

## First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City Participates in Program to Address Racism:

In the wake of the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson Missouri in 2014, First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City felt compelled to respond somehow. We joined the demonstrations here in Salt Lake (related to Ferguson and the many other incidents of police violence that occurred), we signed petitions, we lobbied the legislature. These were all good things, but they tended to look outward. My long experience with the Evergreen Association told me that real change was something that happened from the inside out. So, we began to explore our own need to change. We had a book study of *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander that introduced us to the injustice of mass incarceration. We invited Doug Avilesbernal and the Evergreen Anti-racism team to come dive into white privilege in a workshop called "I'm Not Racist, But We Are." (Excellent presentation. Your congregation should take advantage of this resource). All of this has strengthened our commitment to facing and addressing racism in ourselves and our society.

This year, we were invited to participate in a five-year project sponsored by The Alliance of Baptists in Partnership with the Lilly Endowment called THRIVE. In this program, 27 Baptist congregations will actively confront structures of racism to remove a crucial obstacle that spiritually and materially affects Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Latinx and Asian Pacific Islanders. These congregations, mainly white, will work using a learning community model whereby we collaborate on ideas and challenges and process actions taken together. Yet each individual congregation will develop its own approach and program tailored to its own congregational culture.

The goal of THRIVE is to examine white-dominant congregational life and vitality through the lens of our commitment to racial justice. The long-term objective of the program is to eradicate the presence, and address the ongoing harm of, white supremacy in Baptist congregations. Each local congregation will create, collaborate, and reflect in line with these objectives.

The project involves one clergy person and a lay person who serve as the point people for the project. We have met once as a whole and will meet a minimum of once each year with other smaller interactions in between. One of the important components of the project involves documentation and data collection from the congregations as they progress through the program. The team of sociologists that are running this program will be conducting research on the congregations involved in the hope of developing models for addressing white supremacy and racism in other congregations in the future.

We look forward to this journey with other Baptist congregations that are committed to face the challenges of fighting white supremacy in our country and I look forward to sharing with all of you our progress as we continue through program.

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Curtis Price, Pastor  
First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City

**INVITATION TO YOUR CHURCH:** The THRIVE Project invites your church to participate in the same Racial Attitudes Assessment it will use with participating congregations like FBC of SLC. The Assessment can generate a composite congregational profile of participating congregants. This Assessment will tell you where your congregation is now and will be repeated in 2025 to measure how your anti-racism efforts have changed attitudes during the intervening years. Contact Wim Mauldin for more information at [wim\\_mauldin@hotmail.com](mailto:wim_mauldin@hotmail.com)