

Statement on Racism and Commitment to Change

Associated Ministries Board of Directors

Approved by Unanimous Vote of the Board

July 2, 2020

The Associated Ministries Board of Directors cannot remain silent in the face of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Manuel Ellis, and too many others. Nor can we ignore the impact of race on those who experience homelessness in our community.

We condemn anti-Black racism and violence born from centuries of oppression. We add our voices to the chorus of all those who say, “enough is enough.” We stand with all our communities of color against the injustices of racism, bias, and inequity, reaffirming our commitment to justice. Moreover, we believe that Black lives matter.

As an interfaith organization, we boldly claim our call to God’s transformative work. We defend and acclaim the human dignity of people of color, seeking to silence our own voices and open our hearts to an honest acknowledgment of our failures and implicit biases. We also invite our white sisters and brothers:

- To open their hearts, to leave the safety of silence and their personal emotional comfort, and to confront the fragility of their own race.
- To wade deep into the waters of vulnerability to listen and believe the stories and concerns of our brothers and sisters of color.
- To better understand how white privilege has influenced, and in many cases hindered, our ability to serve communities we have otherwise sought to strengthen.
- To think deeply, without limitation, about the nature of our lives together and what it means to be community *for each other*.
- To reach out boldly with words and deeds rooted in faith, grounded in love, and nourished by mutual trust.

As a result of our commitment to justice and equity, we, the members of the Board of Directors, are dedicated to the unrelenting work of healing and restoring a world poisoned by racial oppression and inequity. We pledge to:

1. Understand more fully the historical background and current legacy of racism and racial inequity in Tacoma and Pierce County by incorporating training sessions, seminars, and symposiums on the topics of race and racism;
2. Increase racial diversity on the Board, beginning with focusing our recruiting efforts to bring at least one additional Black or Indigenous person of color to the Board before other persons are invited to join;
3. Work aggressively to achieve a racial composition of the Board that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve; and
4. Collaborate with other willing community organizations, such as the Tacoma Ministerial Alliance, the Black Collective, and the Tacoma Urban League, in actions to advance the cause of racial equity and justice, while seeking lasting solutions to homelessness.