



Dear FUMC Family,

On July 20, the Church Board of FUMC adopted the attached Statement on Racial Justice, after much prayerful thought, study, and conversation. This statement is in response to the national conversation on racial equity that is happening now. It is the foundation for a series of opportunities our church will offer to help us all learn, listen for understanding, grow in our awareness, find ways to build relationships with people whose experiences and needs are different from our own, and be part of the ongoing effort to create equality for all through non-violent means. This statement is also consistent with our Christian faith and with the recent statements and efforts of the United Methodist Women, the United Methodist Board on Church and Society, our Western North Carolina Conference's recent statement <https://files.constantcontact.com/25e6d31f001/94ebbd0b-775a-45f2-81f4-1cdbc9d67ff2.pdf> and the UM Book of Resolutions below. As your Lead Pastor, I confess that I still have much to learn and discover about my own bias and ways I have unintentionally harmed my brothers and sisters of color. I am reading, engaging in individual conversation, and prayerfully examining my faith in order to grow in awareness and love. I invite us all to seek to be part of the solution in whatever way we can, to more fully bring about the kingdom of God where all people are of infinite value to our Creator. Look for information to come about the resources and opportunities we will have to do this together.

Love and peace,  
Pastor Karen

## **FUMC COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE**

The ongoing experience of racial discrimination, prejudice, and violence suffered by people of color serve to remind all that injustice is still present in our world. Our hearts are with the victims' families and all who feel hopeless in the face of pervasive racial discrimination and outright cruelty.

We are reminded that Jesus bypassed oppressive systems which kept many on the margins of society in order to lift up, heal, and make whole. We join our voices in witness and solidarity during these times of violence against our black brothers and sisters, both locally and globally. Scripture affirms that in baptism we are all children of God through faith; there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). By virtue of our baptism, we are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and commissioned to resist evil, injustice, and oppression, in whatever forms they present themselves.

We believe that God's intent for humanity is community, compassion, and holiness, and that justice has been marred by the history of enslavement and racism.

We denounce the narratives of fear and suspicion that divide people from one another and uphold this statement from the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, “We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God...We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, [or] ethnicity...”

Therefore, we as First United Methodist Church of Hendersonville promise to name prejudice when we see it and to receive the correction of others who see prejudice in us. We pledge to listen to people of color in order to learn, to grow in our awareness of cognitive bias, power structures, racial privilege, and discrimination, and offer opportunities for our congregation to grow in the same and work for the equality and justice for all.

## **A Charter for Racial Justice Policies**

(Please note the following is an excerpt from “The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church”)

“The aim of The United Methodist Church is nothing less than an inclusive church in an inclusive society. The United Methodist Church, therefore, calls upon all its people to perform those faithful deeds of love and justice in both the church and community that will bring this aim into reality.”

*Because we believe:*

1. That God is the Creator of all people and all are God’s children in one family;
2. That racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ;
3. That racism denies the redemption and reconciliation of Jesus Christ;
4. That racism robs all human beings of their wholeness and is used as a justification for social, economic, environmental, and political exploitation;
5. That we must declare before God and before one another that we have sinned against our sisters and brothers of other races in thought, in word, and in deed;
6. That in our common humanity in creation all women and men are made in God’s image and all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God;
7. That our strength lies in our racial and cultural diversity and that we must work toward a world in which each person’s value is respected and nurtured;
8. That our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings, and new relationships and must be reflected in the laws, policies, structures, and practices of both church and state.