



Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Clergy Statement

As clergy of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ohio, we follow a Christ who invites all to the table. Our symbol is a chalice and we practice communion weekly as an essential sacrament in our church expression.

Part of being a church that welcomes all to the table means that we must provide a hospitable environment for all who come to share in the Eucharist. Hospitality is an essential command in the scriptures. We see it from Abraham's welcoming of angels, throughout the whole of Jesus' ministry with the poor and marginalized, to the author of Hebrews exhorting us to "show hospitality for strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hb 13:2)

For too long, we have been concerned with the comfort of the white church's place at the table. For those of us who represent white church leadership, we repent of moving at the speed of our white comfort and only making the table as hospitable as we have wanted to. We have failed to listen to the truly expansive and radical call that Jesus not only wants everyone invited to the table, but that Jesus demands that we make everyone's seat at the table a safe one!

We believe that the table that Jesus sets and invites us to, the table where we celebrate a sacred and holy meal every Sunday is not a table that is confined to sanctuaries on Sunday morning. The Christ we follow was active in the world and the church that claims to follow Him must be active in the world too!

Jesus lays out a blueprint for his ministry in Luke 4:18-19 when he quotes Isaiah, saying:

18 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

Therefore, as unified clergy, we too choose to bring good news to the poor by advocating for a defunding of the police and a reallocation of those funds to social services, healthcare, education, and community programs that will keep Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) safest.

We too choose to proclaim release to the captives, and will work to stop any new prisons or jails being constructed in our communities, while advocating for increased affordable housing, addiction treatment centers, mental health clinics, and ending homelessness.

For those of us who are white clergy, we commit to dealing with the log of injustice in our own eyes while demanding the removal of the splinters of racial injustice in our society. Black people have been subjected to white violence for far too long and we need to demand that it stop immediately!

For those of us who are Black/Non-White clergy, we commit to continue to speak to the injustices of this society, to let them know that we are “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” We commit to take up the mantle of our forefathers & foremothers to not let their sacrifices be in vain. We commit to demand justice, to demand peace and to demand respect!

As united clergy we sign our names below to state that we will work to let the oppressed go free, which means that we demand that Ohio #DefundPolice and we loudly proclaim that #BlackLivesMatter!

Rev. Cynthia Adcock (Co-Pastor at Northwest Christian Church)

Rev. Dr. Judy A. Alston

Rev. Jim Bane (Co-Pastor at New Horizons)

Rev. Heidi Barham

Rev. Don Barnes

Rev. Thomas Barnes (Senior Pastor at Kemper Road Christian Church)

Rev. William Barnes-Jackson

Rev. Chuck Behrens

Rev. Stephen Bentley (Interim Minister Central Christian Church of Coshocton)

Rev. Karen Binford

Rev. David Brown

Rev. Dr. Eric Brown (Pastor at Woodland Christian Church)

Rev. Dr. Olivia Bryan Updegrave (Ministries Across Generations, Disciples Home Missions)

Rev. Audrey Connor (Chaplain)

Rev. John Cox (Pastor Karl Road Christian Church)

Rev. Chad Delaney

Rev. Alan Dicken (Pastor at Carthage Christian Church and Regional Program Director)

Rev. Michael Doerr

Rev. Nik Donges, Retired (member at Anderson Hills Christian Church, District 12 Elder)

Rev. Nancy Dunn (Interim Minister Parma Christian Church)

Rev. Kristine Eggert, Retired (member of Heights Christian Church & E.D. of God before Guns)

Rev. Matthew Every (Pastor First Christian Church of Bowling Green)

Rev. Rich Ferris (Pastor at Firestone Park Christian Church)

Rev. Steven Gower

Rev. Joseph Hara (Regional Elder, District 1)

Rev. Melanie Harrell Delaney (Bethany Fellows)

Rev. Jeff Jackson

Rev. Priscilla Jackson (Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Team)

Rev. Bev Jenkins, Retired

Leila Jindra (Comissioned Pastor at Christian Temple Disciples of Christ in Lorain)

Rev. April Johnson (Minister of Reconciliation with Reconciliation Ministry Christian Church (Disciples of Christ))

Rev. Karakay Kovaly

Rev. Gail Lindsey-Reed

Rev. Chris McCreight

Rev. Lori McKinley

Rev. Roger McKinney

Rev. Dr. Perry C. Mattern, Retired (member at Compass Christian Church)

Rev. Dr. Roger Meredith

Ali Miguel (Comissioned Pastor at New Horizons)

Rev. David Odell-Scott (member at First Christian Church in Cuyahoga Falls)

Rev. Lauren Odell-Scott (United Christian Ministries – Kent State)
Rev. Joy Omslaer
Rev. Roger Osgood (Senior Pastor at Heights Christian Church & Co-Chair Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Team)
Rev. Gary Proietti (Mansfield)
Rev. Evan Reegie Bunch
Rev. Dawn Remster (Pastor First Christian Church of Zanesville)
Rev. Christopher Rinker (Associate Pastor at Northwest United Methodist Church)
Rev. Jonathan Rumburg (Pastor First Christian Church Stow)
Rev. Marc Runyon (Pastor Central Christian Church in Warren)
Rev. Debbie Saxe
Rev. Christopher Shilling (Pastor First Christian Church of Findlay)
Rev. Glen Schory (Pastor at Central Christian Church of Wooster)
Rev. Harry Shackelford
Rev. Ken Slenkovich (Pastor at Fourth Avenue Christian Church)
Rev. Kevin Smith (Associate Minister at Kemper Road Christian Church)
Rev. Faith Solon (Pastor of Young Adults at Northwest Christian Church)
Anne Sowell (Co-Chair Ohio Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission)
Rev. Seth Stout
Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan (Executive Director Ohio Council of Churches)
Rev. Troy Sybrant (Compass Christian Church)
Rev. Lorenzo Thomas (Chaplain)
Rev. Cynthia Tyson
Rev. Dr. Carol Vaccariello (Dual standing UCC/Disciples)
Rev. Jeffrey Wheeler (Co-Pastor at Northwest Christian Church)
Rev. Norman Witthuhn
Rev. Rebecca Woods (Chaplain, member at Carthage Christian Church)