

The Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ presents this Resolution of Witness for consideration and adoption by the Central Atlantic Conference 57th Annual Meeting October 12-16, 2021

United Church of Christ Witnessing “A White Supremacy Free Zone”

1 Leviticus 19.4 says, “Do not turn to idols or make cast images for yourselves: I
2 am the Lord your God.”

3 We exist in a world where there is idol worship. An idol is an object made into
4 something of extreme devotion; a person or thing that is declared sacred or holy;
5 a representation of an object or person as something with perceived powers; a
6 false god; something that great reverence is placed upon and is the object of
7 worship. Many things that surround us are idols.

8 For our purposes here we are focused upon the idol called white supremacy.
9 Being white does not possess any inherent superiority other than the superiority
10 that is bestowed upon the concept by force, laws, myth, institutions and ethos.
11 Being white has no power other than the powers maintained through brute force,
12 the establishment of laws and traditions that maintain institutions, and the
13 accepted narratives used to advance and affirm so-called superiority.

14 As people of faith, rooted in the gospel of justice, we are admonished to tear
15 down the idols that keep us from the simple but true worship of God. Jesus
16 teaches his followers, in the wisdom words of old, to “love God with all your
17 heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind and to love your neighbor
18 as yourself.” We are taught to strip away the things that hinder us in relating to
19 one another with respect, regard and sacred love. We are being taught to rid
20 ourselves of the idols created by human beings for the purposes of control and
21 power. Racism and white supremacy are some of those idols constructed for the
22 purposes of power and greed.

23 In this historic moment we are faced with the idols of white idolatry, racism,
24 hatred, and greed. Hatred has been nurtured and fostered in these last few years
25 to such a degree that if we thought we were rendering it to a relic of the past we
26 were sorrowfully mistaken. White idolatry has been elevated to levels of such a
27 grave danger, and its worshippers have been aggressively engaged in a crusade
28 to raise up the idols that it is apparent that something must be done differently to
29 challenge white idolatry. We are proposing a witness that will help to challenge
30 the resurgence and comfort of the idolizing of whiteness.

31 “Black Lives Matter” has become a mantra attempting to stir awake the white
32 community and invite non-Black allies to stand in solidarity with the struggles of
33 Blackness, but in spite of the declaration that “Black Lives Matter,” the atrocities

34 of white Idolatry, racial profiling, and extra-judicial killings continue. Black Lives
 35 Matter banners have been ripped down and vandalized at white houses of
 36 worship, and white idolatrous groups have attacked Black houses of worship for
 37 bearing the banners and these acts makes it apparent that to declare “Black
 38 Lives Matter” is not enough!

39 While we genuinely appreciate expressions of solidarity and witness, whites in all
 40 their liberal and progressive ideology and theology have not effectively
 41 challenged the infrastructure or comfort of white idolatry. It is important that if
 42 white idolatry is to be challenged, given that it is a white problem, whites must put
 43 some skin in the game and take on a different kind of commitment and posture.
 44 Though it is important for non-Black allies to express solidarity, it is more
 45 important that white communities and houses of worship challenge the white
 46 community, and white enclaves with expressions that will bring discomfort, cause
 47 congregations and people to truly grapple with whiteness and white idolatry by
 48 declaring in banners and other public expressions in communities where whites
 49 live and worship that this is “A White Supremacy Free Zone.”

50 When you think about where United Church of Christ congregations exist, it is
 51 generally in white neighborhoods – suburban, urban and rural – and those white
 52 enclaves where the bulk of UCC congregations exist have a tokenistic color mix
 53 at best. Therefore, for the white community and white congregations to begin the
 54 deconstruction of white idolatry it must be forced into the discussion, making
 55 well-meaning white institutions and people to grapple with their own communities
 56 and the aid and comfort offered to white idolatry. To raise the issue, and to make
 57 the issue not about Blacks but about whites is how white idolatry/supremacy is
 58 challenged and stands any chance of being deconstructed.

59 This call for houses of worship, white United Church of Christ congregations,
 60 UCC congregations and institutions in general to declare their communities and
 61 settings as “A White Supremacy Free Zone” is to take away the quiet
 62 existence of racism and white idolatry and forces the issue into the communities
 63 in which UCC houses of worship exist. Declaring “We are confronting white
 64 supremacy” and publicly expressed forces the discussion and takes away the
 65 comfortable existence of white idolatry.

Acknowledgements:

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