



# Central Presbyterian Church

46 PARK STREET

Rev. David C. Noble, Pastor

MONTCLAIR, NJ 07042

(973) 744-5340

CPC.Office@verizon.net

www.CentralPresbyterian.net

## Statement to Our Congregation and Community on Justice and Reconciliation From the Session of Central Presbyterian Church April 20, 2021

Central Presbyterian Church has long supported justice and reconciliation as integral to its mission and ministry. Twenty years ago, Central recognized the injustice and prejudice that the LGBT community was experiencing, and as a result enrolled as a member in the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, an organization of congregations across the country that are committed to “seeking equity for LGBTQIA+ persons in church and society as an act of generous hospitality and faithful justice.”

Now, having carefully and prayerfully considered recent written requests from numerous members of Central Presbyterian Church, and in this time of intense and widespread examination of inequality and injustice, the Session feels it is appropriate to make a more public statement by approving the placement of signage outside the front of the church asserting support for Black lives and for LGBT lives, along with others who regularly experience injustice and disrespect. Session considers this injustice and disrespect to be both systemic and personal, the result of intentional or unintentional assumptions by our society and/or individuals.

This is meant to be a public witness to justice and respect based on Christian faith as well as a call to Central Presbyterian Church to not only be aware of the issue in our community but also to be re-dedicated to creating an environment in our diverse congregation where “all are welcome.” We approached this as a matter of faith, not politics. It was seen as an important witness to who Jesus is. The following considerations informed the decision:

- Mark 12.13 Jesus reminds his disciples to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no greater commandment.
- Luke 6.20-26 Jesus recognizes specific persons and groups of people who especially deserve God’s blessing- the poor, the hungry, and those who weep, among others.
- Ephesians 5.1 We are to be imitators of God and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.
- Matthew 3.13-17 Jesus submitted to the same baptism as ours in order to be in human solidarity with us and to show he is here for us. We are likewise to be in solidarity with others in need.

(over)

*Look for the tall steeple and the open door.*

- Luke 4.16-20 Jesus declares his intention to set the oppressed free.
- 1 John 3.16 Just as Jesus laid down his life for us we should do the same for each other.
- Mark 1.40-42 Healing begins when Jesus recognizes harm has been done.
- Luke 4.20-30 Jesus preaches the gospel, knowing it (and he) will be resisted.
- Amos 5.15 God's people are called to establish justice.
- PCUSA Belhar Confession (10.5) That the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- Central's Statement of Faith Includes the words, "provide service in ministry to each other, our diverse community, and the world."

Therefore, the Session of Central Presbyterian Church, as a witness to the good news of Jesus Christ, and to proclaim that same good news to its community as well as affirm to its own members that all are deserving of justice and peace, does direct that banners be placed in front of the church to communicate this message to all who might see it. And the Session encourages the congregation to not only affirm the good news of God's justice and peace but also to continue to move forward with learning and action related to these topics so that Central Presbyterian Church may be seen and known as a diverse and welcoming community of believers who more and more seek God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

In Christ,

Brian Cattell  
 Neal Day  
 David George  
 Mark Johansen  
 Emma Justice  
 Cecil Mitchell  
 Frederick Moulongo, Clerk of Session  
 Erin Norton  
 Lynn Selassie  
 David Noble, Moderator of Session

*The banners will be hung at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 25 at the church. All are welcome to attend outside the sanctuary.*