



Statement of Franconia United Methodist Church on Systemic Racism

We, the Church Council of the Franconia United Methodist Church, feel mandated to comment at this time of social concern and protest over racial injustice in the face of numerous recent examples of inappropriate behaviors that resulted in the deaths of US citizens who were people of color.

The bishops of The United Methodist Church have called on all United Methodists to act now by using their voices, pens, feet and hearts to end racism. In that spirit, the leadership of Franconia United Methodist Church calls on its members to stand against oppression and injustice. We repent of the egregious sin of racism and renew our baptismal vows to “resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.”

Racism can only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality—economic and social—that we still see all around us. With renewed vigor, we call our church members and people everywhere to join in advocating and promoting policies at all levels that will combat systemic racism and its effects on our civic and social institutions.

The recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks, only highlight the larger problem of systemic racism that affects our country. We believe racism is systemic in our country, and permeates every facet of life in the United States including health care, employment, education, wealth, the criminal justice system and housing; and we believe it infects our churches as well. In the face of these injustices we often embody the words of the prophet Jeremiah by treating “the wound of God’s people carelessly, saying ‘peace, peace’ when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14) because there is no justice.

Disproportionate human suffering among people of color that we have witnessed recently, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, is yet another reminder of the inequities in our society that have continued because we have been slow to work for justice and greater access to healthcare.

Therefore, the leadership of Franconia United Methodist Church declares the following and calls the entire church to join in this commitment:

- **We pledge to take personal responsibility** to challenge systemic racism in its various forms and to promote justice and equality for all God’s children
- **We pledge to repent of our personal racism**, our failure to hear the cries of our brothers and sisters, our silence in the face of racial injustice, our valuing of law and order, possessions and power more than lives, and our complicity with police violence.
- **We pledge to hold ourselves mutually accountable to the continued work of racial justice**, to engage and listen to one another, to challenge our own biases and prejudices, and to work together to create God’s beloved community where all are included and cherished.



- **We pledge to bring our prophetic voices to the public arena**, and lead our congregation to confront racism, including our own.
- **We pledge to further educate** ourselves, our leaders and members in order to dismantle those systems of racism for the sake of all God's children.

As a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-generational congregation, we understand the fight against systemic racism is always a work in progress. During these challenging times, we unite in prayer that we may not let this opportunity pass before us, but instead that this may be the time, the moment for transformation. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, may we work together to move closer to God's kingdom here on earth, where all are included, treated justly, and loved.

Approved By:

The Church Council of the Franconia United Methodist Church

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