

Reaffirmation of our Commitment to End Racism

Blessed are they who observe justice,
who do righteousness at all times!
- Psalm 106:3

We, as ecumenical staff who have been commissioned to serve as church-wide leaders, had the pleasure of meeting in a spirit of collaboration and prayer on July 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2019, in Montgomery, Alabama – whether in presence or in spirit. During our time we recognized the Quad-Centennial of the forced migration of African peoples from Angola to Jamestown, VA, in 1619 as an event which marked the beginning of a highly tragic period in our nation’s history. Together we shared what our churches and communities have done to dispel the scourge of racism from our land and to acknowledge and denounce the enslavement which dehumanized thousands of people. As we visited the Legacy Museum of the Equal Justice Initiative, we were made more fully aware of the indignities of slavery and the continuation of indignities after emancipation through the enactment and enforcement of prejudicial laws and policies which upheld racial prejudice, white supremacy, and inequity. This experience has motivated us to recommit ourselves to the work of racial equality throughout our land.

We call upon the leaders of our congregations and denominations to do all they can to build a society of tolerance and dignity for all. Our Lord Jesus Christ has called us to “love one another.” This is a love which embraces all human beings without exception. The Legacy Museum in Montgomery offers a lucid portrait of the lived experience of enslaved African American people and its aftermath. We urge all in our congregations to encounter these realities through embarking on a spiritual pilgrimage. Despite the lament of the ominous history of Montgomery as a slave-trade capital of the United States, marks of hope for justice can be found there as one walks in the footsteps of Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Appreciating and answering the call of the Lord to love each other unconditionally, just as our Lord has loved us, we call all to stand against racial discrimination, hatred, and violence, which still plague our country to this day, and stand up for the dignity, rights, and freedom of all.

How very good and pleasant it is
when sisters and brothers live together in unity!
- Psalm 133:1

Signed the following Ecumenical leaders:

- Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith, Senior Associate for Pan African and Orthodox Church Engagement, Bread for the World
- Herman Harmelink III, Ecumenical Officer, International Council of Community Churches
- Hermann Weinlick, Ecumenical Officer, Moravian Church, Northern Province
- Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst, Staff of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church
- Kathryn Mary Lohre, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop, Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- The Rev'd Margaret R. Rose, Ecumenical and Interreligious Deputy to the Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church
- Dr. Monica Schaap Pierce, Ecumenical Associate, The Reformed Church in America
- Nicholas Anton, Director of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
- Rev. Phil Tom, Executive Director, International Council of Community Churches
- Rev. Dr. Walter F. Kedjierski, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops