

We, the session of Vienna Presbyterian Church (VPC), acknowledge that:

- all people are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works;¹
- despite differences, in Christ we form one body, and each member belongs to all the others;² and
- as one body of believers we are called to mourn with those who mourn.³

As such, we recognize and mourn with the brothers and sisters among us who have suffered, and are currently suffering, because of racial division, oppression, crimes, injustices, and inequities. We recognize that this is a sin incompatible with God's plan for those whom he has created in his image,⁴ and a clear violation of his commandment to love one another.⁵

Further, we recognize that racism remains systemically embedded in the fabric of our society; and we repent and accept responsibility for ridding ourselves of the sin of racism by relying on the providence of God, the example of Jesus, the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the powerful platform of the Church for this purpose.

We also recognize that we are experiencing in the United States and globally a moment of kairos— the fullness and ripeness of time – where speaking and acting now would have an outsized effect on future outcomes. In these difficult times we must be quick to listen, slow to speak and resolute in expectations.⁶

We therefore:

1. Affirm that at the center of all of our actions: Jesus is Lord and Scripture is our authority.⁷
2. Pray corporately that God search us and know us,⁸ so that we can see plainly where this sin has infected our hearts, our nation, our families, our systems, our policies, our workplaces, and sadly, even our church communities.
3. Recognize that the Church universal, including VPC, has been silent and/or uninformed about, and sometimes even complicit in, enabling and perpetuating this sin.
4. Repent of our own insensitivity to, and inaction regarding, the spiritual, material, and structural manifestations of racism in our society.
5. Commit to walking the path of discipleship with regard to healing the sin of racism, as we work to become more like Christ.⁹
6. Create a ministry working group charged with providing active assistance to session and VPC in the effort for racial healing and unity in the body of Christ by bringing to session, staff, and the congregation innovative and effective means to further our discipleship in this area.
7. Urge our VPC staff, adult learning communities, small groups, and members to join us in furthering this discussion, and in praying for how this work may be advanced in every area of our life as a congregation.

As we work to become like Christ, together, for the world, we hold onto the hope¹⁰ that VPC, Vienna, and the larger community will be places where all God's children are welcomed, empowered, trusted, and valued fully and equally in God's Kingdom. We ask that the congregation join us as we listen, pray, discuss, and act to further this Kingdom vision at VPC. May God bless and heal our country!

¹ Ephesians 2:10

² Romans 12:5

³ Romans 12:15

⁴ Genesis 1:26-27

⁵ John 13:34

⁶ James 1:19

⁷ Looking specifically on this topic to Micah 6:8; Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:14-21 (read together); Matthew 4:17 (noting Jesus' dual emphasis on repentance and Kingdom); Luke 13:29; Ephesians 2:14-22; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Galatians 3:26-28; Revelation 7:9-12; and Psalm 133:1

⁸ Psalm 139:23

⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁰ 1 Peter 1:3