

Anti-racist Banner Meetings Report and Update

From Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

A parish wide meeting was held last Sunday, February 21 to discuss the petition for a Black Lives Matter banner on the church. The meeting was attended by about 60 households.

The parish wide meeting was followed up by the presentation of the petition to the Vestry at their meeting this last Tuesday, February 23. There was robust and vigorous discussion at both meetings and thanks were given to Peter Shellito, who initiated the petition, for moving us to action.

The key points that emerged were an acknowledgement that it is a non-negotiable that all Christians need to oppose racism. And that we as a parish must do our part.

At both meetings there was a variety of opinion about putting up a banner in support of Black Lives Matter. Some are in favor of a banner as an outward expression of solidarity and commitment. Others are against single issue banners on the church asking the question of how to decide which issues are deserving of a banner.

If a banner is raised, there was a variety of opinions about the wording with some in favor of Black Lives Matter wording and others saying this expression is too linked to a political organization with a particular ideology. More support was generated for a banner with an anti-racist message that connected to a Biblical reference.

Many expressed the view that more important than a banner was putting anti-racism into action and making a commitment to make anti-racism an ongoing and accountable element in the life of the parish. A commitment has been made to a monthly anti-racist forum to further this work.

The Vestry wanted more time to consider how to effectively further the work of anti-racism at St Andrew's. The Vestry will be meeting for a special meeting on March 8 dedicated to the challenge of anti-racism. The questions it will consider include the banner, the establishment of a Vestry anti-racism group, and other concrete actions.

In its decision-making the Vestry is committed to finding the best way forward for the parish to further the work of anti-racism at St Andrew's in line with Christ's command "to love our neighbors as ourselves" and Christ's Golden Rule to 'do unto others as we would have them do unto us'.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in Christ, Adrian