

### **\*Antiracism Statement**

*“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* - John 13:35

As we live our mission to be more like Jesus Christ for our community and beyond, we remember our baptismal commitment to “resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves” – both as individuals and as a congregation – and must actively work to eradicate injustice toward our neighbors.

#### **Acknowledging the Past**

We regret that our nation has prospered at the expense of those who, because of racial or ethnic bias, have been denied the benefits of their labor. For example, African Americans have been oppressed for 400 years because of slavery, slave codes, Jim Crow, segregation, and lingering inequality in many systems in America.

While the Church has sometimes taken the initiative in racial reconciliation efforts, we confess that the Church has also contributed to racism by action and inaction.

We recognize that many devastating social problems in our country and local communities are direct results of these deeply rooted injustices.

We know we cannot change the past, but we do express our regret. We acknowledge this legacy and its effects, and we grieve.

#### **Looking Forward**

*“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.”* - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

We acknowledge there are many forms of racism and bias that continue today, whether unconscious or conscious, systemic or arbitrary.

As an expression of our core values, our desire to be more like Jesus, and our hope to repair damage that has been done, we will respond by:

- **Focusing on relationships** - Seeking to build genuine relationships with those who bear the brunt of this legacy in our community because we believe we are all children of God
- **Living active, curious faith** - Recognizing that the Holy Spirit is still at work among us we will continue to listen, learn, and better understand how the perpetuation of systems that leverage benefit for some and pain and disadvantage for others continues today.
- **Showing care and compassion** - As Jesus commanded us to love one another, we will promote communities of love, reconciliation, equality, and justice.

These efforts will be reflected in our worship, learning, outreach, service, and fellowship as we attempt to live into the Wesleyan ideal to do all the good we can, and do no harm.

Our goal is long-standing justice and equality for Black Americans and all people of color. We realize that we cannot do it alone, but we play a role in making this vision a reality for our community and beyond.

*\*Discussions of social issues can be controversial and bring out a variety of responses. If you find areas in this statement that are challenging, then let's have a conversation. Any member of the Racial Healing & Reconciliation team would be happy to talk about this statement and its formation.*