

Washington District's Racial Justice Statement

The biblical story tells us over and over to love God and to love one another. The Triune God shows us that our God is a God of relationship. The stories and teachings of Holy Scripture convict us to repent of our past complicity that has harmed persons of color. We acknowledge the benefits that come with the privilege of having white skin tone, and that this white privilege disadvantages persons of color.

We make this statement as the backdrop of the COVID-19 Pandemic makes racial injustice more easily seen. We make this statement out of the revelation that George Floyd's murder demonstrates racism as the misuse of power plus discrimination. We make this statement out of our hope to become the allies that our communities and nation need, for we believe that the sin of racism will only be resolved through the choices and actions of white people.

We are ready to listen – to hear the voices of persons of color that have been silenced through the systems that have been built in our country, our communities, and our churches. We are ready to educate ourselves about our American history of laws that established these unjust systems. We resist the use of polarizing “us” versus “them” language. We choose to acknowledge and celebrate both commonalities and differences among all racial and ethnic groups. We reject the mindset that rests comfortably in the statement, “All Lives Matter.”

We are ready and willing to step out of our known and comfortable system, to be transformed in truth. The biblical story of the Exodus reminds us that oppression exists; when the Israelites and Egyptians were in harmonious relationship with each other, the people of God thrived. It is time for persons of color to thrive, and for Black lives to truly matter.

We commit to boldly and courageously dismantling racism, even when the work is uncomfortable. We encourage one another to be willing to make mistakes, for it is in those mistakes that we will grow in our understanding. In our discomfort and humility, there lies the opportunity for a change.

We call the laity, clergy, and friends of the Washington District of the United Methodist Church to engage with us in anti-racism by:

- rising up against injustices,
- contributing to organizations and businesses that specifically benefit persons and communities of color,
- calling out intentional and unintentional negative messages that communicate insults, racial slurs, and innuendos,
- educating ourselves through books, films, blogs, and conversations,

We must no longer remain silent or look the other way. In all our efforts, may we continue to pray for God's wisdom, compassion, and guidance, as we seek to dismantle racism and live into God's intent for harmony, respect, and unity for humanity.

With hope of reconciliation,

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