



SHINING WATERS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
The United Church of Canada



We love because God first loved us. Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from God is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

-1 John 4:19-21

Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.

-Cornel West

A Regional Statement on Anti-Black Violence and Racism – June 8, 2020

[Racism is an ongoing sin existing within our communities.](#) It is with both lament and anger that we respond to the recent killing of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement officers, as well as additional examples of anti-Black violence emerging across North America. The deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and Regis Korchinski-Paquet further highlight the injustices encountered by Black civilians every single day.

Anti-Black discrimination is not new, and it is important to name the systemic racism that exists within the Canadian context, as well as within the Church. It is also important to name the trauma, grief, fear and anger, experienced over and over again, by peoples of African descent and their allies. No parent should have to wonder if [their child will make it home alive after interacting with the police.](#) No person in a public space should need to fear that [law enforcement will be weaponized against them.](#) Hundreds of years of firmly established racism have brought us to this point of deep seated pain and outrage.

We know many of you are grieving right now, and that statements of solidarity are empty without follow through. Be assured, this note is only one of many conversations and

communications to come. **An action plan for how Shining Waters Regional Council will address the pandemic of racism within our midst will be released after an intentional *first phase of listening to the experiences and expectations of racialized members within the Region.*** We have realized that in order to approach this work thoughtfully and authentically, it is necessary for Regional Staff and the Social & Ecological Justice Commission to go through their own internal work first. In the meantime, we know it is important for Communities of Faith to know where the Regional Council stands.

Black lives matter.

We **affirm** our support for demonstrators,
and pray for their safety.

We **denounce** the violence perpetrated by those in positions of power,
and long for their hearts to be moved through repentance.

We **lament** our own complacency and complicity;
for staying silent in times when we should have done more,
and ask forgiveness from those whom we have neglected and harmed.

We **commit** to speaking out against all forms of racism, anti-black violence,
and changing our own structures and ways of being with one another,
rejecting the status quo in order to more fully realize God's call to love all our siblings...

...because, justice is what love looks like in public.

Yours in Christ,



David Leyton-Brown,
President,
Shining Waters Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



Rev. Susan Eagle
Chair, Social and Ecological Justice
Commission
Shining Waters Regional Council
The United Church of Canada

If you have any questions please contact:

Bri-anne Swan

Minister, Social and Ecological Justice and Network Support

Shining Waters Regional Council

The United Church of Canada

Phone: 416-231-7680, 1-800-268-3781 ext. 6773

Email: bswan@united-church.ca

Other helpful links:

[Bystander Intervention Training from the National Association of Japanese Canadians:](#)

<https://youtu.be/n8gdmGSUNwU>

[United Church of Canada resources about Anti-Racism:](#)

<https://www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism>

["Black lives matter to the United Church of Canada" Facebook Group:](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1606176779707925/>