

Service of Justice and Prayer

*in Response to the Racism and White Supremacy in Charlottesville
used in worship at CAPC Oakland on July 21, 2019*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**All Gracious God,
 our sins are too heavy to carry,
 too real to hide,
 and too deep to undo.
 Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
 What our hearts can no longer bear,
 And what has become for us
 a consuming fire of judgment.**

**Set us free from a past that we cannot change;
Open to us a future in which we can be changed;
and grant us grace
to grow more and more in your likeness and image;
through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.**

Assurance of Pardon

* What We Believe

God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, God overcomes the barriers between sisters and brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize others, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess.

—The Confession of 1967

* What We Believe

The PC(USA) affirms that racism violates God's purpose for humanity and is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the PC(USA) recognizes that racism is a sin. The PC(USA) is committed to spiritually confronting the idolatry and ideology of White

supremacy and White privilege. The PC(USA) confesses its complicity in the creation and maintenance of racist structures and systems in all parts of our nation's life, including the church itself.

The PC(USA) rejoices in its witness of resistance to racism provided by past and current PC(USA) leaders and individuals and echoed by congregations and governing bodies. The PC(USA) recognizes that it has not spoken boldly enough, nor acted courageously or creatively enough in response to racism.

In Jesus Christ, God frees us to love and teaches us, through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, how to live as a family. We are led by the Holy Spirit to participate in transforming personal lives, dismantling institutional racism, healing racial prejudice and hatred, and building "The Beloved Community" for all of God's children.

— Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community

* What We Believe

We believe in one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit,
who gathers, protects and nourishes the Church
from the beginning of the world to the end.

**The Church is holy; the Church is universal;
it is the fellowship of God's children,
called together from the whole of humanity
to proclaim God's wonderful deeds.**

We believe that the reconciling work of Christ
gives birth to a uniting Church,
because Church unity is a gift from God
and a goal we need to strive for.

**The unity of the Church must become visible
so that the people around us can see
how separation and hatred are overcome in Christ.**

We believe that genuine faith in Jesus Christ
is the only condition for membership in this Christian church.

**We praise God that race, class, gender, or culture
does not determine who belongs to this Church.**

We believe that God has entrusted to the Church
the message of reconciliation;
and that the Church is called
to proclaim and embody this reconciliation;
to be peacemakers;
and to believe and to witness that God conquers all powers
of sin and death, of hate, bitterness and enmity,
through his life-giving Word and Spirit.

**We praise God that the gospel does not separate people
on the basis of race, gender, class, or culture,
but is the power of reconciliation in Christ.**

We believe that God wants to bring about true justice
and lasting peace on earth;
we believe that God is, in a special sense,
the God of the suffering, the poor and the downtrodden.

**We praise God who gives justice to the oppressed
and bread to the hungry;
who sets captives free and makes the blind to see;
who protects strangers, orphans and widows
and obstructs the plans of the wicked.**

We believe that the Church belongs to God
and that it should stand where God stands:
against injustice and with those who are wronged
**We commit ourselves to reject all forms of injustice
in ourselves and amongst us;
and to struggle against all forms of injustice
and every teaching that allows injustices to flourish.**

We are called to confess and to do all this
in obedience to Jesus Christ, our only Lord,
even if authorities or laws oppose this,
even if punishment and suffering may be the consequence.
Jesus is Lord! We will follow Him!
**To the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory for ever and ever.**

—The Confession of Belhar