

## Palms Session Statement on Racial Inequality

We the Session of Palms Presbyterian Church, being called to embody the love and grace of Jesus Christ, lament the sins of racism and violence that persist in our nation and separate people from God and from each other. While our response as a church is rooted in our faith and in Scripture, and not out of allegiance to any political party, ideology, or organization, we should recognize how our Christian witness aligns with those who currently work for justice and a world based on love, reconciliation, and life-affirming peace.

The Presbyterian Church (USA), Special Committee on Racism, Truth and Reconciliation states “recent tragedies have caught the national spotlight; and inequities, racism and unlawful acts happen to Black, Indigenous, and people of color on a daily basis. As followers of Jesus Christ, who loves all and calls us to challenge the unjust structures of church and society, we are called to work for justice and peace for all God’s people.”

The PCUSA antiracism policy approved by the special committee affirms the following: (excerpts follow, the full statement may be found [here](#).)

*While recognizing that racism victimizes many different racial ethnic groups, we acknowledge the unique impact on the African American community. Given the particular forms that anti-black racism has taken the United States of America both historically and today, we state clearly: GOD LOVES BLACKNESS. Too many have denied this basic truth for too long. Our choice to align ourselves with love and not hate requires both a rejection of racism and a positive proclamation that God delights in black lives.*

*We call for our denomination and for society to commit to engaging in the work and practice of elimination of racism.*

*We call the Presbyterian Church (USA) to a season of repentance for its complicity in the horrific history and unjust treatment of people of color, which continues to this day.*

*We call white people to recognize their privilege in society and engage in the work of eliminating racism and racist acts against people of color.*

The session and staff of Palms support this position and statement from PCUSA.

We at Palms are guided by our vision to serve as “bridge builders for a divided world . . . ambassadors for compassion and reconciliation” and “servant leaders for God’s work in a rapidly changing world” daily living into Christ’s commandments and example. We should never succumb to the lure of complacency. We must shine a light on those places where we as individuals, and as a church, can continue to grow into our faith and live out those visions more faithfully and abundantly.

In that regard, we have voted to become a **Matthew 25 Church, a sanctuary of welcome for all people**. There are three areas of key focus. Session will be working toward developing programs and policies to fully embrace our commitment to being a Matthew 25 church.

- **Building congregational vitality** by challenging our members to deepen and energize their faith and grow as joyful leaders and disciples actively engaged with our community, seeing new

disciples engaged in ministry and longstanding believers develop in faith as the gospel of Jesus Christ is shared in word and deed.

- **Dismantling structural racism** by fearlessly applying our faith to advocate and break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
- **Eradicating systemic poverty** by acting on our beliefs and working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.

A copy of the full brochure on Matthew 25 churches can be found [here](#).

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me...'" (Matthew 25: 31-40)*