

## **Stonecrest Statement on Kingdom Justice & Mercy Racial Justice**

*“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.” Isaiah 1:17a*

*Stonecrest Mission is to Know Christ and Make Him Known to a Hurting World.*

As Stonecrest Community Church, our priority is to know Christ and to make Him known to a hurting world. We believe that God's Word is true, alive, and relevant. While God created all people in His image, He was also purposeful in creating differences among us. Our strength lies in our oneness in Christ Jesus, expressed through our ethnicity and our racial diversity.

We believe that Christ loves all equally and that the message of the Gospel of Christ is the answer to all forms of injustice. God hates all sin, including the sin of prejudice, discrimination, and racism. As we hear and understand more about our own biases and prejudices, God calls us to confess and turn away from those thoughts, words, and deeds that devalue and segregate people of different backgrounds and ethnicities.

Our church will actively and intentionally work to represent and expand God's Kingdom here on earth by following Jesus' example of breaking down all divisions and bringing His healing and reconciliation to all people. We envision a world in which each person's significance is revealed, esteemed, and nurtured through the Spirit of God. Our commitment to racial justice is based on hearing, understanding, and obeying God's Word, which leads to tangible and gracious action to make a difference in our society and culture to reflect the Kingdom of God.

We believe God's Word teaches us the following:

### **Unity and Diversity: Creation**

- God created all people of all ethnicities and cultures in His image (Gen. 1:27-28), giving each person incredible worth, value, and purpose.
- People were in the right relationship with God, one another, and nature. There was complete wholeness and peace enjoyed by all of creation. (Gen. 1:31)

### **Racism and Injustice: The Fall (Sin)**

- Sin entered the world and corrupted the core of human identity, resulting in broken relationships that bring division, hatred, and hostility toward each other and God (Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 59, Romans 3:10-20; 5:12-21).
- The image of God is distorted when people believe that other humans are less human or less valuable because of their skin color, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, background, or gender. This sin of elevating self over God's creative design for humanity led to Babel's sin (Gen. 11, James 2:1).
- Sin leads to acts of violence, oppression, marginalization, inequality, and discrimination used against people because of their skin color, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, background or gender. (Leviticus 19:33)
- Sin corrupts every human institution and system. The sinful nature of people (both conscious and unconscious) create and maintain systems and structures to protect and preserve the status of those in power by taking advantage of the vulnerable and oppressing the marginalized based on the difference of skin color, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, background or gender. (Jeremiah 17:9 Isaiah 10:1-4)
- The sins of racism, injustice, and oppression permeate society both on the individual and corporate level from generation to generation. The sin of silence and complicity allows racism and injustice to perpetuate. (Lamentations 5:7 James 4:17)

### **Righteousness and Justice: Jesus (Redemption)**

- Righteousness and justice flow from God's heart and character (Psalm 89:14). He gives his people clear instructions to care for the neglected, heal the broken, and stop injustice. (Leviticus 19:15, Isaiah 1:17, Isaiah 61, Micah 6:8, Amos 5:24) He promises the coming of the Messiah, who will bring hope, peace, and justice. (Psalm 9:7-10, Isaiah 42:1-4).
- Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (Luke 4:14-30). He taught a radical new way to live based on the foundational tenant of loving your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 5-7, Luke 10:25-37).
- Jesus values the diversity of all people. He sought after the outsider, the neglected and the oppressed. (Luke 15) He prayed for the unity of all believers (John 17). He crossed ethnic, social, and gender barriers to bring the good news of the Gospel to all people. He expects his followers to do the same as they seek the Kingdom of God. (John 4:1-9, 1 John 2:6, Matthew 6:33).
- Jesus loves the whole world and died for all people providing salvation for all who believe. It is through Jesus that our relationship with God is

restored, and reconciliation is possible with our fellow humans. Jesus Christ has the power to break down all barriers, including racial and ethnic divides, through confession, repentance, and restoration. (John 3:16, Eph. 2:11-16, 2 Cor. 5: 11-21)

### **Kingdom of God: Fulfillment (Here and Not Yet)**

- The Church of Jesus Christ is to embody the unity and diversity of the Kingdom of God in this world. Through the Holy Spirit, the Church was launched into its mission on Pentecost, when people from all over the known world heard the good news of Jesus in their language. This was a sign that Babel's curse of racial and ethnic division and hostility was being undone in the Church (Acts 2:5-13).
- The Church is to exhibit compassion, humility, unity and love and is called to be peace-makers (Colossians 3:1-17, Romans 12). Through the redemptive work of Jesus, the Church has been given the ministry of reconciliation, healing, and proclaiming righteousness and justice for all people (Acts 2, Eph. 2:11, 2 Cor. 5:16-21). The gospel's direct implication for the Church is to be 'salt and light' by bringing Kingdom justice and mercy into this world. (Acts 6:1-7; 10:1-22, James 1:21)
- The Church looks forward to the day when believers "from every nation, tribe, people, and language" will join as one and celebrate the redeeming work of Jesus Christ together (Revelation 7:9-10).

Therefore, Stonecrest Community Church is committed to Kingdom Justice and Mercy, specifically addressing racial justice and reconciliation. Since it is our desire to FOLLOW JESUS by intentionally hearing, understanding, and obeying Jesus in every area of our lives. (John 10:27). And because of God's love of our differences and His call to us to love one another unconditionally, we commit:

- *To hear* what God says about discrimination, injustice, and oppression in Scripture. Allowing the Holy Spirit to bring discernment, awareness, conviction, lamentation, confession, healing, grace and hope as we seek to better understand the Kingdom of God.
- *To hear* other people's experiences by opening our hearts, homes, fellowship, and corporate gatherings to share our lives with people from all backgrounds so that together we may embody the quality of human community God intends for all people to enjoy.

- *To understand* and educate ourselves and our church about all forms of injustice in our society and particularly, at this time, to oppose discrimination, prejudice, and racism as unbiblical.
- *To understand*, embrace, celebrate, and reflect cultural differences in our church programming, activities, staff, volunteers, and leadership teams. To acknowledge that to be united does not require uniformity.
- *To obey* God's Word individually, being light and salt on the earth, acting on behalf of justice for all, loving mercy and walking humbly as Christ followers.
- *To obey* by calling on our church to participate in strategies and Christian partnerships to pursue racial justice to make a difference for the Kingdom.

In reliance on the wisdom and grace of God we make these commitments.