

The Session of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia urges the Presbytery of Shenandoah to endorse a statement decrying the sins of racism and white supremacy and confessing the ways in which we participate in sinful systems, beliefs, and behaviors:

As Christians living and serving in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, we stand in solidarity with the Charlottesville community, and with communities across the country that have experienced and are experiencing the physical, emotional, and spiritual violence of white supremacy and racism. It is easy to condemn the violence, but more difficult - and more necessary - to recognize our complicity in the sinful systems of white supremacy that have led to it.

We stand in solidarity with our neighbors, and we commit ourselves to eradicating this sin of racism in our lives and in society. We will educate ourselves, confess our sins of omission and commission, and pray for the softening of our hearts and minds to hear and respond to the communities who continue to experience oppression. We will listen to and learn from all members of our family in Christ, which transcends every barrier of race or division. We recognize that all of us are harmed by the hatred of white supremacy and the sin of racism, and we pledge our energies towards reconciliation, which must come through justice and equality for all of God's beloved children.

We further endorse and commend the statement from our denominational leaders:

We give thanks for the presence and faithful witness of church members who stand against white supremacy and racism. Individually and collectively the church, including Presbyterians, stood against hate in Charlottesville. Individually and collectively the church, including Presbyterians, works to disrupt racism and to build racial equity in places across the country. We grieve for Heather Heyer, who was killed while standing witness; we grieve for state police officers H. Jay Cullen and Berke Bates, who died in a helicopter crash while monitoring events in Charlottesville; we pray for the recovery of all who were injured.

We acknowledge that Scripture has been misused to justify white supremacy and racism. However, we proclaim that the Bible's message presents a far more consistent and insistent witness to God's love for diversity and justice. This may be observed in God's delight in the varied creation; heard in the words of prophets who reject oppression and commend justice as true worship; seen in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who values all persons regardless of any aspect of their identity; and experienced through the work of the Holy Spirit, who consistently blows through all the divisions we create, to reveal God's love for all humanity.

White supremacy and racism stand in stark, irreconcilable contradiction to God's intention for humanity. They reject part of the human family and are utterly contrary to God's Word made incarnate in Jesus. They are idolatries that elevate human-created hierarchies over God's freely given grace and love. They are lies about the human family, for they seek to say that some people are less than other people. They are lies about God because they falsely claim that God favors some people over the entirety of creation.

But as we give thanks, we acknowledge the church's complicity in the creation of white supremacy and racism. We confess the church's failure in challenging and disrupting white supremacy and racism. Too often we have accepted the status quo. Too often we have stood silent in the face of injustice and oppression.

By God's grace may we remember the events in Charlottesville; repent of our acquiescence and failures; and renew our commitment to proclaim and live the good news of Jesus Christ. May that commitment

lead us to stand against, speak against and work against racism and white supremacy, this day and every day.

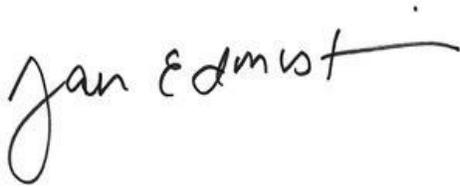
May it be so. Amen.

Handwritten signature of J. Herbert Nelson, II in cursive.

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Handwritten signature of Tony De La Rosa in cursive.

Tony De La Rosa
Interim Executive Director - Presbyterian Mission Agency

Handwritten signature of T. Denise Anderson in cursive.Handwritten signature of Jan Edmiston in cursive.

Rev. T. Denise Anderson & Rev. Dr. Jan Edmiston
Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)