



HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL CALLED ASSEMBLY

MARCH 1-2, 2024

AN ECOSYSTEMIC APPROACH TO
RACE IN AMERICA



The March 1-2 Presbytery Meeting was strongly attended, with 95 in attendance, representing 49 of Ministers of Words and Sacrament, 7 of NWC leaders, 4 of CP, as well as 31 of elders, 21 of different churches and 8 of different New Worshiping Communities. Given the statistics, this was a great cross diversity of our leadership.

Since this was an experiential, relational bonding and sharing of personal narratives and learnings, we are sharing highlights from a place of process.

Ecosystem

A community of organisms whose livelihood is intricately linked to the wellness of their connected neighbors.

UNCOVER | Excavation of what is unseen or unspoken

- We were greeted and in turn, greeted one another with the words “it is good to see you.” A vital part of community building, inclusion, and belonging is that people are seen and heard.
- We reviewed fears that keep us from seeing others or being seen by others, and distract us from engaging in authentic connections in difficult conversations.
- We explored the deep uncovering by reflecting on the dirt of our world, in our historical lives, in our perceptions and origins.
- We shared with each other what people see of us, our public roles and what we know about ourselves that very few see. We celebrated what God sees in us. Through sharing these particularly vulnerable places, we opened our hearts to seeing one another and how we cultivate empathy and connection with one another.
- We experienced a deepening capacity to trust one another in our sharing of ourselves.
- We explored how words have power and together we created definitions for racism at each of our 17 tables.



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RECOVER | space to revisit and revive

- A small task force worked through lunch to create a shared definition that was celebrated as an affirmation of the whole.....Racism is a set of perpetuated behaviors that systemically devalues, excludes, traumatizes, and dehumanizes people of one group to maintain the power, privilege and wealth of another group.
- We explored the vibrancy and qualities of water and its impact within ourselves and in our world and how our baptismal vows impact our anti racism work.

DISCOVERY | the trees of life

- We explored what seeds we can plant to impact our work not just for us but for generations upon generations in order to bring lasting change.
- We drew and shared our tree of life stories, and realized that to tell a counter story (against racism) we have to know our own story first.
- We explored, listened, discussed, and shared what specific things God is calling each of us to realize that we need to break free from the sin of racism and embrace the call of becoming.
- We witnessed and experienced the profound impact of watching someone be invisible and the harm that can be caused, and the shift to being seen.
- We celebrated that we can bring change in 3 feet of our personhood, and to not get overwhelmed in the journey ahead we go together.