

## **“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”**

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Racism within the Luther Seminary community is a threat not just to Luther Seminary but also to the congregations and parishes that the leaders developed by the seminary will be sent to serve. It is necessary that the racism present on this campus be brought to light and corrected. In this we all have a part for failing to fight against racial injustice because it is a sin that binds us all.

Until we, as the body of Christ, see *all* people as equally necessary to Christ’s church, we fail to be Christ’s church and are blind to the light that is Jesus Christ.

**”In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven.  
(Matthew 5:16)**

### **WE ARE CALLED:**

1. To shine a light into the dark corners where sin lies within
2. To root out injustice wherever it takes hold in us and our community
3. To hold accountable those who seek to teach and develop leaders of the church

### **IN RESPONSE TO THIS CALL, WE RAISE OUR VOICES TO SHINE A LIGHT ON:**

1. Individual acts of racism that have been perpetrated by members of our community
2. Institutional systems of racism that are perpetuated in this campus setting
3. Structural systems of racism that preserve an unbiblical social order among the members of this seminary.

All of which we believe are embedded within the policies, procedures and practices of Luther Seminary.

### **WE HAVE SEEN EVIDENCE OF:**

***Institutional racism:** racial discrimination that derives from individuals carrying out the dictates of others who are prejudiced or of a prejudiced society*

***Structural racism:** inequalities rooted in the system-wide operation of a society that excludes substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in major social institutions.” ([Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 352](#))*

The institutional and structural racism in our seminary community has caused harm and suffering to our brothers and sisters whose skin is a color other than white. When one member of the community suffers, all suffer, and we are diminished as we are unable to thrive together. To begin to move forward, the community must seek reconciliation and forgiveness from our wounded brothers and sisters. Following the model of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, we advocate following the fourfold path:

1. Admitting the wrong and acknowledging the harm.
2. Telling one’s story and witnessing the anguish
3. Asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness
4. Renewing or releasing the relationship

To begin this movement toward healing:

1. Luther Seminary must sacredly listen to the stories of our minoritized brothers and sisters
2. Luther Seminary must join in the lament of our minoritized brothers and sisters
3. Luther Seminary must actively pursue a path to eradicate racial injustice within this body of believers and create a culture that is actively anti-racist and in which racism is not tolerated.

We as students of Luther Seminary living into our call as Christian Public leaders call for Luther Seminary to become an actively anti-racist institution. To that end we urge that the following be considered as part of the ongoing work of eradicating racism in our seminary community and also the communities we will be called to serve:

1. Acknowledge the presence of institutional and structural racism present at Luther Seminary.
2. Because racism has been entrenched over the long term, it is clear that outside resources and expertise are needed. Luther Seminary must engage with an outside training institute such as *Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training* to partner with and provide the needed resources.
3. Anti-racism training to be conducted for the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees. This training should take place at least annually and be documented.
4. Anti-racism training to be conducted for Administration, Support Staff and Faculty. This training should take place at least annually and be documented.
5. Changes to the current curriculum including the requirement for all students in degree programs to take at least one course on racism and its history in our country and in our Church organizations.
6. Establishment of a process through which racially unjust incidents in our classrooms can be brought forward and faculty be held responsible as appropriate for allowing such incidents in their classrooms. This must include clear documentation of all allegations and the resolutions and actions taken in response.
7. Establishment of policies and consequences to be enforced when students are identified as participating or promulgating racist opinions or actions on campus. Such policies and consequences to be included in the Student code of conduct.

It is time for the entire Luther Seminary Community to stand up and act to end institutional and systemic racism:

Stories must be told.

Stories must be heard.

Stories must be remembered.

We must not attempt to whitewash our past or our present.

We will not stand quietly as our brothers and sisters face oppression within these walls.

WE expect the Luther Seminary administration and board of directors to act on this.

WE expect that a timeline will be put in place for specific action to be taken.

WE expect that this timeline and actions will be taken and made public and available to all in our community.

Signatures:

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