



SHINING WATERS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
The United Church of Canada

Encouraging and Connecting Communities of Faith

*Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness,
with patience bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
-Ephesians 4:1-3*

*Racism is not only what we say but what is left unsaid.
-Cláudio Carvalhaes*

A Regional Statement on Anti-Black and Anti-Asian Hate, Racism, and Violence – May 2022

The impact of the May 14, 2022 racially motivated targeted shootings of Black shoppers in Buffalo, NY was deeply felt in Shining Waters Regional Council. As a community, we grieve for the families of those killed and wounded. We hold in prayer all in God's family who cannot shop, walk the street or live their lives without fear or hypervigilance.

Our hearts ache for those traumatized with physical, emotional, and spiritual wounds that will take a long time to heal. We pray that our eyes finally stay open to those living the legacy of race trauma and policing that generations of Black bodies continue to suffer.

On June 6 we will remember the Afzaal family out for a walk and whose lives were taken by a Muslim hating driver in London, Ontario in 2021. On August 3 we will remember 22 people gunned down while shopping in El Paso, Texas in 2019 because they were Mexican. Lives taken by racism.

Racism is very real and ever-present. White supremacy is a pervasive major driving force and racism is also a shapeshifter that corrupts all our relations.

Even though most of us think this pandemic is ending, it has unleashed increasing targeted violence, harassment, and racist attacks on other racialized groups, particularly Asians.

Two days before the Buffalo massacre, an African American shooter in Dallas, Texas targeted, shot, and wounded three Korean American women in a hair salon. It was only the latest in a string of targeted anti-Asian hate attacks, magnified in the racialized pandemic.

Then on May 15, 2022 Taiwanese American worshipers at the Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Laguna Woods, California were locked in their church by a shooter of Chinese ancestry who targeted them because of his hatred of the Taiwanese, those from a country long oppressed by China. In the shooting, one died and five were injured.

Western constructs of race divisions as we know them are unhelpful when they keep us from loving the whole of humanity that God loves.

If there is one thing we can do to stop the evil of White supremacy and non-White supremacy, it is for us to face the existence of racism and “to unite and work together by putting cultural differences aside, and put our heads, hearts and voices in one place. Unity is strength.” (Rev. Eleanor Scarlett.)

While we may be onlookers of racially motivated and targeted violence in the U.S., we cannot be silent to racist rhetoric here in Canada that fuels racist actions. White supremacist racist hate is growing again in our Canadian culture and being given voice and space.

Only by standing and speaking together can we make a difference.

We denounce.

We denounce racially motivated violence and hate incidents in our society and in our Church.

We denounce White supremacist manifestos and the attention given them.

We denounce the tolerance and complacency that grow with each new racially motivated and targeted shooting we hear about.

We lament.

We lament that the sin of racism continues to destroy God’s desire for humanity.

We lament that the hate-filled words and actions of one individual are allowed to poison the community for many.

We lament that our collective silence is our collective complicity that makes racism and White supremacy flourish and our spaces unsafe.

We affirm.

We affirm that all are equal before God.

We affirm our solidarity with those who should not have to live in fear for simply being who they are.

We affirm that God has given us voice to speak out when we witness injustice.

We affirm that God is at work even in our broken hearts.

We commit.

We commit to no longer making space for racism in our communities, in our families, in our churches, church structures and policies, in our meetings, and in ourselves.

We commit to using our united voices: clergy and lay, White, Indigenous, Black, Asian, Latino, Latina, and all people of colour, to speak out together when we hear, read, or see racism.

We commit to breaking open our own lack of courage to name racism when we see it, especially in ourselves, and neither accept nor concur.

We commit to believing that change is possible, that redemption is possible, that White supremacy can be deconstructed.

May we re-commit ourselves and Shining Waters Regional Council to becoming an anti-racist Church by engaging with our whole selves.

As followers of the one who knows what it is
to be a body that suffers violence and hate,
was mocked, and bruised, and killed,
May we bear witness to life that is healing and whole,
and all that is love and peace.

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” -Martin Luther King, Jr*

Black Lives Matter. Stop Asian Hate.

In Christ’s love,

(Rev.) Betty Lou McNabb
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On behalf of the Intercultural Diversity Commission members
Shining Waters Regional Council