



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Statement of Lament & Commitment to Action

As people of faith in community at Saint Mark's Cathedral, we acknowledge our sins and our failure as Church, and as individuals, both past and present, to respect the dignity of every human being, especially BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color); LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual); and other marginalized communities. We have fallen short of our commitments as Christians and recommit to work with focus and intention to live into right relationship with each other and all creation as followers of Jesus.

We acknowledge we are a diverse community of people with different ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds and different ways of being in ourselves and in the world. When we speak of injustices, not everyone among us has experienced or contributed in the same way. We especially recognize that among us are people who have been directly harmed by this community itself and to whom we are lamenting our blindness, actions, and inactions, and committing to work to change.

Saint Mark's Cathedral reaffirms its commitment to respect the dignity of every human being, strive for justice and peace among all people, and seek and serve Christ in all persons. We recommit our resolve to condemn the discriminatory and violent discourse and actions in our nation that target particular groups of people based on their skin color, their religious affiliation, their gender or orientation, their disabilities, or their country of birth. We must do better, and we pledge to be a network of faithful and prayerful learners, listeners, and activists, in God's name, joining others who similarly pledge to look beyond our own blinders and pursue justice.

We Lament.

- ◆ **We lament** the Church's role in the stealing of ancestral lands and subjugation, enslavement, and genocide of societies of Indigenous peoples, including Native Americans and Pacific Islanders.
- ◆ **We lament** the Church's role in profiting from the sin of slavery, the selling, trading, and genocide of people of African descent—and where the Church has been a spectator and participant in public and private lynching, and creation of laws and systems of harm, with lasting effects to this day.
- ◆ **We lament** the Church's complicity-by-silence in the commoditization, dehumanization, and belittling of peoples brought to this country to toil in brutal labor, including Latinx people, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and other immigrant and undocumented people.
- ◆ **We lament** the Church's complicity in the historical exclusion, incarceration, and denial of civil rights of Asians and Pacific Islanders.
- ◆ **We lament** the Church's complicity in failing to honor the language, culture, and civil rights of Latinx people, both American citizens and those from other countries.

- ◆ **We lament** the Church's complicity in the historical and ongoing physical, psychological, and spiritual attacks, social exclusion, dehumanization, and denial of civil rights of our LGBTQIA+ siblings and the ongoing effects of these actions still present today.
- ◆ **We lament** the systems of white supremacy, white exceptionalism, white privilege, and the patriarchal, misogynistic, cisgender, heteronormative, and ableist ways present in the Church that have caused and condoned people to be viewed as less, inferior, or unworthy rather than as all equally beloved children of God, made in the image of the Divine.
- ◆ **We lament** the Church's silence in the face of violence against women. We lament the Church's suppression of women and failure to rightfully recognize, accept, and promote women in Church leadership and ministry.
- ◆ **We lament** the collusion of the Church with white nationalism and systems that directly and indirectly promote racism, oppression, segregation, and disenfranchisement and the historical, and continued, misuse of our sacred texts to uphold and promote injustice.
- ◆ **We lament** the ways in which the stories of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities have been diminished or erased from the histories of our churches, institutions, and communities of faith.
- ◆ **We lament** the willful blindness of Christian leadership in promoting and advocating for systems of over-policing, the militarization of police, mass incarceration, school-to-prison pipelines, poverty, and violence.
- ◆ **We lament** the Church's lack of moral courage to forcefully stand with and on the side of the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed, and our failure to recognize, affirm, and honor them as siblings in and members of our own churches.
- ◆ **We lament** the resounding silence and crippling fear that often infects the Church in matters of racial reconciliation and social justice.
- ◆ **We lament** the lack of inclusion of BIPOC people in high offices of the Church and the ways that finds local expression.
- ◆ **We lament** our hubris of dominion and consumption rather than grateful and loving stewardship of the Earth that has led us to abuse creation, causing lasting harm to our home and every living thing. We further lament that the consequences disproportionately disenfranchise and cause egregious harm to the most vulnerable and marginalized, especially BIPOC communities.

We Commit to Action.

1. We will strive to go deeper in faith.

We commit to read, study, and work to live the words of Jesus: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* We must seek both courage and humility as we lament and respond to injustice.

2. We will strive to listen, especially to those in our own community who have experienced wrongs at our lips and hands.

We will invite into dialogue, engage, and include in decision-making voices who have not been present at the table, intentionally listening to those with whom we may disagree, as we

seek safe and sacred spaces for hearing and validating each other's stories, pains, fears, and hopes.

3. We will grow and learn.

We will work to adopt an intersectional approach in all aspects of our common life, remembering that all forms of oppression are connected. We look to educate ourselves, and share with others, the many places where our privilege blinds us from being compassionate to others.

4. We will strive to lift up truth.

We will hold ourselves accountable to replace fear and lies with facts about immigrants, refugees, Muslims, and other faiths and traditions.

5. We will reject White Nationalism, including the way it has subverted the Gospel of Jesus, and we will defend the rights of members of all faiths.

We will name acts of individual and institutional racism and oppression, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim rhetoric, xenophobia, and American exceptionalism as sins. We believe all people are made in God's image, equally beloved of God. We denounce the defamation and banning of Muslims or any religious group.

6. We will love our neighbors by standing against bullying, attacks, and hate speech—and all the ways that fear and “othering” are spread—both within and outside ourselves and our community.

We will hold ourselves accountable to identify, report, and confront hate speech and behavior—against all religious groups, women, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and all marginalized groups. We will educate ourselves about bullying in schools and youth settings and create safe places for children and youth to be supported in their God-given racial, ethnic, and gender identities and sexual orientations. Our church must stand as a sanctuary and haven for people threatened by those who would attack them.

7. We will welcome the stranger, as Scripture demands.

We will offer Sanctuary to and advocate for immigrants and their families and we will block, interfere with, and obstruct the deportations of immigrants in our broader community, all of us one human family.

8. We will expose and oppose racial injustice.

We will join with other local organizations and faith communities to struggle and speak out against the denial of civil liberties, voter suppression, racial profiling, and over policing when we see it and when the leaders of our communities of color call it out to our unseeing eyes.

9. We will work to end misogyny and objectification that enables sexism and a culture of sexual violence.

Gender fairness and equality must be fundamental principles in all parts of our society including the Church. We will work to replace misogyny and objectification with mutual respect. We will name sexual assault for what it is—a sin and a crime—and maintain zero-tolerance and disciplinary policies.

10. We will fight for climate justice and protection of our environment.

We will recognize the prior claim to and stewardship of the lands on which our cathedral and diocese are located as belonging to Native peoples. As subsequent and shared stewards of our land, air, water, and vital natural resources, we will stand with others in broad coalition

to preserve all precious resources. We will work to reverse the troubling trends of human-caused climate change—and the disproportionate effect on the vulnerable, particularly BIPOC communities.

11. We will engage with our best values.

We will defend the dignity of every human being. When called to stand up, we will dialogue, debate, and protest with dignity, discipline, and non-violence, not with hate for hate.

12. We will work to make our commitment to diversity and inclusion a visible reality.

We will develop, adopt, and implement standards, policies, and practices in our Church to serve as roadmaps as we continually align our intentionality with our daily lived actions. We will support local businesses that are owned and operated by underrepresented and BIPOC proprietors. We will work to broaden the diversity of the leadership of our Church to include the many diverse faces of the body of Christ, and will discern with our BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, non-English speakers, and differently abled siblings where and how we can authentically reflect diversity in our worship and other activities.

We make these laments and commitments to you, and with you.

Saint Mark's Cathedral community offers sustenance for the journey, resources for learning, safe space for dialogue, and opportunities for prayerful resistance and action, as we seek forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing together. Join us as we engage this work, in God's name.

Including adaptations from *A Covenant to Root Out Racism*
by The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson, Bishop of Missouri, 2020

Adopted by the Vestry of Saint Mark's Cathedral Parish
Seattle, Washington
May 25, 2021