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**West Bay Region Antiracism Meetings (January – May 2021)**

Over the last six months, the West Bay Antiracism Group has been holding bimonthly meetings on Zoom to feature content and hold small group discussions of racism in the US and how to engage with our congregations.

On January 28, the group discussed what we saw in the January 6<sup>th</sup> attack on the US Capitol and the police response, and our responses to what we saw, contrasted to the police response to Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 and other protests for people of color. Some expressed shock at how the police allowed the riots/insurrection by predominantly white people to happen, and how this event was white privilege and entitlement on display. Some shared their experiences in talking about white supremacy with their congregations. Some of the sentiments included, "Get racism on the table. Be willing to make mistakes. Speak the truth of what we are seeing. Help each other to see, not just the individual racism, but more importantly, the systemic racism of systems."

On March 25, the group discussed how to engage in conversations with our congregations about racism by reflecting on how congregations deal with controversy and conflict, and lessons learned. Lessons learned from dealing or not dealing with controversy were shared. These included: Not covering up major issues, pastor sets the tone, hold honest and open discussion in safe spaces such as small groups, any issue takes time and compassion, tension between those who want to do something and those who don't have time to engage in debate and deliberation. Ways to apply these lessons to conversations about racism were discussed. These included: Involve everyone in sharing stories, fears and experiences in order to foster understanding of others' perspectives; understand where people are coming from without getting into arguments; combine different approaches such as group discussion and liturgy/sermons; recognize and address the generational differences in awareness and understanding both seriously and strategically.

On May 27, the group learned about anti-Asian racism, including how white supremacy leads to antagonism between People of Color. Resources were offered on the history of anti-Asian racism, the myths and narratives about Blacks and Asians perpetuated by white supremacy/white dominated mainstream society, and how the myths and narratives are used to pit Blacks against Asians and vice versa. The recent scapegoating of Asians for the Covid-19 virus and the anti-Asian hate/attacks is the most recent expression of anti-Asian racism in the US, which dates back 150 years or more. Some expressed their personal experience with anti-Asian racism and their consumption of racist narratives, and how Blacks have shown up in solidarity with Asians in the past and in the present.

The West Bay Antiracism Group will be on hiatus during the summer and resume its meetings in the fall.