

As Christians, we believe that the work of dismantling racism in our communities, world, and individual lives comes as a faithful response to God's mandate found throughout scripture.

As United Methodists, we believe that the Bible is the word of God and is the primary source of God's revelation to humanity, and in scripture we hear that diversity has always been a part of God's vision and plan for God's Kingdom. In Genesis 1, all of humanity is created in God's image and God determines that all of Creation is very good. In Matthew 20, Jesus sends his disciples out to make disciples of all nations- God's people and God's Kingdom include people of all races, ethnicities, languages, and nationalities. God shows no partiality when it comes to who is included in God's Kingdom (Deut. 10 and Acts 10). All people are children of God and therefore, joint heirs with Christ in God's Kingdom (Romans 8). We pray in worship each week for God's Kingdom to "come on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6 and Luke 11) and as we do, we affirm our commitment to God's vision of a diverse Kingdom and to participating with God in making it a reality.

The Kingdom of God not only values and celebrates diversity but also rejects division, hatred, discrimination, violence, and oppression due to differences in skin color, ethnicity, language, nationality, or any other distinguishing characteristic as we hear in Galatians 3:28:

"There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

We are called to love one another and to work toward complete unity:

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

"I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20-23).

And so, at McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church, we seek to become aware and informed of the diversity of God's Kingdom, to reflect on our diversity and what it means to live as disciples of Jesus Christ, as members of God's family, and as citizens of God's Kingdom, and to respond in faith and action so that God's vision of Kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven. McFarlin's Just Action Team leads us in this calling.

The purpose of the Just Action Team at McFarlin Memorial UMC is to promote the fulfillment of the United Methodist Church's call to action concerning racism in *The Book*

*of Discipline* that we “shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large.” The Just Action Team will carry out this purpose through educational opportunities, building relationships, and actions in the community.

We believe that the work of dismantling racism must be done in collaboration with many diverse groups and persons, and so we encourage all members of McFarlin and members of the Norman community to work together and respond faithfully to what the Lord requires of us: “to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).