



BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Lives Matter. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Libertyville acted at its June 2020 meeting to affirm that straightforward and significant statement. Our leaders also initiated an anti-racism task force that will build on actions already underway to demonstrate our commitment to that statement.

This statement for us is an act of spiritual affirmation and solidarity. God created every human being in the image of God. We sin when we neglect or harm that image. Sin compounds upon itself in our relationships. Sin that originated with slavery has afflicted relationships over many generations in our society. Over time it created a pervasive system of racism that uniquely oppresses black people.

Therefore, while we affirm that all people are made equally in the image of God, in these days when systemic racial injustice against black people is being exposed so clearly, we are called to affirm with unique emphasis, “Black Lives Matter.” The wisdom of the Bible’s Book of Ecclesiastes (vs. 3:7b) teaches, there is “a time for keeping silent and a time for speaking.” We believe this is a time to speak and affirm that Black Lives Matter – especially at this moment in history – as an expression of our Christian faith.

We make this affirmation as an act of solidarity with black communities that have chosen this straightforward and unqualified expression as the banner of the moment. Therefore, as the summer begins, we are placing this banner outside of our church and in prominence on our website. In our attachments and on our media, you will find new and continuing actions that further express what this statement means for our Christian community.

This statement is a call for our congregation and our community to pray and commit to actions that will address root causes of racism. This sin afflicts our personal lives, our local lives together, and the life of our wider society. For many of us, the first commitment may be to listen and perceive in a fresh way. But the tragedies of recent days, months, and years press us toward deeper understanding and commitments to anti-racism that will unfold with opportunities through our church in the weeks and months ahead.

Together we have faith that our commitments and conversations about ways Black Lives Matter will deepen our understanding of how God’s love and justice treasures every human life. We invite you to prayerfully consider with us how God is calling us to change our hearts and our lives.

With Faith for the Future,
The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Paulson, Pastor
Moderator of the Session
The First Presbyterian Church of Libertyville



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Immediate Action Steps for Anti-Racism

For Parents/Families—*Raising Anti-Racist Children*

This online series for parents will explore big questions about how to raise anti-racist children. Participants will receive resources to engage on their own (e.g. a podcast, a short article, or a YouTube video) and then we'll have a live Zoom meeting that includes some teaching, some facilitated discussion, and some time to practice strategies for talking to our kids about race. The Zoom gatherings will happen each **Wednesday at 8:30 p.m.**

The first gathering will be **Wednesday, June 24** when we'll discuss: **“How do I begin to talk about race with my children?”** We're planning a 6-week series, but feel free to join us from week to week as you're able—because we know sometimes children make our lives unpredictable! The series will be facilitated by a group of white parents who are also learning how to raise their own children to be anti-racists. [Please sign up online](#), and we'll send you an email each week with details about the upcoming conversation, including a Zoom link.

For Youth—*Dialogues on Race*

Our high school youth are invited to participate in *Dialogues on Race*, a 7-week study exploring racism and racial identity through a Christian lens. The series will begin in July and will be led by Rev. Kara Smith-Laubenstein. Please [fill out the Summer 2020 SHF Survey](#) and check the “Dialogues on Race” box to let us know you're interested in participating.

For Adults—*Films on Racism: Stories that Speak to Our Souls*

This summer we're offering three films to watch from home followed by group discussions. These online discussion groups will not be for the purpose of sharing already formed opinions or persuading others to agree. These will be times of healthy curiosity, reflection, and questions—sharing confusion, frustration, challenges, and new learning. We will ask, “Where is God in all of this?” and “What do we imagine Jesus would think/feel/do after seeing this movie?” The series will be facilitated by Rev. Melanie Hammond Clark, and our first film will be *Just Mercy*. [Sign up online to let us know you're interested](#), and we will follow up soon with additional details about how and when to join a discussion.

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