

February is Black History Month, the time when we celebrate the achievements, contributions and struggles of peoples of African descent. It is not a secret that racism is alive and permeates all levels of our society, from the personal to the systemic level. Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) have been disenfranchised and marginalized throughout history and these problems persist into the present. There is no easy solution to these issues, but one thing is clear: silence is not the answer. As a result of this, First Met is committed to becoming an anti-racist congregation and together with the United Church of Canada (UCC), we seek to deepen the church's anti-racism work.

What does it mean to become an anti-racist congregation and at a larger scale, denomination? In October of 2020, the UCC published their anti-racism policy, *That All May Be One*, which names four key areas of work:

- Organize the full participation of peoples.
- Organize for diversity by supporting anti-racism work and promoting positive relationships among diverse peoples.
- Act justly within the church's structures, courts, policies and practice.
- Speak to the world by supporting anti-racism work within broader society.



## **United against Racism**

*Credit: The United Church of Canada*

We at First Met condemn all forms of racism and are working towards decolonizing our theology and participating in interfaith dialogue to create a welcoming community for peoples of all backgrounds. One example of how we are working towards this is the Territorial Acknowledgement we do at the start of every service. We seek reconciliation between nonindigenous and indigenous peoples and denounce

all forms of racial and religious bigotry including Islamophobia and antisemitism. We recognize that our community is made up of peoples from many cultures and we seek to create an equitable environment where all voices are heard. We will continue to educate ourselves on the injustices present in our community so these aspirations can become a reality. Our commitment to becoming an anti-racist congregation is an ongoing effort and requires continuous reflection and action. Racism and bigotry are deeply embedded in our society and as a result, this process requires constant energy and attention from all corners of our community. There is so much work to do.

### **Further Reading / Resources**

[United Church of Canada anti-racism initiatives](#)

[One Instrument in the Orchestra](#) - Nancy Oliver-Mackenzie: United Church of Canada

[Black History Month Resources](#) - United Church of Canada

[A Call for Social Holiness](#) - Rev. Dr. Paul Douglas Walfall

[Black Lives Matter in the United Church](#)

[Healing our Broken World](#) - Course on race and becoming one with the other