



## Racial Reconciling Covenant

As participants in the Racial Reconciling Movement, the congregation of

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**believe and commit to the following:**

As stated in Article V of the Constitution of the United Methodist Church:

*The United Methodist Church proclaims the value of each person as a unique child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. The UMC recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The UMC shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The UMC shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of racial justice at all times and in all places.*

And Social Principals Article 162 A of the Book of Discipline:

*Racism is the combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominant race is innately superior to the others. Racism includes both personal and institutional racism. Personal racism is manifested through the individual expressions, attitudes, and/or behaviors that accept the assumptions of a racist value system and that maintain the benefits of this system. Institutional racism is the established social pattern that supports implicitly or explicitly the racist value system. Racism, manifested as sin, plagues and hinders our relationship with Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. In many cultures white persons are granted unearned privileges and benefits that are denied to persons of color. We oppose the creation a racial hierarchy in any culture. Racism breeds racial discrimination. We define racial discrimination as the disparate treatment, and lack of full access and equity in resources, opportunities and participation in the Church and in society based on race or ethnicity.*

*Therefore we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons. We rejoice in the gifts that particular ethnic histories and cultures bring to our total life. We commit as the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access.*

*We commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society. We assert the obligation of society and people within the society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic persons. We further assert the right of members of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic persons to equal and equitable opportunities in employment and promotion; to education and training of the highest quality; to nondiscrimination in voting, access to public accommodations, and housing purchase or rental; to credit, financial loans, venture capital, and insurance policies; to positions of leadership and power in all elements of our life together, and to full participation in the Church and society. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within the Church and society.*

**We have found to be true:**

- Racism and racial inequity is a specific problem in our society.
- Jesus led from the edges. His ministry focused on all people, especially on people not in the power elite of society.
- The margins are now our centers – those who are marginalized need to be the focus of our efforts; and yet, our congregations struggle to include marginalized people.
- Not hearing the voices and stories of all people is a loss to all of us.
- What we say we believe is not necessarily the way we live out our daily lives.
- There is no easy answer or quick fix – the answer is in building relationships and on-going efforts.
- Change takes access to resources and action-oriented education

**We want to:**

- Eliminate racism in our society; individual, cultural, institutional, and systemic.
- Break down the established social patterns of the racist value system.
- Reduce discrimination in churches and society.
- As we do for religious minorities in Social Principle 162B, we should do for racial minorities: *We condemn all overt and covert forms of intolerance, being especially sensitive to their expression in media stereotyping. We assert the right of all to freedom from legal, economic and social discrimination.*

**We commit to:**

- Not be daunted by the magnitude of the task, by guilt or shame, or the powerlessness of a single person; we will move forward taking intentional steps to eliminate racial inequities in our own backyards.
- Doing what we can as a congregation and as individuals to raise awareness, speak up and take action whenever possible
- Providing access to resources and providing action oriented education to our congregation
- Assessing our progress in these commitments on a regular basis

**Our Congregation will:**

- Pray, seek and work for unity at all levels of church life. (Article 6)
- Conduct a Racial/Ethnic Awareness audit
- Partner with a coach recommended by the Racial Reconciling Movement
- Together with their coach, set goals for progress in the “racial awareness continuum”
- Engage in vital conversations in groups and worship.
- Monitor and measure our progress by repeating the cultural audit annually

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Church Council Chair on behalf of the Congregation