

In Support of the Minnetonka Coalition for Equitable Education

November 17, 2020

We, the Vestry, Wardens and Clergy of Trinity Episcopal Church Excelsior support and endorse the goals and actions of the Minnetonka Coalition for Equitable Education (MCEE). Our parishioners include students, parents, educators, taxpayers and neighbors in the Minnetonka School District. We believe that every child needs the opportunity to receive an equitable education--one where race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, English language proficiency, socio-economic status, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, disability, or skin color do not impede their ability to receive equal educational opportunities. The Minnetonka school system's reputation for excellence does not extend to all its students given the pervasive undercurrent of systemic racism that exists locally as well as at a state and national level. Our Christian faith compels us to call this out and to actively engage in the difficult but necessary work to change the inequitable climate in which our children, as well as other community members, live their lives.

Trinity Church commends the work of the MCEE with its student-based message and leadership. We also recognize and appreciate the actions that the Minnetonka School Board and District Administration have taken thus far in furtherance of MCEE's Anti-Racism Imperatives. These include issuing a statement acknowledging that racial injustice and discrimination exist in Minnetonka and stating that more must be done to create an inclusive environment. They also include creating a webpage addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion and setting forth an action plan to remedy current deficiencies. We support wholeheartedly the School Board's commitment to change. But more must be done.

The Minnetonka School Board and District Administration have laid a solid foundation. We encourage them to build upon it. Equitable education means teaching all students the value of multiple perspectives, critical thinking skills, inclusivity, and the ability to accept and build relationships with others who have backgrounds that differ from their own. Discrimination of any kind causes irreparable harm, especially to our young people, and we must categorically reject it. Doing so requires us to be unequivocal with our voices and to use words like "bias," "race," and "systemic racism" to accurately and directly confront the problem.

While we, as a nation, are in the midst of a very divisive time, eliminating discrimination and racism is not a divisive issue. These concepts are also a fundamental part of our faith, and our faith calls us to act. The Vestry and Clergy of Trinity Church pledge ongoing support to MCEE as it continues examining the ways that we can use education to develop a community and a nation free from systemic racism and bias so that all people can live their lives to their fullest potential.

Signed,

The Wardens, Vestry and Clergy of Trinity Episcopal Church, Excelsior MN