

Ballot 3: Racial Justice

There will be four ballots taken at annual conference on the proposed amendments to our constitution. The third ballot seeks to amend Article V of our constitution to strengthen our commitment to racial justice by explicitly recognizing the church's role in combating racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy both within the denomination and in broader society. These changes reflect a critical shift in the church's acknowledgment of and response to deeply entrenched racial injustice.

There are several points of significance to be noted with this amendment.

First, this amendment makes an explicit acknowledgment of racism. The inclusion of terms like "white supremacy," "white privilege," and "colonialism" represents a significant departure from previous language that has been more vague or indirect. By explicitly naming these issues, we as a church confront our own history and complicity in systemic injustices, marking a pivotal moment in our moral and ethical evolution.

Second, this amendment makes a clear commitment to active anti-racism. Declaring that the United Methodist Church must live as an actively anti-racist institution challenges the church to move beyond passive acknowledgment of racism. This language signifies a commitment to proactive measures, calling for tangible actions that dismantle racist structures within the church and society, thereby fostering a culture of accountability.

Third, this amendment provides a response to our historical context. These changes arise in the context of broader societal movements advocating for racial justice, including the civil rights movement and more recent protests against systemic racism. By aligning itself with these movements, the United Methodist Church positions itself as a relevant and responsive body that seeks to address systemic racism rooted in historical injustices of the Church.

Fourth, this amendment places an emphasis on unity and healing. The language promotes a vision of The UMC as a community that actively works to root out discrimination and oppression. This approach emphasizes the need for unity and healing within the church, encouraging members to engage in dialogue and reconciliation, thus fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment.

Fifth, by incorporating this language into its Constitution, The UMC positions itself as a leader in the fight against racism within religious and social contexts. This sets a precedent for other denominations and organizations, encouraging a broader commitment to justice and equity in faith communities.

And sixth, these proposed changes connect to the long history of reform within the United Methodist Church, reflecting a legacy of addressing social issues. By explicitly confronting

racism, the church reaffirms its mission to promote justice and equity, continuing the work of past leaders and movements within the denomination.

The commitment reflected in the changes in Article V represents a significant step forward for the United Methodist Church in its pursuit of racial justice, and aligns with one of the discipleship priorities we in the TWK have discerned will guide our work locally. The proposed changes hold significant historical importance as they explicitly acknowledge systemic racism and commit The United Methodist Church to actively combat it. These changes challenge the Church to claim its prophetic witness as a redemptive and transformative force in both its community and the wider society, dedicated to the principles of equity, dignity, and respect for all individuals.