

JOHN CALVIN *Presbytery*

P. O. Box 787
Shell Knob, Missouri 65747

June 12, 2020

To the Congregation of Gibson Chapel and All Members of John Calvin Presbytery but especially those who are people of color.

We, the General Council of John Calvin Presbyter, are committed to dismantling structural racism in all its forms.

The belief that being white imbues people with superior skills, talents, and worth was woven into the founding of our nation. The atrocities committed in the name of white supremacy are numerous. From the evil of the decimation of native cultures, to slavery, to the Asian anti-immigration policies and the detaining of Japanese Americans, and the vilification of our Latinx brothers and sisters, our nation has a poor track record of honoring the beautiful diversity of humanity that God created and called good.

Unfortunately, the PC(USA) and our individual congregations have often accepted the cultural norms and acted in ignorance.

We are the Church Reformed and always being reformed by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is our sincere hope that we will truly be reformed in this time of social upheaval.

To that end we do sincerely apologize for every instance of racism in which we participated either intentionally or by omission.

We ask that all our congregants repent of our implicit bias against people who do not look like us. We ask that each one take into account their own hearts that we may indeed become one family under God.

We repent of our sins against our brothers and sisters of color who have suffered from racial inequalities and systems that value white lives over theirs. We strive to make equality a matter of the heart and not a slogan of platitudes.

We commit to working to reform our beliefs and our actions to more closely reflect God's amazing love for all people. In so much as it is possible we ask that you pray for us to be shaped by the love of God to embrace all people whom God has made.

We have already begun work as a Matthew 25 presbytery. Many congregations have already committed to dismantling structural racism, but we pledge to do more.

General Council has also empowered a task force to focus our efforts in growing toward a better future in our relationships. We will also commit to revisiting this issue as a Presbytery through the coming years. It is our hope that we will change our hearts, minds, and spirits to more closely follow Christ. It is our intent to move forward in a way that creates real and meaningful progress as we are led by the Holy Spirit

We hope that you will accept our apology and work with us. We are praying for you in this time of crisis and for the times of crisis you have faced repeatedly. We refuse to simply repent without action. It is indeed sinful to hold one person in higher esteem than another. May we indeed further the idea that we are all equal in the eyes of God and each other.

We are honored that you are part of this Presbytery.

In Christ's Love,

Reverend Jennifer Dawson, General Council Moderator