

# Recommendation

**The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy overtures the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022) to offer *AN APOLOGY TO AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY* and to approve the following statements:**

1. That the PC(USA) and its members, in the spirit of the CONFESSIO OF BELHAR as a framework for considering matters of truth, unity and reconciliation acknowledge that:

White supremacy is a conscious, calculated effort to perpetuate and institutionalize white supremacy and privilege through legal systems as well as economic and physical intimidation. After the Civil War, white Americans controlled economic and political systems that resulted in lynching, Jim Crow Laws, Black Codes, white citizens' councils, slavery through incarceration, poverty, racial profiling, the school to prison pipeline, and mass incarceration; all intended to harm or further enslave African Americans. Even today we continue to prolong racial inequality through codifying white supremacy. As white Presbyterians we apologize for being complicit for the last 400 years in perpetuating these injustices.

We recognize as people of faith that the only appropriate path to healing and reconciliation is to acknowledge the wrongs that we, the Presbyterian Church, as part of the institutional church structure, were and are complicit in perpetuating. This was done through interpretation of selected scriptures and rationalization to justify human bondage and perpetuate white supremacy and privilege. We apologize for this transgression.

We acknowledge that Black lives have been devalued beginning with slavery and their human dignity continues to be circumvented through the economic and legal systems that are racist as institutions. We apologize for benefiting from and continuing to be part of this social, economic, and legal construct. We recognize that the presence and persistence of racism in ourselves and our institutions is the result of the sin of slavery.

We recognize the necessity of building a trusting relationship between White Americans and African Americans. A first step to healing and reconciliation can only be done by acknowledging that slavery is the economic, artistic, and religious foundation on which this country is built.

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A apologizes to African Americans both in the church and outside of the church for all the wrongs that have been done throughout our history and those that are on-going.

2. That the PC(USA), in the spirit of Christ in John 13: 35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" and 1 John 4: 12 "No one has ever seen

God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and God's love is perfected in us" (NRSV), adopt and use:

### **A LITANY OF REPENTANCE**

As white Christians we repent of our complicity in the belief in white supremacy: the belief that people of European descent are superior in intelligence, skills, imagination, and perseverance. We acknowledge that this belief in white supremacy has been the foundation of, and an excuse for, atrocities against people of African descent in the United States and in the world.

We repent of our failure to recognize and take responsibility for the legacy of slavery.

We repent of the injustice, pain, humiliation, and suffering imposed on African Americans by our ancestors and ourselves through actions and inaction. We repent of our complicity in failing to act in mutual loving relationship.

We repent of closing our eyes to the degradation and injustice forced upon African Americans who were enslaved, segregated, terrorized, and imprisoned.

We repent of covering our ears to the crying of families torn apart, to the sound of human flesh being struck, while songs of freedom and heavenly grace flow from our lips.

We repent that we have failed as an institution and as individuals to use our voices to abhor and end lynching, segregation, and racial profiling. We regret our generations of silence on these issues so that we could maintain a comfortable life in our churches, homes, and communities.

We repent of shutting our hearts to the experiences of fellow humans whose stories of pain, suffering, hardship, struggle, love and joy mirror our own life journeys, yet are deprived of privilege and marred by racism. We have turned our backs and walked away pretending not to see, yet we saw, pretending not to know, yet we knew, and convincing ourselves that we were not complicit, yet we are.

We now know that we as white Christians have benefitted directly and indirectly from these injustices. We name ourselves as complicit and repent.

Finally, we repent of our violent actions to suppress Black agency. African Americans, since the time of slavery, have actively pursued their freedom...built this country...laid foundational structures...and demonstrated their capacity to fully participate in the construction of this American society in spite of white supremacy.

As repentance means turning and going the other way, with Christ's help we seek to do so. At the same time, we commit ourselves to walking with people of African

descent toward the goal of healing, reconciliation, and eliminating racism as we seek to dismantle white privilege.

Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to share this apology with all of the congregations of the PC(USA) on behalf of the denomination. The means of sharing this apology shall be coordinated with the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) and the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation (SCRTR).

3. Therefore, we recommend that the PC(USA) act on the following concerns:
  - Direct the PC(USA) and the Office of Public Witness to refute arguments and new laws that prohibit the teaching of a fully-inclusive history of the United States. God commanded the people to remember the difficult times in their history, the mistakes they would rather forget. “Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation.” (Joel 1:3, NRSV)
  - Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk to develop curriculum about slavery and its legacy for children, youth and adults to foster repentance that leads to metanoia (“a transformative change of heart”) with the assistance of a qualified consultant, and to designate appropriate budget resources. The purpose of this curriculum is spiritual change that leads to apology, reconciliation, and acts of restorative justice including reparations. In this way the PCUSA might further the growth of “beloved community” in our midst.
  - Encourage congregations, presbyteries, and synods to prepare a history of their community to facilitate and deepen their study and understanding of these issues and to share the resources they find helpful in that preparation with the larger church.
  - Commit the PCUSA to restorative justice/reparations and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk to provide tools and budget resources for congregations, presbyteries, and synods to enact restorative justice measures in their communities that will close gaps in economics, health, education, environmental well-being, and the criminal justice system created out of the legacy of slavery and white supremacy. These gaps have existed since our development as a country and still exist today.
4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to share this apology with the National Council of Churches.
5. Direct the General Assembly to commend this apology to the entire PC(USA) in all its expressions for their use in the work of reconciliation among all peoples.

# Rationale

When reviewing the 2016 PCUSA Curriculum on Racism, the Giddings-Lovejoy Dismantling Racism and White Privilege Team noticed it named the need for repentance and jumped to reconciliation. Yet as an African-American member pointed out, an apology is necessary before reconciliation is possible. Thus Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery approved *AN APOLOGY TO OUR AFRICAN AMERICAN SISTERS AND BROTHERS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY* in its February 2020 Presbytery meeting as the needed missing piece. We present now to General Assembly *AN APOLOGY TO AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY* to make whole a good work already begun.

## **Biblical and Theological Underpinnings for Apology Overture**

<sup>23</sup> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. – Matt. 5:23-24 NRSV

<sup>16</sup> So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. <sup>17</sup> So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived! <sup>18</sup> All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. <sup>19</sup> In other words, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, by not counting people's sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, "Be reconciled to God!"  
~ 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 CEB

"The Spirit enables people to receive forgiveness as they forgive one another and to enjoy the peace of God as they make peace among themselves. In spite of their sin, the Spirit gives people power to become representatives of Jesus Christ and his gospel of reconciliation to all. ~ Confession of 1967, 9.20, *Book of Confessions*

<sup>27</sup> All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. - Galatians 3:27-28 CEB

"One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, 'Hear, O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your

mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." -Mark 12:28-31 NRSV

### **We trust in God the Holy Spirit**

**[who] gives us courage**

**to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,**

**and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.**

~ *Brief Statement of Faith*, lines 52, 66, 70, 71, *Book of Confessions*

### **We believe**

- “that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation...a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought...;
- that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways;
- that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another....
- that the credibility of this message [of reconciliation] is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity....
- that God has revealed God’s self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people....”

~ *The Confession of Belhar*, from 10.3, 10.5, 10.7, *The Book of Confessions*

The Confession of 1967 gave the church an agenda of action items in a section entitled RECONCILIATION IN SOCIETY. There follow rich paragraphs describing the work to be done in the areas of · racism, · international peace, · poverty, · gender. In paragraph a, the church confessed;”

“The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it.” *BofC* 9.44

However, a critical step has been omitted: a confession by participants of their complicity, either overtly or unconsciously, in the very problems described. Gifts continue to be brought to the altar, but reconciliation demands that those who have benefitted from the injustice, even if not obviously taking part, apologize for their participation. Without the honest reckoning with past behavior, the tendency is to want to rush from an unpleasant present to a utopian future without apologizing for a destructive past. Cries for redress of past wrongs, for example, The Black Manifesto of 1969, were not heard and true progress was not made. Especially the events of recent years and months have put the problems created by centuries of racial injustice into stark relief and it is past time to be held accountable for the past wrongs, to confess our

sin through apology to those who have suffered because of our sins and those of our forebears, and to seek ways to genuinely reconcile with one another. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, “Few are guilty but all are responsible.”

### **WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:**

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

– Frederick Douglass 1857.

The Doctrine of Discovery was proclaimed by Pope Nicolas V in a 1452 letter to Portuguese King Alfonso V. It gave Alfonso the right to enslave into perpetuity “Saracens (Muslims) and pagans and any other unbelievers.” This facilitated the Portuguese slave trade from West Africa. Three years later, in 1455, Pope Nicholas V wrote to Alfonso again, giving him his blessing to claim the lands of “other unbelievers.” So, it is not surprising that enslaved Africans were brought to North America as early as 1619 to labor on lands claimed under this doctrine. The U.S. Supreme Court in **1823 upheld that doctrine.**

When Presbyterians began immigrating to the Colonies, slavery was already established and some Presbyterians became enslavers. Since then, a tension has existed in the Presbyterian church over condoning or condemning white supremacy and privilege.

- Reverend Francis Makemie, an enslaver, organized the first American presbytery in 1706.
- During the **1740 and 50's** Samuel Davies, an enslaver and educator, held that enslavement was ordained by God, but also championed their literacy and spiritual welfare. In contrast, George Bryan, a Philadelphia Presbyterian leader in the 1750's, was an abolitionist. During the American revolutionary era, it was natural that Presbyterian Colonists would be more questioning of the morality of enslavement.
- In **1776**, Jacob Green, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Hanover New Jersey, asked: “Can it be believed that a people contending for liberty should, at the same time, be promoting and supporting Slavery?” Abolitionist Presbyterian George Bryan helped pass a 1780 colonial Pennsylvania law mandating gradual emancipation.

As the Colonial Period ended, slavery was on the wane in the Northern Colonies, but entrenched in the Southern ones. The Presbyterian Church straddled that divide.

During the periods of the Confederation and the early United States, enthusiasm for abolishing slavery continued. The Presbyterian Church's general assembly spoke against enslavement several times. However, reform was quickly mired down over two issues, how to emancipate the enslaved and how to treat free African Americans.

- Between 1787 and 1817 the General Assembly supported the abolition of slavery, but did not strongly support manumission or consider disciplining enslavers.

- In **1818**, the General Assembly described enslavement as inconsistent with the law of God but at the same time defrocked the Reverend George Bourne of Virginia, for condemning enslavers as sinners. It also declared that in slaveholding regions there are conditions that “render an immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent...with the safety and happiness of the master and the slave.”
- The General Assembly also called on all Presbyterians “to patronize and encourage the society formed for colonizing in Africa.” Robert Finley, director of Princeton Seminary, was among the founders of this movement. Removal of free African Americans appealed to the enslavers’ white supremacy and to the antislavery advocates it moved toward abolition without antagonizing the enslavers.
- During the 1830s, Presbyterian evangelist Charles Finney spoke out against slavery, but considered African Americans as inferior and was opposed to the integration of the races. This thinking became the basis for Jim Crow laws.
- When the issue of slavery threatened to split the church, the General Assembly of 1836 postponed further discussion based on a committee report that stated that “slavery was recognized in the Bible and that to demand abolition was unwarranted interference in state laws.” During the 19<sup>th</sup>, century two schools of thought emerged among Presbyterians. The anti-slavery activists comprised the new school and were perceived by the conservative wing as a threat to social order. This was the beginning of the North – South schism. The Old School church split along sectional lines at the start of the Civil War in 1861.
- When the Scottish immigrant Covenanters and Seceders formed the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPNA) in 1858, opposition to slavery was one of their five founding tenets.

The Presbyterian church could claim that it was in theory anti-slavery based on its 1818 statement, but in fact the majority of its leadership was heavily contaminated by white supremacy. James Thornwell and others proposed a positive theological defense of slavery. Charles Hodge and Robert Breckinridge took an accommodationist stance, denying that it was sinful but calling for its eventual and gradual elimination. Albert Barnes was the only prominent theologian who argued that it was sinful and preached abolition. The enslaver, the accommodationist and the abolitionist all shared the same communion table. The Presbyterian Church’s failure to take prompt action in early colonial times, or to take a strong stand later on makes it complicit in normalizing chattel slavery, one of the most vicious systems ever to exist in the USA.

African American Christians saw the essence of Christ’s message more clearly than white Christians. Free African Americans in the north created a Presbyterianism that had an anti-slavery, anti-white supremacy theology. African American attendance at Northern Presbyterian churches was not forbidden, but could lead to difficulties. For example, in 1794 at Scotch Presbyterian Church in New York City, African American

Katy Ferguson had to be escorted by the pastor to the communion table. As African Americans became Presbyterians, race, class and their own preferences pushed them to form separate congregations. In these churches, with an African American minister, they enjoyed freedom of worship as well as freedom from the paternalism of white pastors. The first of these churches was First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1807. Prior to the Civil War, African American Presbyterian Churches were also found in New York state, New Jersey, Washington D.C., and Maryland.

This was an era when most Presbyterian Ministers were trained by apprenticeship to another pastor rather than in seminary. Nevertheless, Theodore Wright became the first African American to graduate from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1828. These educated pastors and their congregants were the seeds of the African American middle class. They were abolitionists and dedicated opponents of white supremacy. They educated a generation of African American Presbyterians that would continue the fight against white supremacy into the Jim Crow era and beyond.

White Supremacy, developed in the Presbyterian and other Christian denominations during the nearly 250 years of enslavement did not vanish but became the force behind new laws that systemically perpetuated white supremacy and economic exploitation of African Americans after the end of Reconstruction.

In 1865, intense northern hostility toward the defeated south provided the political will to keep federal troops in the south for the next twelve years. It was a radical, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to establish civil and political equality for African Americans. The U.S. Army withdrew in 1877, leaving the progress African Americans had made at the mercy of southern terrorists and severely limiting the ability of all churches to support relief for African Americans. At the same time liberal Presbyterian leadership was presented with a series of other social issues such as: the burgeoning industrial economy, an increasing secularization of society, scientific challenges to interpretation of the Bible and the Prohibition movement.

White supremacist ideology within the Presbyterian leadership made it easier to address these problems instead of tackling the very difficult issue of African American civil rights. Paternalistic views, like those of Presbyterian evangelist Charles Finney who considered African Americans inferior to whites, were prominent in both Presbyterian leadership and laity. Newspapers, north and south, increasingly reflected language and images that reinforced these views. Thus by 1910 legalized white privilege had returned with a vengeance; in the south, enslavement-based agriculture morphed into share cropping, slave patrols morphed into Black Code laws, and the strict hierarchy of enslaver and enslaved morphed into Jim Crow segregation laws. In the north and mid-west, de facto segregation that had existed prior to the Civil War hardened.

The Presbyterian church's indifference to racial reforms in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries betrayed African Americans and played a significant role in the return of white supremacy. In contrast, African American Presbyterians like Francis Grimke, a founding

member of the NAACP, continued to speak out against racism within and without the Church. He and other anti-racist proponents were passionate and eloquent, but nevertheless a minority.

After Reconstruction was dismantled, white supremacy dominated the Presbyterian Church's race relations policy, a policy driven by its members' views rather than by adherence to the gospels or even Church declarations. The lynching of African Americans was condemned by the General Assembly in 1899. Yet, the Presbyterian Church was more interested in driving biblical scholar Arthur McGiffert from its midst in 1900 than in removing Wilmington clergyman Robert Elwood, who in 1903 was responsible for inciting the lynching of African American George White. After a trial and a reprimand by the PC U.S.A. he was allowed to continue in his ministry in Wilmington, until eventually accepting a call to a large congregation in Leavenworth, Kansas.

The Presbyterian church did nothing concrete to support African American civil rights until 1923 when it supported the Dyer Anti-Lynching Act. It would take until 1946 for the General Assembly to address racial equality within the body of the Church directly. Still by 1957, the Committee on Social Education and Action lamented that "further exhortation only emphasizes the gulf between what we profess and what we do." This era of indifference seemed to end with the *Presbyterian Confession of 1967*. However, in 1969, when The Black Manifesto was introduced by James Foreman, the Presbyterian Church refused to follow the recommendations by Black pastors who supported greater inclusion of Black members in the hierarchy of the Church and requested \$5,000,000 in reparations.

What is the current state of white supremacist attitudes in the Presbyterian Church?

Racism has always been an endemic problem and is currently on the rise. Spokespersons for white supremacist ideology are gaining celebrity status by self-publicizing their views on social media. Terrorism against African Americans and other people of color has dramatically increased over the last decade. Evil is present in our country against which the church must take a stand, or stand for nothing. Hopefully, the questions are not if, but when and how. A radical discipleship, one of courage and love, is necessary.

Since the Civil Rights era there has been progress in dismantling white supremacy. But Robert Jones, Southern Baptist scholar and sociologist, concludes that white privilege and white supremacy are stronger in mainstream Protestantism (and Catholicism) than in the religiously unaffiliated. He finds views that ignore the horrific history of racist oppression against African Americans. White Christians' feelings towards African Americans have become more benevolent since the civil rights movement, yet many within the church still blame African Americans for what are clearly after-effects of the original sin of enslavement and do not understand systemic, structural racism.

Since 1967, fifty years of internal reform have given the Presbyterian Church more concrete expressions of the church's commitment to anti-racism: *Facing Racism: A*

*vision of the beloved community* (1999), addition of the *Belhar Confession* to the *Presbyterian Book of Confessions* (2016) the, *Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era* (2016) and *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community – Churchwide Antiracism Policy* and *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community Antiracism Study Guide*. (2016) These documents, along with the Confession of 1967, serve as a solid foundation for the actions that are to come after the Apology. The PCUSA has been complicit in the making of that scarred history.”

The negative use of the term “Critical Race Theory” is an example of the kind of argument that requires a solid response using historical data and Biblical mandates. For we can only solve our equity issues if we learn exactly what the causes and effects of racism are. The aim is to foster a sense of responsibility for our history, not to make people feel guilty. Together then we might begin to solve issues created by white privilege.

It is time for the Word to become our deeds. James 2: 14-17

## **HISTORY OF RACISM IN ST. LOUIS**

Specific examples of racism are necessary in order to bring home the brutality and terror associated with it. Abolitionist and free press martyr Elijah Lovejoy wrote newspaper columns that “invoked rape and the ripping apart of families to force his readers to face slavery’s atrocities in terms that were raw and draped in horror.” Since this Overture originated in the St. Louis area, it is essential to address its long and important African American history.

Enslavement in St. Louis began with the early Jesuits, who most likely owned enslaved peoples. In 1699, Jesuits, at their settlement at the mouth of the River des Peres, may have been enslavers. St. Stanislaus Seminary enslaved people who lived in multiple dwellings as shown by an 1830s map. St. Louis University students are currently working on a project to document the school’s role in slavery.

In the mid nineteenth century the O’Fallon building, one of Washington University’s earliest structures, was named after John O’Fallon, the head of a grand jury that refused to indict the mob that burned Francis McIntosh to death. On the other-hand the founder of the school, William Greenleaf Eliot, and his wife, Abigail, were instrumental in assisting freedom seekers.

In 1780, enslaved people helped successfully defend St. Louis, then under Spanish rule, against the British and their Native American allies at the Battle of Fort San Carlos during the Revolutionary War. This prevented British access to the Mississippi Valley. African Americans toiled on the 19<sup>th</sup> century farms and plantations in Wildwood, Bridgeton, Florissant and other areas to bring profit to the white man. African Americans wrote our local history and enabled us to live our lives of privilege.

At one time, there were over twenty dealers of enslaved people in St. Louis. The most prominent was Bernard Lynch. Slave auctions, mostly as part of probate sales, were probably held on the grounds of the first two log structures of the old Catholic Church and then later at the Old Courthouse. The Underground Railroad played an important role in the area and many freedom suits were heard at the Old Courthouse, including the famous Dred and Harriet Scott case, which helped precipitate the Civil War.

African American John Buckner was hanged to death from a railroad bridge in St. Louis County in 1894, without due process or a trial. In 1836, biracial boatman, Francis McIntosh, was burned alive by a mob in downtown St. Louis, without due process or a trial. Elijah Lovejoy, pastor and publisher, wrote that McIntosh burned for eighteen minutes and begged to be shot. Lovejoy preached at Old Des Peres Presbyterian Church in St. Louis County in the early 1830s, and also in St. Charles, Missouri as well as Alton, Illinois. For his strong abolitionist views, he himself was killed by a proslavery mob in Alton while defending his printing press. The last area lynching occurred in 1942 in Sikeston when Cleo Wright was murdered.

The 1917 East St. Louis Massacre was described as the worst labor related violence and among the worst race riots in U.S. history – 250 African Americans killed, 6,000 left homeless and 7.8 million dollars in damaged property (in 2019 dollars).

Mill Creek Valley, an African American neighborhood, was leveled in 1954 for redevelopment – around 20,000 people, 95% of them African American, were displaced. Well-known African American protests include the 1943 Jefferson Bank & Trust demonstration, led by Norman Seay and the 1943 Southwestern Bell pickets.

Percy Green, founder of ACTION, and Richard Daly, climbed the Arch in 1964 to protest the exclusion of African Americans from jobs related to the building of the Arch.

William Lacy Clay, Sr., led protests over the closing of the African American Homer G. Phillips Hospital.

Restrictive covenants, redlining and other racist real estate practices have a long tradition in St. Louis. The legality of housing covenants was challenged in the 1946 *Shelley v. Kraemer* housing covenant case. Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church and the Waggoner Place Methodist Episcopal Churches helped fund Kraemer on the pro covenant side. When such covenants were deemed unconstitutional, white flight followed. In 1954 Cote Brilliante closed and then reopened as an African American congregation on the same site.

Third Presbyterian Church was also impacted by white flight from North St. Louis. In 1955 the church took a vote and said there were “too many Negroes moving into this community. We don't know how to minister to them and we don't want to minister to them so we vote to close.”

Racism in contemporary times rears its ugly head in the police shooting of Michael Brown and the Ferguson uprising, the acquittal of policeman Jason Stockley, other local shootings involving police and African Americans, the resurgence of white supremacist groups and continuing discriminatory real estate practices and voting regulations. The killing of Michael Brown led to the founding of The Black Lives Matter movement.

Sundown towns, where Black people had to be out of town by sundown, were located throughout rural Illinois and Missouri. The Ku Klux Klan has a historical and current presence in Missouri. The Aryan Nation headquarters are in Wood River, IL. Other hate groups are spread throughout Missouri, with two located within the current boundaries of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

The rich history of St. Louis includes the heroic actions of the Underground Railroad conductors, preachers and abolitionists, freedom lawsuits, the United States Colored Troops in the Civil War and more. Let us remember forever the souls who fought to overcome racism: the Roberson Brothers, Rev. John Berry and Mary Meachum, Rev. John Anderson, Dred and Harriet Scott, Priscilla Baltimore, Annie Malone, Archer Alexander, Charlton Tandy, James Milton Turner, Peter and Nancy Jane (Rutledge) Hudlin, Fr. Moses Dickson, Caroline Quarlls, Elijah Madison, Elijah Lovejoy, William Greenleaf Eliot, Josephine Baker, Norman Seay, James Buford, Percy Green and many others.

This history of St. Louis Metro and southeast Missouri is scarred by the legacy of slavery and racism. We acknowledge that the history of the St. Louis region is scarred by the legacy of slavery and racism and that the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy has been complicit in the making of that scarred history.”

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