

## St. James Church

### Anti-Racism Policy

At St. James Church, we have zero tolerance for racism and are committed and willing to stand up to fight for justice and highlight wrongdoing. We are a family, and as the Bible declares, “no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family” (Ephesians 2:19). We are sisters and brothers who belong and grow together, to see the kingdom expand. No one is excluded and everyone, no matter what they look like or their background, has the opportunity to take their place in God’s family and make a valuable contribution to St. James Church.

We value the richness that comes with racial and ethnic diversity and desire to create a true sense of belonging for our church family and anyone touched by our mission to go from one to many. All people are made in the image of God, and in the Bible, God proclaims that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28) The Bible also tells us that God shows no partiality: “Then Peter began to speak: “I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism” (Acts 10:34)

Therefore, we believe in justice and equality for all, in line with what the Bible teaches on these matters. As Christians, we stand for love and justice. It is not enough for us to say that racism is bad; our faith compels us to speak up and take action against oppression and injustice. St. James Church takes on the responsibility of being anti-racist, intertwining this with the outworking of our mission, values and vision.

St. James Church intends to be active in our local communities and wants to commit to being part of the solution and a role-model organisation in reflecting the diversity of these communities and giving opportunity to anyone, regardless of their ethnicity or racial background.

This policy applies to all staff team members, volunteers, partners, regular attenders and anyone who is reached by the work of St James Church.

## **Taking Action**

St. James Church is committed to taking positive action to increase the diversity, inclusion and representation of all people across the Church and urges individuals to personally commit to antiracism in their own lives and spheres of influence.

Being racist or anti-racist is not about who we are; it is about what we do. Anti-racism results from conscious decisions to make consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life.

The continued efforts of each of us individually can add up to a lasting change in our society. Since racism operates at individual, societal, and institutional levels, anti-racist choices must be taken in each of these levels to eradicate racism from the structures and fabric of our society.

## **What can you do?**

- Pray
- Awareness: Read up and learn. Read books and watch videos that will help you to understand this issue more deeply.
- Be intentional about developing meaningful relationships with people who are not the same colour/ethnicity/ background/culture as you/
- Act: Speak out when you see injustice and racism taking place – raise an official concern, blow the whistle
- Have more conversations about institutional racism, race, personal experiences, neo-colonialism, political and economic oppression. Be a good listener. Be more comfortable with being uncomfortable.

## **What will St. James Church do?**

- A commitment to diversity in leadership, governance and staff team
- Address, equip and engage our Church family on the theology of equality and justice and share testimonies and stories to this end

## **Complaints**

- If you wish to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints Procedures.

This Policy has been devised with due regard to the provisions of Equality act 2010 and also The Diocese of Southwark Anti-Racism Charter: Strategies for Enhancing Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion Adopted unanimously by the Southwark Diocesan Synod on 13 March 2021

April 2023