

# **Standing for Racial Justice Committee**

## **Strategic Plan**

**Adopted November 2022**

### **Introduction**

For the past several years, a small group of CJC members has been meeting as the *Standing for Racial Justice Committee* to educate ourselves about systemic racial injustice and the unearned privilege that white people enjoy. We have come to deplore and condemn the hardship and fear that result for Black and brown people, Jews of Color, and all minorities, including Jews.

Motivated by our increasingly painful awareness of widespread racist assumptions, unconscious bias, and overt discriminatory practices in American society, we have committed to offer Columbia Jewish Congregation opportunities to learn about systemic racism. We strive to create meaningful education about the many ways that white people contribute – most likely without intention or awareness – to this violation of core Jewish values, and most important, about what actions we can take to eliminate them.

While most of us condemn racism, racial equity cannot be achieved alone through individual learning and inclusiveness; it requires addressing root causes of inequity, not just their manifestations.

**Our Goal now is to educate and help ourselves, as individuals, to become more aware and more just and thus support our congregation to become an even more righteous collective. We yearn to ensure that all who enter our sanctuary or school or who participate in our activities will experience a warm welcome and feel they belong.**

To accomplish this bold end, we seek to create a common language and understanding and a safe environment to explore these difficult issues together. We want to take effective action. We aim to partner with allies, including congregations of different faith communities and congregations of color.

At the same time, we understand that this initiative must be grounded in a challenging and ongoing learning process and that organization cultures change slowly. As individuals, we bring our unique experiences and differences to this challenge, and we must be respectful of each other. We strive to be humble learners as we proceed and give each other patience and respect as we find our way. This ambitious initiative of learning and culture change will take time.

Ultimately, pursuing racial justice for all is a profound expression of our Jewish identity; of our tagline "*Wherever you are in your journey, you are welcome here;*" and of the original vision of Columbia as "*a garden for growing people.*"

### **Mission Statement**

**The mission of Standing for Racial Justice is to advance the holy work of Tikkun Olam by mobilizing our congregation to pursue a more socially just world through education, collaboration, and action as guided by CJC's values and history as directed by our tradition's commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." [Leviticus 19:18]**

## **Our Values**

Since early 2020, the work of Standing for Racial Justice Committee has been guided by our members' values of Tikkun Olam and respect for all people. Recently we discovered Reconstructing Judaism's document "Attitudes, Beliefs and Values Shaping Jewish Practice," authored by Rabbi David Teutsch and published on the RJ website. Composed of forty-nine Values, we recognize that a subset of these has energized our study and now guides our invitation to CJC members to join our learning and action planning. They are listed here with their Hebrew names (*italicized*), when provided:

### **Our Bedrock Jewish Values Regarding Racial Justice**

<p><b>Justice</b> - <i>Tzedek</i>  Obligation to one another - <i>Mitzvah</i>  Truth - <i>Emet</i>  Democracy</p>	<p><b>Tikkun Olam</b>  Service to God and the work that waits to be done  - <i>Avoda</i>  Paths of peace –  <i>Darkhey Shalom</i></p>
<p><b>Dignity</b>  Love - <i>Ahava</i>  Humility - <i>Anava</i>  Kindness / Covenanted care - <i>Hesed</i>  Empathy  Compassion and mercy - <i>Rahmanut</i></p>	<p><b>Diversity</b>  Inclusion  Egalitarianism  Each Made in Image of God – <i>B'tzelem Elohim</i></p>

## **Overall Guiding Actions to Achieve Our Goal**

**Educate** – Facilitate education programs about racial justice for CJC’s congregation: children, teens, and adults.

**Integrate** – Incorporate Jewish values (as outlined in the preceding section) in all aspects of CJC’s communal activities, youth and adult education, celebrations, and worship.

**Collaborate** – Seek and partner with other groups, both internal and external to CJC, that share our mission and values regarding racial justice.

**Energize** – Inspire the congregation to become involved in existing racial justice initiatives and create new ones both within CJC and in collaboration with community partners.

### **CJC’s “Commitment to Racial Justice”**

***Approved May 2, 2023***

***On May 2, 2023, CJC’s Board of Directors voted to endorse the Standing for Racial Justice Committee (SRJ) Strategic Plan and directed SRJ members to proceed with the following initiatives.***

## Events to Date and Goals Addressed

Learning Events	Goals			
	Educate	Integrate	Collaborate	Energize
	Facilitate education programs about racial justice for CJC's congregation: children, teens and adults.	Include Jewish values of racial justice in all aspects of CJC's communal activities, youth and adult education, celebrations, policies, and worship.	Seek and partner with other groups, both internal and external to CJC, that share our mission and values.	Motivate the congregation to become involved in existing racial justice initiatives and create new ones both within CJC and in collaboration with community partners.
<b><u>Monthly learning meetings</u></b> Spring 2020 – present	✓			✓
<b><u>Resource List</u></b> Posted on <a href="#">CJC website</a>	✓	✓		✓
<b><u>Highlights</u></b> CJC Weekly Update - <a href="#">Archive posted on CJC website</a>	✓	✓		✓

Learning Events	Goals			
	Educate	Integrate	Collaborate	Energize
<p><b><u>Services/Jewish Holidays</u></b></p> <p><b>Juneteenth Shabbat Programs, 2021, 2022, 2023</b></p> <p><b>Yom Kippur Workshop, 2021, 2022, 2023</b></p> <p><b>Tu B'shvat Seder</b> in collaboration with CJC Green Team, 2022</p> <p><b>MLK Weekend Shabbat Program, 2023</b></p> <p><b>Yom Kippur Service – Social Justice Themed Al Chait, 2023</b></p> <p><b>Shabbaton with Rabbi Emerita Sonya Starr: Housing Justice = Racial Justice, 2023</b></p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p><b><u>Speakers/Workshops:</u></b></p> <p><b>1619, 1654, 2020: Jews, Race and U.S. History</b> Presenter: Marc Dollinger, Ph.D., 2021</p> <p><b>Deep in Our Memories:</b> Exploration and comparisons of historical trauma in Jewish and African American communities; Presenter: Rabbi Sonya Starr, 2021</p> <p><b>How to Do Intersectionality,</b> Presenter: Rabbi Sonya Starr, 2022</p> <p><b>Workshop on the Sociology of Race</b> Presenter: Roberta Goldberg, 2023</p> <p><b>Racial Justice Training,</b> Presenter: Dr. Denise Boston, Equity and Restorative Practices Manager, Howard County Office of Human Rights and Equity, 2023</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓

Learning Events	Goals			
	Educate	Integrate	Collaborate	Energize
<u><b>Book/Video Discussions</b></u> <i><b>Biased</b></i> by Jennifer Eberhardt, 2021 <b>TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The Danger of a Single Story</b> , 2023 <i><b>The Fire Within</b></i> by Don Lemon, 2023	✓	✓		
<u><b>Special Program</b></u> <b>Juneteenth Program</b> , 2023	✓	✓	✓	

