



MOUNT OLIVET'S COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND RECONCILIATION

Rooted in God's love for the whole world made manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church commits itself to promoting equality among all people, opposing racism in all its forms, working for the healing and health of our community, examining our own practices so they better align with Jesus' vision for the world, and building relationships of trust and solidarity with people in and beyond our congregation so that we may grow together into the people God desires us to be.

Promoting equality among all people.

We believe all people are created in the image of God. This creates both an opportunity and duty for mutual care and interdependence as children of God and members of the same human family. As the Apostle Paul writes, "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). We are therefore called to stand up for the dignity, value, and equality of all persons and especially for those who are being denied them at any time.

Opposing racism in all its forms.

Human history is marred by the consistent and sinful use of difference as a basis for discrimination, rejection, and oppression. Whether it was the Israelites in Egypt, early Christians in Rome, or Jews in Nazi Germany, the story is painfully consistent. But sin is never theoretical. In our current context, that sin expresses itself in the racism that confers benefits and privileges to White, European-descent persons and communities over other races and ethnicities and that has been a particular and oppressive burden for Black, Indigenous, People of Color and their communities. Racism comes in many forms, not only in the actions of one person against another, but also in systems of law, access to health care and economic opportunity, and powerful institutions that touch nearly every aspect of our lives. We are therefore called to reject racism not only in theory but also to dismantle it in practice wherever we find it, especially in our own lives and institutions.

Working for the healing and health of our community.

The Bible's ethical teaching can be summarized in one phrase: "love your neighbor" (Mark 23:31). Through his words and deeds, Jesus showed us that loving those around us, working for their well-being, and giving particular attention to those in need is God's chief desire for us. We are therefore called to strive for the good of our neighbors and the health of our communities, especially those diminished by racism, so that we may be, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "repairers of the breach" (Isaiah 58:12).

Examining our own practices so they better align with Jesus' vision for the world.

Jesus often calls us to "repent" (Mark 1:15), a word that not only implies sorrow over one's actions but actually means to turn around, to walk in a different direction, and to chart a new course. By examining our practices, culture, and institutional relationships with a particular commitment to rid them of racial bias, we have the opportunity to follow Jesus' lead so that we can contribute to establishing a world marked by peace rooted in equity. We are therefore called to an ongoing process of reflection, confession, repentance, repair, and renewal.

Building relationships of trust and solidarity with people in and beyond our congregation.

Lasting social change begins with fostering authentic and meaningful relationships across traditional divides of race, religion, socio-economic status, and perspective. These relationships are built upon mutual trust and marked by solidarity. They take commitment, effort, and vulnerability to establish. We are therefore called to walk into the life-giving future God desires for all people by reaching out to other persons, faith communities, and groups, listening to their stories and sharing our own, so that together we may be open to the vulnerability, mutual understanding, and growth that genuine relationships require.