



Holy Listening and Holy Action: The Work of the Whole Church

*But let justice roll down like waters, and
righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*
Amos 5:24 (NRSV)

We, the Extended Cabinet of the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, receive with humility and gratitude:

- the challenge of our Council of Bishops to “reclaim our baptismal vows to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.” [Council of Bishops Act Now to End Racism](#)
- the mandate of our Southeastern Jurisdictional College of Bishops to engage in “self-examination, to not be silent in the face of racism acknowledging that God calls us individually and collectively to take action.” [Pastoral Letter Southeastern Jurisdiction](#)
- the call from our Bishop, Paul Leeland, to “confess our sins of racism where some have had privileges and benefits that others have been denied.” [Pentecost in a Time of Pandemonium](#)
- the summons to Witness, Protest, and Promise along with our brothers and sisters in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. [Summons to Witness, Protest, and Promise.](#)

We commit ourselves to these challenges and promises as the work of the Church. Empowered and enlivened by the Holy Spirit, the work of the Church is to be fully engaged in the redemptive and restorative ministry of Jesus Christ. Fidelity to our holy vocation involves naming our sin and calling the Church and the world to repentance in the face of the coming Reign of God, liberating the oppressed, seeking reconciliation, making peace, doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. This is the work of the baptized. This is not optional work for just some or for a few and not just for individuals, but also for systems and institutions.

Systemic racism includes institutional policies, procedures, and practices that prevent equity by favoring an empowered people group and disfavoring a disempowered people group by excluding, restricting, exploiting, dehumanizing, and sometimes killing. Confronting and dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy and cooperating with God to build a more holy, just, equitable, and Beloved community is the work of the whole Church.

We believe this is a *Kairos* moment and intend to take the following actions holding one another accountable. We ask the Church to hold us accountable. These action steps are but a beginning and yet we trust that these actions will bear the fruit of repentance and will be a witness of God’s Reign on earth.

UNITED METHODISTS STAND AGAINST RACISM

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1. We will listen. We will learn. We will act.
2. For the next 30 days, we will pray at 8:46 a.m. and 8:46 p.m., reflecting the amount of time the officer held his knee on George Floyd's neck. We will "pray for all persons of color who suffer at the hands of injustice and oppression." We will "pray for our church as we take a stand against racism."
3. We will live fully into and lead others to live fully into the Western North Carolina Conference [Comprehensive Plan of Equity](#).
4. We will read together the book by Linda D. Addo and James H. McCallum *To Be Faithful to Our Heritage: A History of Black United Methodism in North Carolina* to be reminded of and learn from our history.
5. We will partner with the North Carolina and South Carolina Conferences to provide leadership training for all interested Black clergy entitled "A Collaborative COVID-19 Ministry of Self-Care, Social Media Responsibility, & Social Justice for Carolina Black Clergy & the Neighbors They Serve."
6. We will provide the lay and clergy members of our Conference boards, commissions, councils, and teams with training this summer focusing on *Cultural Humility: Planting Seeds for a Lifelong Process*.
7. We will attend and support the Antiracism Ethics Training to be held from 2021-2023.
8. We will plant at least one new multicultural church each year.
9. We will expect that every congregation and every clergy will be engaged in the work of Dismantling Racism, which includes but is not limited to:
 - naming and repenting of our own participation in racism and injustice
 - growing in the knowledge and likeness of Christ through an intentional commitment to spiritual disciplines
 - learning the history of how race and racism have shaped our communities, churches, and nation
 - intentionally listening to the stories and experiences of people of color
 - using any power and privilege we have to hold leaders accountable for addressing systemic racism and injustice and to amplify the voices of those who often go unheard.
10. We will work together so that each district is developing strategies and practices to address systemic racism.
11. We will encourage clergy and congregations to seek partnerships across racial lines and to work together to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
12. We will rekindle our cooperative ministry with our Pan Methodist (AME, AME Zion, CME) brothers and sisters.
13. We will encourage clergy and congregations to build healthy relationships with local law enforcement agencies to seek reconciliation and build and maintain trust to sustain healthy communities.
14. We will provide [resources](#) for congregations and clergy to address racism, white privilege, mass incarceration, and criminal justice reform. Although the United States, through the law, has made strides in eliminating legalized discrimination, we still must work to end policies, procedures, and practices in institutions that practice exclusion and prevent equity.

Bishop Paul Leeland	Linda Kelly
Laura Auten	Mark King
Carl Arrington	Melissa McGill
Michael Bailey	Samuel Moore, Jr.
David Christy	Dan Pezet
Amy Coles	Angela Pleasants
Bev Copley	Mark Ralls
Beth Crissman	David Snipes
Otto Harris	Caroline Wood
David Hockett	Jane Wood
Kim Ingram	