

AKRON  CANTON

# PARKSIDE GREEN

1 TIMOTHY 1:15

## The Gospel and Racism

We affirm our commitment to the unchanging truth that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ as stated in the Scriptures and affirmed in our doctrinal statement:

1. We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:23, 5:12-21, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3).
2. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to the virgin Mary. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of his shed blood (Matthew 1:18; John 1:14, 3:16; Romans 5:1, 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
3. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life. We are saved by faith alone apart from works, but genuine faith leads to good works (John 1:12, 3:5-8; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).

As followers of Christ and believers in the Gospel, we affirm our call to reflect the gospel by loving all of our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39; Luke 10:25-37). Racism, flagrantly violates Jesus' "golden rule" that "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12). We also affirm that God created every person, 100% of humans, equally in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27; James 3:9-10).

Therefore, we acknowledge and affirm the following:

1. Our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked, and so we ask God to search our hearts and to show us ways in which we have not rightly loved our neighbors as ourselves due to the color of their skin or any other reason. As the Lord shows us these areas, may we repent and seek forgiveness from those we have wronged or offended (Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 19:12-13, 139:23-24).
2. As believers we are called to stand up for those who have suffered injustice and oppression of any kind, including racial injustice and racial oppression. For this reason, we lament and stand against past and present realities of racial injustice and oppression in the U.S. and the Church (Psalm 82:3; Proverbs 31:9; Micah 6:8; Matthew 23:23).

3. As followers of Christ, we should be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. We desire to display wisdom, empathy, and charity in our relationships with other people, including those who may have experiences and viewpoints different than our own (Proverbs 18:2; Colossians 3:12-14; James 1:19).
4. We are called as believers to emulate God by not showing favoritism. So, we desire to be a church where God's people from every race and nation feel loved and belong. We reject any theology or philosophy which promotes the superiority of one race over another (Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Acts 10:34-35; James 2:1-9).
5. We anticipate and long for an eternity when believers from every nation, tribe, people, and language will worship God together in complete unity. We are committed to working for and reflecting this unity in our local body (Ephesians 4:3-6; Philippians 2:1-2; Revelation 7:9-10).

The gospel has the unique power, through the Spirit, to break down divisions between people of different ethnicities and to unite them in Christ. In the first century, the gospel united Jews and Gentiles as one in Christ, bringing peace and reconciliation to those who historically had been estranged (Galatians 3:26-28, Ephesians 2:11-22, Colossians 3:11). In the twenty-first century, the gospel gives God's people, including us at Parkside Church Green, power and hope as we seek racial unity in Christ.