

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County Statement of Conscience on Racial Justice

In June 2015, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations approved an Action of Immediate Witness calling our congregations to organize to create racial justice, to create learning spaces to transform ourselves and the world. In response to that call, a Racial Justice Task Force was created at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County (UUCMC) to address our concerns regarding the systemic injustice suffered by people of color and others marginalized by race and ethnicity. We observe police brutality going unchecked, mass incarceration, the school-to-prison pipeline, the degradation of voting rights, human rights violations of immigrants and refugees, and the targeting of Muslims as symptoms of deep-seated racial injustice. As Unitarian Universalists, we strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations and we view the violation of these principles as a call to action to create justice for all.

We, the members of UUCMC, commit to understand how racism serves to perpetuate white privilege and the resulting economic, educational, housing and judicial disparities between whites and people of color. As individuals, the commitment to racial justice requires a re-education that includes admitting our country's history of violence; seeking out the histories of those who are missing from the accepted narrative; attending to the unspoken messages in media. Self-education about privilege includes listening more than speaking, receiving meaning instead of delivering opinion, and acknowledging and assessing our discomforts. We are committing to open our hearts and minds to a deeper understanding of the ways that black lives are too often disrespected, and to affirming and promoting that Black Lives really do Matter.

We, the members of UUCMC, affirm the need to take personal responsibility for stopping racial injustice and for building new roles, practices, shared values and relationships to counteract the effects of inequity. We commit to take notice and name the problems we see, and to actively work for change. Our work for an open and diverse society free of racial injustice must include support for:

- Equitable tax systems, fair wages and benefits;
- Universal access to adequate housing, social services, child care, education, health care, legal services, financial services, and transportation;
- Improved policing and criminal justice practices;
- Cessation of mass incarceration of people of color;
- Enforcement of the Voting Rights Act to ensure equal access to the electoral process;
- Immigration reform, with a path to citizenship.

As Unitarian Universalists, we have a religious and moral obligation to challenge complacency in ourselves and in our communities. Our history teaches that social change does not come easily and is not without risk. Nevertheless, let us recommit to justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Let us embrace our responsibility to help create a more just world. Let us continue to reflect and organize for action within our congregation and beyond our doors. Unitarian Universalists and our greater society have the power to create positive change for racial justice. Let's do this!

Approved by congregational vote: March 20, 2016