

Historical Reflection & Anti-Racism Value Statement by Asbury UMC Arnold, MD

Historical Reflection

We, Asbury United Methodist Church, acknowledge, lament, and repent of the ways we have contributed to racism. This includes but is not limited to ancestors who took land from the Susquehannocks (the indigenous peoples on what is now the Broadneck Peninsula¹); local farmers owning slaves and their inhumane treatment²; segregated churches and schools with Asbury hosting the whites only Arnold Elementary School³; Asbury was a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church South; Asbury's participation in minstrel shows through the 1950's⁴; Asbury's 1956 Deed that disallows those of "African Blood" and "mongolians" to live on the property⁵; and our acceptance of the unjust practices of the time. There have been times, past and present, when our silence resulted in complicity. We recognize that as a predominately white congregation we historically benefited from white supremacy^{6, 7}, white privilege, and participation in systems of inequality and inequity.

Asbury UMC Arnold's Anti-Racism Value Statement

Asbury UMC is striving to know and share God's love unconditionally, following Christ's example. All people are sacred, worthy, and are made by God, who created humanity in God's own image.⁸ We recognize that people of color have been unjustly treated with a disregard for their humanity and divine value.

Racism is a sin. We envision a church where people of all races are treated equally and all voices are valued; where we honestly acknowledge our history in order to live more truthfully in the present; where healing and reconciliation are commonplace, the divine value of every individual is recognized, and social justice is upheld and honored.

We acknowledge and recognize that we must be purposeful and take action to make these values a reality—not only for Asbury UMC Arnold but for all people.⁹

We vow to be an Anti-Racist Church, to do better, to learn from our collective history, to continually educate ourselves and teach others, and to advocate for justice and equity. We are an imperfect people and our work has just begun. We vow to pursue racial reconciliation, walking together in this difficult work, even when we are uncomfortable. We strive to love as Jesus loves.

¹ Stornetta. *Arnold, Maryland and Neighbors on the Broadneck*, Page 3.

² <http://library.uncg.edu/slavery/petitions/results.aspx?s=3&sid=121&Rec=20985311&lastset=450&perpag=25>

³ Stornetta. *Arnold, Maryland and Neighbors on the Broadneck*, Page 65.

⁴ Stornetta. *Arnold, Maryland and Neighbors on the Broadneck*, Page 108.

⁵ <https://www.bwcumc.org/news-and-views/whites-only-a-tale-of-two-church-deeds/>

⁶ "In order to do that however, we need a clear picture of what we're up against. In her essay entitled *What Is White Supremacy?*, author and activist Elizabeth Martinez puts forth the following definition: White supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege." - [White Supremacy Definition from Be the Bridge \(Page 13\)](#)

⁷ "the belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races" & "the social, economic, and political systems that collectively enable white people to maintain power over people of other races" - [Merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/white%20supremacy)

⁸ Genesis 1:26

⁹ <https://www.winterinstitute.org/about/mission-vision-values/>

¹⁰ <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/commitment-to-becoming-an-anti-racist-church>