

First Presbyterian Church of Durham - Anti-Racism Policy

In the wake of events and protests across our nation and the world, we, the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Durham, NC, are compelled to witness to Christ's commands to love, honor, and care for all people. As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we are guided by our *Book of Confessions* including The Confession of Belhar, which states, in part:

We believe that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

As Presbyterians, we acknowledge the importance of confession and lament. Therefore, we affirm that:

- Racism is sin;
- White supremacy is idolatry;
- The foundational structures of the United States—including our political, electoral, economic, educational, healthcare, police and court systems – have embedded in them the effects of our national legacy of colonization, slavery, and the entitlement to power of primarily white people of middle- and upper-income levels;
- We lament the violence against people of color in the United States, from our earliest atrocities against Native Americans to the aggression that continues against people of color and minorities to this current day.
- We lament the deaths of the millions of African people who died in the slave trade and under the cruel whips of slavery within the shores of this country.
- We lament the suffering of all the millions of lives of people of color that have been shortened, deprived of opportunity, deprived of resources, deprived of justice, deprived of the social protections that are routinely extended to white people, and rendered voiceless, from the inception of this country to the present, due to the foundational racism, hypocrisy, and plutocratic entitlement woven throughout the fabric of our society and our governmental systems, our Constitution and the subsequent interpretations thereof.
- We confess that by our actions and inactions, we have been complicit in our nation's failure to address the underlying racism inherent in these and other deaths.

Repentance requires effort to change our ways, turning away from sin and towards God and neighbor. Therefore, we will:

- Pray without ceasing that “justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24);
- Examine critically and intentionally the history of whiteness as a social construct;
- Work in our own lives and in the life of this congregation to dismantle white privilege;
- Heed the voices of people of color;
- Use our voices, our bodies, and our material and other resources to support, advocate, and work toward the enactment of laws, policies, and tangible actions leading to justice and equity for all.