

Church and Society (#2 Bright Lemon)

First Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: GRATITUDE TO THE PROVINCIAL ELDERS' CONFERENCE AND THE
MORAVIAN CHURCH NORTHERN PROVINCE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2022
PILGRIMAGE TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE AND HEALING

Whereas, The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province called upon the Provincial Elders' Conference to require all pastors, licensed lay pastors, and candidates for ordination to receive anti-racism training; and

Whereas, The Provincial Elders' Conference, Moravian bishops residing in the Northern Province, and members of the Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team participated in a pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama in January 2020, and were profoundly moved and transformed by the experience and determined that all clergy should have a similar shared experience as anti-racism training; and

Whereas, The Provincial Elders' Conference directed the Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team to plan a pilgrimage for all pastors, licensed lay pastors, and candidates for ordination in September 2022 (after a two-year delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic); and

Whereas, Seventy-four pastors, licensed lay pastors, and candidates for ordination attended the Pilgrimage held September 13-16, 2022 in Montgomery, Alabama and were profoundly impacted by the experience and wish to express their gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Pilgrimage; and

Whereas, The Pilgrimage was only possible with the support of the Provincial Elders' Conference, the Moravian Church Northern Province, and congregations and entities; therefore be it

RESOLVED: (1) Participants in the September 2022 Pilgrimage toward Racial Justice and Healing, listed below, express their gratitude to the Provincial Elders' Conference, the Moravian Church Northern Province, congregations, and entities, for the opportunity to participate in the Pilgrimage:

Rev. Jamie Almqvist	Rev. Jane Gehler	Rev. Charlie McDonald
Rev. Jason Andersen	Rev. Cynthia Rader Geyer	Rev. Andy Meckstroth
Rev. Greg Behrend	Rev. David Geyer	Rev. Christie Melby- Gibbons
Rev. Barbara Berg	Rev. Dr. Amy Gohdes- Luhman	Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller
Rev. Marian Boyle Rohloff	Rev. Desna Henry	Rev. Dan Miller
Rev. Mark Breland	Goulbourne	Rev. Bruce Nelson
Rev. Evette Campbell		

Dr. Greg Carey
Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin
Rev. Angelica Cieza
Rt. Rev. M. Blair Couch
Rev. Rebecca Craver
Rev. Carol Dague
Rev. Dr. Lynnette Delbridge
Rev. Brian Dixon
Rev. Otto Dreydoppel
Rev. Dr. Eileen Edwards
Rev. Nasel Ephraim
Rev. Derek French
Rev. Judy Ganz
Rev. Jennika Borger

Rev. Earl Goulbourne
Rt. Rev. Paul Graf
Rev. Jodie Harney
Rev. Pat Honszer
Rev. Christine Johnson
Rev. Darrell Johnson
Rev. Melissa Johnson
Rev. Dr. Michael Johnson
Blondel Jones-Grant
Rev. Andy Kilps
Rt. Rev. Doug Kleintop
Rev. Sue Koenig
Rev. James Lavoy
Rev. Kurt Liebenow
Rev. Aaron Linville
Rev. Ben Lippert
Rev. Staci Marrese-Wheeler
Rev. Mandy Mastros

Rev. Richard Newswanger
Rev. Jay Petrella
Rev. Scott Rainey
Rev. Eric Renner
Rev. Janel Rice
Mike Riess (IBOC)
Rev. Rhonda Robinson
Rev. Tracy Robinson
Rev. Beth Rohn-Habhegger
Mikalya Sauerbrey
Rev. Fran Saylor
Rev. Rowan Simmons
Rev. Aden Ward
Rt. Rev. Kay Ward
Rev. Maggie Wellert
Rev. Bevon White

And be it further resolved,

RESOLVED: (2) Participants in the September 2022 Pilgrimage toward Racial Justice and Healing commit to continuing to learn and work for racial justice and healing; encourage the planning of and participation in future pilgrimages; and call upon the Provincial Elders' Conference, the Moravian Church Northern Province, congregations, and members to support and engage in the ongoing, transformative work toward racial justice and healing.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 23, 2023

Church and Society (#2 Bright Lemon)

Second Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

Re: Rev. Dr. Charles Martin'sⁱ 1917 Eastern District Synod Resolution

WHEREAS, in 1917 the Rev. Dr. Charles Martin presented a memorial to the Eastern District Synod (appendum I) regarding the wrongs of slavery in our country and the indifference of the Moravian Church to the suffering of black persons, calling the Synod to:

- “express its indignation against the horror of Wacoⁱⁱ, the inhumanity and savagery of Memphisⁱⁱⁱ, the shameful, brutality, and fiendishness of the East St. Louis riots^{iv} and the race riots of Chester, PA^v;”
- “recommend to the Church in America the adoption of some constructive plans, educational, social and ecclesiastical efforts which may help to ward off those bloody racial conflicts that recurrently outrage the Christian conscience of the nation;” and
- “urge upon the Government legislation making lynching of every kind and form a Federal crime;” to assist the black person in his/her demand for social justice; to fight against segregation; to apply whole-hearted efforts to secure the rights granted by the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Martin memorial was approved by the 1917 Eastern District Synod, and noted in the minutes, with the resolves also noted in a later section under the heading, “Racial Conflicts,” but the church did not follow up with any statements, plans, or actions; and

WHEREAS, our Holy Scriptures claim that all persons are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and continue to call us to justice as a public expression of “love thy neighbor”, as seen among the prophets (Is 48:6, Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8) including Jesus’ own mission statement in Luke 4:18-19 that he was anointed “to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,” referencing the year of Jubilee that allowed for an economic, cultural, and environmental leveling and reset within society; and

WHEREAS, the Northern and Southern Province Synods of 1998 affirmed an Interprovincial Faith and Order “Statement on Racism and the Church” (appendum II); and the 2018 Northern Province Synod reaffirmed this decision, as an official position of the two provinces of the Moravian Church in America, which aligned our provinces with the 1957 Ground of

the Unity Statement that “We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of ethnic origin, sex, or social standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ”; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Province of the Moravian Church (MCNP) has approved legislation on multiple justice issues at our provincial synods, most recently at the 2018 MCNP Synod related to immigration, violence and responsible weapon ownership, elimination of racism, inclusion of persons of all gender identities, and awareness of violence against women and has particularly worked over the past inter-synod period to promote racial justice; and

WHEREAS, resolutions have been passed by the Synod of the Worldwide Unity regarding issues of global justice, most recently in 2016 affirming the equality of men and women in God’s eyes; and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province affirmed the historic position of the Moravian Church as stated in the Letter to the Worldwide Unity from the Unity Board dated January 15, 2018, that: “In the very core of Moravian understanding of humanity, the God-given equality of all people is fundamental;” and condemned in the strongest terms racism and discrimination in all its forms; and

WHEREAS, there continues to exist great disparity in the opportunities available for persons of color and violence against them persists, as we have seen in the senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tyree Nichols and others; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: (3) the 2023 Northern Province Synod calls the church to honor the voice and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Charles Martin and reaffirms his 1917 resolution regarding racial injustice and violence in his time and expresses regret for the failure of the church to act on this resolution following its approval by the 1917 Eastern District Synod; and be further

RESOLVED: (4) the 2023 Northern Province Synod calls on our church to continue to express its indignation at the horrors of racial injustice and violence that persist in U.S. and Canada more than 100 years after Rev. Dr. Charles Martin called on the church to take action for change; and be it further

RESOLVED: (5) the 2023 Northern Province Synod commits to applying whole-hearted efforts to challenge and end the racial injustice and violence of our day, including asking the Racial Justice Team to continue to educate our churches about racial injustice in U.S. and Canada, and how to challenge political, social, economic, and ecclesiastical systems that perpetuate a culture of racism.

Respectfully submitted,
 Committee on Church and Society
 Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
 Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
 June 23, 2023

ⁱ Moravian Church in America, Eastern District. "Journal of the First Synod of the Eastern District of the American Province of the Moravian Church or Unitas Fratrum." 1917, pp. 59-60. Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The three "Resolved" statements are also found under the heading "Racial Conflicts," p. 67. [Thanks to Tom McCullough of the Moravian Archives for calling attention to this resolution.]

ⁱⁱ In 1905 Sank Majors was arrested in Waco for raping a white woman; he had a white attorney who had sufficient evidence to prove his innocence, but a jury found him guilty and sentenced him to prison. An angry mob broke into the jail on August 8, 1905, hanged him from a bridge and then shot him. In 1916 Jesse Washington was accused of raping and killing a white woman. Someone had said they had seen him near where the murder occurred. After 4 minutes a jury called him guilty. An angry mob charged the courthouse, mutilated his body and nearly 15,000 people watched and cheered as he was burned alive and then dragged through the streets of Waco.

ⁱⁱⁱ On March 9, 1892 three black grocers in Memphis were seized from the jail and brutally lynched without trial. White grocers complained that their store was decreasing white profits and a white mob attacked the store of the black grocers. When 3 white men were wounded, the black grocers were arrested. In May 1917, Ell Persons, a black woodcutter in Memphis, accused of killing a white woman, was grabbed by a mob, chained, doused with gasoline, and set on fire, with a crowd of thousands cheering.

^{iv} From July 1 -3, 1917 a smoldering labor dispute in East St. Louis, IL, located across the river from its counterpart in Missouri, turned deadly as rampaging whites began brutally beating and killing African-Americans. The official death toll was 39 black individuals and 9 whites, but many believe that more than 100 African Americans were killed.

^v Also in July, 1917 racial tensions were increasing in Chester, PA and were ignited when a white man was killed by a black man. In revenge, gangs of white men roamed the city killing any black person. As blacks began defending themselves, the violence escalated over 6 days. In the end 7 people were dead and 28 injured. Police arrested both black and white and worked to prevent any lynchings.

ADDENDUM I

[This is a transcription of an introductory sentence followed by a resolution presented by Rev. Dr. Charles Martin to the Eastern District Synod in 1917. It was adopted by Synod.]
 Memorial.

The following memorial was presented by Bro. Martin, and adopted by Synod upon motion of Bro. M. W. Leibert:

WHEREAS: The Creator and Preserver of the world slumbers not nor sleeps, is not slack concerning His promises or rewards;

WHEREAS: He maintains a Paradise of Bliss for the Faithful who love and serve their fellowmen, even the most despised or degraded, and a Debtor's Prison where the last farthing is exacted from the man who ignores or forgets his huge indebtedness;

WHEREAS: He keeps a Record of Dereliction of Duty and Abuse of Privileges which the world becomes alarmingly conscious of at intervals like the following:

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- A. Belgium in the Congo. Germany in Belgium. God keeps count.
 - B. America fattening on Slavery with the blood of Crisps [sic] Attucks, the Negro, soaking the ground. Slavery at the throat of America exacting with the blood-drinking sword every drop of blood drawn by the Slave-driver's whip. God is not asleep.
 - C. European men and money finding a harbor in America destroying life and property on the side of injustice in this most horrible and detestable of wars—American men and money pouring into Europe to settle the account of justice. Votes and money for political ends—blood and money for neglect of duty and criminal policy. God sleeps not.

WHEREAS: The Moravian Church in Negro lands [is] active, glorious, having a past that is worthy. The Negro in the land of the Moravian Church finds it unconcerned, indifferent to the needs of millions of Negroes, cramped by surrounding conditions, absorbing the poisons arising from racial sentiments. God is looking on. Zinzendorf is wondering if these are the descendants of the immortal race while the Negro is scanning the horizon to look for the fathers of the faith whom he knew in other lands as stalwart champions of social justice and human uplift. My heart stops beating and my brain becomes paralyzed when I think what it will mean for pure unadulterated Negroes to present themselves for admission to Nazareth or any of our Colleges. If I wrong the Church may God forgive me. If not then awake to righteousness, be clean and keep clear from the mind and practice of the cruel South and hypocritical North.

WHEREAS: From the inception of the Missionary activity of the Moravian Church God has declared the salvation and uplift of the Negro to be its life. It is your life, saith Jehovah.

WHEREAS: These black people have given prominence and glory to the Unitas Fratrum and form the greatest portion of its membership;

WHEREAS: The Communion Prayer of Bishop Leibert for a return to the spirit of the fathers—Dober, Martin, Zeisberger—and a noble host of men who knew not men after the flesh, by color or race, but knew men in Christ and despaired of none, is not only needed but is very cheering—a clarion call to the Church of to-day. May we help God to answer it.

In the name of justice, for the glory of the past, for the unreleased spirit of heroism sleeping in the bosom of the Church, Be it

Resolved: First, That this Synod express its indignation against the horror of Waco, the inhumanity and savagery of Memphis, the shameful, brutality, and fiendishness of the East St. Louis riots and the race riots of Chester, Pa. Be it

Resolved: Second, That this Synod recommend to the Church in America the adoption of some constructive plans, educational, social and ecclesiastical which may help to ward off those bloody racial conflicts that recurrently outrage the Christian conscience of the nation. Be it

Resolved: Third, that this Church urge upon the Government legislation making lynching of every kind and form a Federal crime; that it assist the negro in his demand for social justice; his fight against segregation; his heartrending, manly efforts to secure the rights granted by the Constitution of the United States.

(Moravian Church in America, Eastern District. “Journal of the First Synod of the Eastern District of the American Province of the Moravian Church or Unitas Fratrum.” 1917, pp. 59–60. Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The three “Resolved” statements are also found under the heading “Racial Conflicts,” p. 67.

ADDENDUM II

A STATEMENT ON RACISM AND THE CHURCH

Racism has been defined as an institutionalized socioeconomic system or a pattern of behavior “which divides people into groups identified by characteristics of origin or color for the purpose of establishing and perpetuating, on the basis of those characteristics, the subordinate status and the denigration and exploitation of one group to the benefit of the other.”ⁱ

The church must declare that racism is sin. The Moravian Catechism describes sin as disobedience to the known will of God.ⁱⁱ God’s will is made known to us in Jesus’ teaching that we are to love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). Racism then is sin, because it contradicts the teaching of Jesus and violates the known will of God.

The sin of racism is also evidenced in its violation of God’s call for the members of Christ’s church to be reconciled to God and one another and to be engaged in a ministry of reconciliation in the world (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). Contrarily, racism separates and perpetuates divisions, thus denying the unity of the church proclaimed in Holy Scripture: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male nor female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:27-30). Through its struggle with the issue of including outsiders, the early Christian church discovered that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34) and that Christians are called upon to do likewise (James 2:1).

The *Ground of the Unity* states, “The Unitas Fratrum recognizes no distinction between those who are one in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to testify that God in Jesus Christ brings His people out of ‘every race, kindred and tongue’ into one body, pardons sinners beneath the cross and brings them together. We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.”ⁱⁱⁱ Further the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin.^{iv}

The Moravian Church, despite sound biblical teaching and clear statements of belief, has, from time to time, demonstrated the values of the surrounding world and thus has denied

the very affirmation it professes. It has been affected by the very racism that is contrary to our beliefs.

As evidence, we identify:

- * an absence of racial diversity in some areas of the workplace and the classroom;
- * the disproportionate number of black and biracial churches that have been arson victims;
- * the segregation apparent in our church's worship life and congregational life in general, and the tendency of congregations and Provincial Elders' Conferences to extend calls only to pastors of the same race as the congregation;
- * the absence of widespread dialogue on the issue and the resulting congregational inaction to overcome the effects of racism in our society in housing, health care, and equitable salaries; and
- * the inability of the majority to hear the expression of frustration, pain, and anger on the part of minority peoples or even to recognize the hostility growing out of their experiences in our society.

The church of Jesus is called to be salt and light:

- * to set an example and show the way for a society which cries out for racial healing;
- * to match our fine statements with worthy deeds;
- * to confess the sinfulness of our failure to practice what we preach about discrimination;
- * to examine our personal and corporate life and repent; and,
- * under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to turn from our racism and take a new direction in keeping with the teachings of God in Christ Jesus.

Thus the church shall practice racial inclusion in every area of its congregational and denominational life; and individual Christians and congregations shall work actively to identify and eliminate the patterns of discrimination both within the church and within society at large.

Adopted by the 1998 Synod • Reaffirmed by the 2018 Synod

ⁱ Arthur Freeman, "The Cross and Racism," paper presented to the World Faith and Order Conference, January 27, 1992, p. 1.

ⁱⁱ Provincial Synods of Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces, 1956. "Catechism of the Moravian Church in America for the Instruction of Candidates for Confirmation and Church Membership," reprint (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1994), p.18.

ⁱⁱⁱ Synod of the Unitas Fratrum 1995, The Ground of the Unity, A Doctrinal Statement, p. 6.

^{iv} The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1982), Section V, p. 32.

Third Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius and Initial Steps toward Reconciliation and Healing of the Moravian Church Northern Province’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

WHEREAS, in scripture we are taught, “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet’”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:8-10); and

WHEREAS, in “A Moravian Church Statement on Racism,”¹ racism was declared as sinful and contrary to God’s will made known to us in Jesus’ teaching that we are to love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29-31) and that, “The sin of racism is also evidenced in its violation of God’s call for the members of Christ’s church to be reconciled to God and one another and be engaged in a ministry of reconciliation in the world (2 Corinthians 5:16-21);” and, “Through its struggle with the issue of including outsiders, the early Christian church discovered that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34) and Christians are called to do likewise (James 2:1);” and

WHEREAS, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin;² and

WHEREAS, “The Moravian Church, despite sound biblical teaching and clear statements of belief has, from time to time, demonstrated the values of the surrounding world and thus denied the very affirmation it professes.”³ And both “...has been affected by the very racism that is contrary to our beliefs,”⁴ and been complicit and perpetuated racism;
and

WHEREAS, the Doctrine of Discovery, originating with Pope Alexander VI in 1493 as a papal bull, created a framework that supported racism, colonialism, and the annihilation of Indigenous peoples; and,

¹ A Moravian Church Statement on Racism and the Church, Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, Moravian Church in America, 1998, p. 1

² Northern Province Synod, 1982, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1982, Section V., p. 32

³ A Moravian Church Statement on Racism and the Church, Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, Moravian Church in America, 1998, p. 1

⁴ Ibid.

WHEREAS, the Doctrine of Discovery was the international law used to claim land under the principle of terra nullius which stated that lands not occupied by Christians were “vacant” and therefore could be defined as “discovered” and sovereignty, dominion, title and jurisdiction claimed; and,

WHEREAS, the Doctrine of Discovery was the principle used by protestant Christian groups, including Moravians, to make claims to Native land in the Americas; and,

WHEREAS, the Moravian Church and its members have benefited over time from the Doctrine of Discovery and have been complicit in the harm done to Indigenous peoples; and,

WHEREAS, the legal principle of the Doctrine of Discovery is entrenched in the laws of the United States and Canada and has been used to deny the humanity of Indigenous peoples and withhold from them the privileges as citizens under the perpetual protection and pupilage of the government, and continues to have serious impact on the daily lives of contemporary Native American communities; and,

WHEREAS, all of the ecumenical partners with whom the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America is in full communion as well as their affiliated denominations in Canada, have already repudiated and repented of the Doctrine of Discovery (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2016), the Episcopal Church USA (2009), the United Methodist Church (2012); and the Presbyterian Church (USA) (2016), and in the case of the Episcopal Church USA passed legislation to require Doctrine of Discovery Training for those seeking ordination(2018), therefore, be it

RESOLVED, (6) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province repudiates and renounces the Doctrine of Discovery as 1) fundamentally opposed to the will of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Moravian Church’s teachings and beliefs opposing racism and discrimination; and 2) a legal document and basis for the seizing of Native lands and abusing the human rights of Indigenous peoples; and directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference to issue a public statement of this action together with a statement of repentance for the harm done in the name of Christianity; and

WHEREAS, the historical consequences of the Doctrine of Discovery (physical and cultural genocide) and the resulting systemic and institutional racism continues to impact subsequent generations of Indigenous people. The legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery which includes the loss of land and culture and the institution of residential and boarding schools established to “kill the Indian in him”⁵ has resulted in inter-generational trauma that is manifested today through a multitude of issues experienced by contemporary Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Canada, including but not limited to, disproportionately high rates of poverty, poor living conditions, suicide, unemployment, high school dropouts, incarceration, health concerns, and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people; and

⁵ ‘Kill the Indian in him, and save the man’: R. H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans. Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. <https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/teach/kill-indian-him-and-save-man-r-h-pratt-education-native-americans>. Accessed March 5, 2023.

WHEREAS, Native American women on reservations face murder rates more than ten times higher than the national average (U.S. Department of Justice); and homicide is the third-leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women 10 to 24 years of age and the fifth-leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women between 24 and 34 years of age (Center for Disease Control and Prevention); and in 2016, though there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, the federal missing person database only logged 116 cases (National Crime Information Center)⁶; and in Canada 1,017 women and girls identified as Indigenous were murdered between 1980 and 2012—a homicide rate roughly 4.5 times higher than that of all other women in Canada⁷; and

WHEREAS, both the 2016 Unity Synod and the 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province have passed resolutions regarding violence against women, girls, and children; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, (7) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province, directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference and all three District Boards, as a first step in a process of reconciliation, to engage in dialogue with those harmed by the Doctrine of Discovery, to listen to their histories and stories, and to plan with Indigenous peoples how best to take authentic, informed actions toward awareness, acknowledgement, repentance, healing, and reconciliation; and be it further

RESOLVED, (8) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference and the Northern Province Racial Justice Team, in consultation with Indigenous communities and Moravian and ecumenical partners, to develop and provide clergy, congregations, and members of the Moravian Church Northern Province and the wider community with resources about the Doctrine of Discovery and its past and continuing consequences on the lives of Indigenous peoples; and be it further

RESOLVED, (9) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province asks each of its congregations to research their own histories and the histories of the lands they occupy and prepare a Land and Labor Acknowledgement to share with the congregation and its communities with suggested resources to be provided by the Northern Province Racial Justice Team; results of congregational research and action shall be reported to the PEC; and be it further

RESOLVED, (10) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference and the Northern Province Racial Justice Team to expand its representation and work to include authentic, informed actions toward awareness, acknowledgement, repentance, healing, and reconciliation developed with those harmed by the Doctrine of Discovery and the complicity of the Moravian Church in the

⁶ Statistics from the 225th General Assembly (2022) Presbyterian Resolution RGJ-02, “A Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People (MMIWG2S) – From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns”

⁷ <https://amnesty.ca/no-more-stolen-sisters/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-facts/>

damaging effects of colonialism in the Americas which continue to harm Indigenous individuals, peoples, and governments; and be it further

RESOLVED, (11) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province calls on the church to recognize the May 5th in the US and Canada as National Day of Awareness & Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People, and where it is possible, in consultation with those directly impacted to provide support for Indigenous individuals, families, and communities that have been impacted by the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people; and

WHEREAS, in 2007 the United Nations passed the “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” which called into question the validity of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery, which for centuries served as “legal” rationale to seize land and to subjugate and dehumanize Indigenous peoples; and,

WHEREAS, the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples received support by the governments of the United States (2011) and Canada (2016); and one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s 2015 Calls to Action is for “faith groups ... to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, (12) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference and the church to advocate for Indigenous Peoples by addressing the systemic violations of human rights as outlined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

RESOLVED, (13) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Northern Province Racial Justice Team to also include racial healing with First Nations people in Canada in their work; and

WHEREAS, The 2022 Synod of the Moravian Church Southern Province passed legislation calling for the formation of an “American Indian and Alaskan Native Peoples Reconciliation Working Group,” by the Southern Province Racial, Cultural, and Ethnic Reconciliation Team, with ecumenical partners to include the Moravian Church Northern Province and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; therefore be it

RESOLVED, (14) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province asks the Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team to collaborate with the Southern Province Racial Cultural, and Ethnic Reconciliation Team and participate on the “American Indian and Alaskan Native Peoples Reconciliation Working Group,” to be established in accordance with legislation passed at the 2022 Southern Province Provincial Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, (15) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference to engage in dialogue with Moravian partners in North America, Europe, and the United Kingdom to undertake truth and reconciliation work related to

a repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, acknowledging our complicity in the harmful effects of colonialism.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 23, 2023

Resources:

The Doctrine of Christian Discovery: Lutherans and the Language of Empire
Tink Tinker, 03/01/2017
<https://elca.org/JLE/Articles/1203>

A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to American Indian and Alaska Native People
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration_to_American_Indian_Alaska_Native.pdf

Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen lands, Strong Hearts, film by Anglican Church in Canada
<https://www.anglican.ca/primate/tfc/drj/doctrineofdiscovery/>

Doctrine of Discovery Training Report, General Convention of the Episcopal Church,
https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/gc_resolutions_2018/2018-D011.pdf

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report
December 2015
<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525#chp2>

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
September 2007
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

The Biggest Issues Facing the Native American Community Right Now. DiversityInc Staff, DiversityInc., November 12, 2020. <https://www.diversityinc.com/the-biggest-issues-facing-the-native-american-community-right-now-2/>. Accessed March 5, 2023.

8 Key Issues for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Indigenous Corporate Training, Inc. December 5, 2022.
<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/8-key-issues-for-indigenous-peoples-in-canada>. Accessed March 5, 2023.

Contemporary Native American issues in the United States. Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_Native_American_issues_in_the_United_States. Accessed March 5, 2023

Church and Society (#2 Bright Lemon)

Fourth Partial Report of the Church and Society Committee

RE: MASS INCARCERATION AND LEGAL SYSTEM REFORM

Whereas, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin;¹ and

Whereas, The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province reaffirmed the attached “A Statement on Racism and the Church” approved by the 1998 Synods of the Southern and Northern Provinces; and

Whereas, “Black Americans are incarcerated in (U.S.) state prisons at nearly 5 times the rate of white Americans;” and nationally one in 81 Black adults in the U.S. is serving time in state prison; and for example, Wisconsin leads the nation in Black imprisonment rates with one of every 36 Black Wisconsinites in prison; and Latinx individuals are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate that is 1.3 times the incarceration rate of whites;”² and

Whereas, The United States incarcerates its citizens at a higher rate than any other country; and

Whereas, “African Americans are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to experience lengthy prison sentences. African American adults are 5.9 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites and Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely;”³ therefore be it

RESOLVED, (16) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province asks congregations to engage in prayerful study of the local legal and criminal justice systems utilizing resources from our ecumenical partners such as, “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries” from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America <https://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Criminal-Justice>; and be it further

¹ Northern Province Synod, 1982, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1982) Section, V, p 32.

² “The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons” by Ashley Nellis, Ph.D. October 13th, 2021 www.sentencingproject.org/reports/the-color-of-justice-racila-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons-the-sentencing-project/

³ Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System, April 19, 2018. www.sentencingproject.org/reports/report-to-the-united-nations-on-racial-disparities-in-the-u-s-criminal-justice-system/

RESOLVED, (17) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province asks congregations to engage in conversations with local law enforcement departments about their practices around cultural competency, mental health training, and community policing with the results of such research being reported to the PEC and the Northern Province Racial Justice Team; and be it further

RESOLVED, (18) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province asks congregations to engage in advocacy efforts at local, community, and national levels for legal system reform and reinvestment into community-based programs as alternatives to incarceration such as treatment of addictions and mental illness, and restorative justice practices. These results are to be reported to the PEC and the Northern Province Racial Justice Team; and be it further

RESOLVED, (19) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province invites congregations to utilize resources from the Provincial Racial Justice Team to help with education and advocacy regarding mass incarceration and legal system reform.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee on Church and Society

Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff

Secretary, Brenda Hoelman

June 23rd, 2023

Fifth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: Antisemitism and Jewish-Christian Relations

WHEREAS, Jesus, who was born, lived and died as a Jew, quoting Leviticus 19:18, commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31), and teaches in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) that all people are neighbors to us; and

WHEREAS, the number of antisemitic incidents in the United States¹ and Canada² reached all-time highs in 2022 and 2021, respectively, and these incidents of harassment, vandalism, assault, and murder, inflicted harm, injury, and death on our Jewish neighbors; and

WHEREAS, there is a history of antisemitism in Christianity beginning about 150 CE with interpretations of the Gospel of John in the writings of the early church fathers, and continuing through the centuries to the teaching and preaching of Protestant reformers that was later used to support the killing of millions of people during the Holocaust,³ and which persists today in false allegations and ideologies in the church, and in the “great replacement theory” a conspiracy theory espoused by white supremacists; and

WHEREAS, Christian churches, including the Moravian Church Northern Province, may be inadvertently perpetuating antisemitism and contributing to its rise through our liturgies, hymns, early communion preparation practices, lectionary use, and worship resources, including scriptural references and other texts read without explanation of their context; the Moravian Book of Worship; “Readings for Holy Week;” and preaching and teaching in congregations; and

WHEREAS, Ecumenical partners of the Moravian Church Northern Province have adopted resolutions that address Jewish-Christian Relations⁴ and antisemitism such as *the 2016 Book of Resolutions: United Methodist Guiding Principles for Christian-Jewish Relations*⁵ and *The Episcopal Church’s Christian-Jewish Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for The Episcopal Church* (2021)⁶; and

¹ <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2022>

² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/bnai-brith-report-antisemitism-canada-1.6813185>

³ shmm.org/research/about-the-mandel-center/initiatives/ethics-religion-holocaust/articles-and-resources/christian-persecution-of-jews-over-the-centuries/christian-persecution-of-jews-over-the-centuries

⁴ <https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/national-jewish-christian-dialogue/>

⁵ <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-resolutions-united-methodist-guiding-principles-for-christian-jewish-relations>

⁶ <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/07/christian-jewish2021.pdf>

WHEREAS, The Moravian Church Northern Province has not previously addressed Jewish-Christian Relations or antisemitism in a statement from the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission or a synod resolution; therefore be it

RESOLVED: (20) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders 'Conference to request the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission to 1) study, and develop a statement regarding antisemitism and anti-Jewish theology; and develop theological and practical guiding principles on Jewish-Christian relations, with both the statement and principles to be available prior to the 2026 Moravian Church Northern Province Synod; and 2) to bring recommendations for approval to the Northern and Southern Province PEC's related changes or supplements to the Moravian Book of Worship, Readings for Holy Week, and other liturgical and educational materials produced for use by Moravian congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED: (21) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encourages preachers, teachers, and other worship leaders of the Moravian Church Northern Province, when reading scripture in public which uses the word "Jews," to provide notes expressing how the text "had been and continues to be, used to malign Jews," and accompanying related prayers of repentance;⁷ and/or use language that is less likely to lead to antisemitic interpretations; and be it further

RESOLVED: (22) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encourages preachers, teachers, and other worship leaders of the Moravian Church Northern Province to consider in interpretations of scripture "what is written in the texts, what the texts meant when they were written, and what they have come to mean in relationship to antisemitism and anti-Jewish theology, and how they might be understood in ways that contribute to dismantling antisemitism and anti-Jewish theology in proclamation and teaching"⁸; and be it further

RESOLVED: (23) The Provincial Elders Conference ask the appropriate faculty at Moravian University to create and share a short guide that can help our congregations understand how scripture "[has] been and continues to be, used to malign Jews" and assist preachers, teachers, and other worship leaders use language that contributes to "dismantling antisemitism and anti-Jewish theology in proclamation and teaching;" and be it further

⁷ "What should churches do about the treatment of the Jews in John," Steven Thorngate Interview with Amy-Jill Levine, June 2023, The Christian Century.

⁸ Adapted from a resolution adopted at the 2021 Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, R-1: *Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings*

RESOLVED: (24) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encourages our congregations to build relationships with local synagogues and Jewish organizations.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 23, 2023

Additional Resources

<https://ccjr.us/news/statements/ccjr-2022dec14>

<https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2022/12/15/this-advent-churches-urged-to-assess-worship-for-inadvertent-antisemitism/>

Church and Society (#2 Bright Lemon)

Sixth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: ACCEPTING THE REPORT TO THE 2023 NORTHERN PROVINCE SYNOD
from the
RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM

Whereas, The Church and Society Committee reviewed the report from the Racial Justice Team and the accompanying documents; and

Whereas, The Church and Society Committee appreciates the work of the Racial Justice Team during the last intersynodal period; therefore be it

RESOLVED (25): The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province accepts with gratitude the report from the Racial Justice Team as written; and be it further

RESOLVED (26): The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province commends the Racial Justice Team for their outstanding work and report.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee of Church and Society
Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Chair
Brenda Hoelman, Secretary

Seventh Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: The support of humane and just treatment of individuals and families seeking refuge and asylum in the United States

WHEREAS, Jesus himself was a refugee (Matthew 2:13-15); and

WHEREAS, The Old and New Testaments clearly direct us not to mistreat or oppress those seeking shelter in our lands (“foreigners living in our lands are children of God who need to be shown Christian love and compassion,” Lev. 19:33-34; Zec. 7:10; Matt. 25:35; John 13:15; “there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” Gal. 3:28); and

WHEREAS, The Renewed Moravian Church began as refugees receiving sanctuary in Herrnhut and many latter-day North American Moravians sought sanctuary in America, and

WHEREAS, the 2016 Unity Synod voted that

“the 43rd Unity Synod 2016 accepts the present situation of refugees in the world as a challenge to her witness of the love of Christ to all people. It encourages all provinces with their congregations and institutions to stand by the refugees who seek shelter and protection in their countries. It calls provinces and congregations to clearly speak out against hatred, racism and rejection within their societies and be advocates of those who have neither right nor voice to express their needs;” and

WHEREAS, the 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province called for the humane treatment of any person coming across our borders, legally or illegally; and called for steps to be taken immediately to reunite families that have been separated at the border; and

WHEREAS, refugees are fleeing to the United States to escape persecution, torture, and murder in their homelands, and deportation of those seeking asylum often means disappearance or death upon their return; and

WHEREAS, the growing number of individuals and families seeking refuge and asylum in the US has created a climate of fear, rejection, discrimination and hatred against foreigners – a climate that is being exploited by politicians who call for a closure of borders and incite hatred of the “other”; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health and Human Services’ shelter system received 122,000 migrant children who were taken into US custody without their parents in the fiscal year 2021, an all-time high¹; and

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-122000-unaccompanied-migrant-children-us-shelters-2021/>

- WHEREAS, the US Government’s “Remain in Mexico” policy, implemented in January 2019 has resulted in sending more than 60,000 lawful asylum-seekers to seven cities in Mexico that are among those most dangerous areas of the border, exposing men, women and children to assaults, kidnappings, murders and extortion and seriously hampering their ability to obtain legal representation when or if they are allowed to present their case; this policy was reinstated in December 2021², and
- WHEREAS, on May 11, 2023 the House of Representatives passed the Secure Border Act expanding the border work force, increasing salaries for border agents, funding security technology upgrades and restarting border wall construction; according to the National Council of Churches the legislation disregards the dignity of immigrants, expedites the deportation of children and continues to detain minors in deplorable conditions, and
- WHEREAS, the Moravian Church stands united in Jesus in affirmation that all were created in the image of God, and in recognition of Jesus’ boundless love for all individuals and families, particularly those who, like Jesus, experienced homelessness, vulnerability, and unjust treatment by the powers of governments, both secular and religious; and
- WHEREAS, in accordance with the precepts of the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, “though giving our loyalty to the state of which we are citizens, we do recognize a higher loyalty to God and conscience” (IV,c); therefore be it
- RESOLVED: (27) The 2023 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church affirms the worth, dignity, and inherent value and rights of immigrants, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and declares its support for the humane treatment of any person coming across our borders, regardless of legal status; and be it further
- RESOLVED: (28) The 2023 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church joins the National Council of Churches in its call “for a comprehensive solution to our immigration challenges that respects the ‘Imago Dei’ in all people, keeps our borders safe, and honors the diversity that makes our nation a great tapestry;”³ and be it further
- RESOLVED: (29) The 2023 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church encourages District organizations such as the Eastern District Church & Society Committee, the Western District Justice Team, and the Board of Elders of the Canadian District, as well as other members of our congregations, to develop educational materials for congregations to better understand the issues around immigration; and be it further

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/us-and-mexico-reach-deal-to-restart-trump-era-remain-in-mexico-program-along-border/2021/12/01/381a4190-5318-11ec-8ad5-b5c50c1fb4d9_story.html

³ <https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness/2008/immigration.php>

RESOLVED: (30) The 2023 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church requests that the Provincial Elder's Conference advocate for humane policies at our borders, including but not limited to welcoming unaccompanied children, refusing to separate families, rejecting changes to child labor laws that endanger the lives of children, and continuing to reunite all children who have been separated from family members at the border; and be it further

RESOLVED: (31) The 2023 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church goes on record as supporting those who, acting out of their faith and witness, provide sanctuary and asylum to those fleeing from persecution in their home lands.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 23, 2023

Eighth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

Re: “A Call to Faithful Action of the Moravian Church Northern Province toward an End to Gun Violence”

Whereas, a vicious and growing trend of gun violence and mass shootings have reached epidemic proportions over the last decade in the United States¹; and

Whereas, as of June 23, 2023 the United States has already experienced over 300 mass shootings; and

Whereas, gun violence is both a leading cause of premature death in the U.S. and a leading cause of death for children and teens; and gun violence has killed more than 38,000 people and caused nearly 85,000 injuries each year since 2018, according to the American Public Health Association² and;

Whereas, our Christian faith teaches us that we should seek peace (*Matthew 5:9*) and pursue it; and Jesus said that he came that we might have abundant life (*John 10:10*) and the pervasiveness of gun violence is the antithesis of the life God intends for us and commands us to live (*Exodus 20:13*); and

Whereas, the rampant violence in our communities in the United States requires a faith response that not only strives to end the violence, but also transforms communities and lifts up a standard of love, peace, and justice; and

Whereas, thoughts and prayers are not enough, and sending them to victims and their families without taking action to end gun violence corrupts our responsibility as Christians, citizens, and neighbors; and

Whereas, the prevention of gun violence is not about partisanship or politics. It is about keeping people alive and protecting human rights; and

Whereas, it is past time for urgent, decisive, and deliberate action to end this threat to our way of life and vision; and

¹ CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/24/us/mass-shootings-fast-facts>)

² American Public Health Association (<https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/gun-violence>)

Whereas, our holy Scriptures teach that our prayers should lead us to action (*I John 3:18*); and

Whereas, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”³ Therefore be it

RESOLVED (32) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province, affirms the call of The National Council of Churches of Christ USA and its member communions for an end to gun violence,⁴ and calls upon Moravians across the Northern Province, as a people of faith, to:

- 1) “...use all of the resources available to us to put an end to widespread gun violence and mass shootings in our communities;”
- 2) “...work within our congregations and communities to create safe spaces for those who experience violence and provide care for victims/survivors of gun violence and mass shootings;”
- 3) “...be attentive and offer a public witness, and care, to those in our communities who are susceptible to being perpetrators of gun violence, showing them grace and mercy, and attempting to put them in contact with resources that may help them choose a different path;”
- 4) “...make concerted efforts to connect with other groups, both religious and secular, to find solutions to end gun violence and mass shootings in our communities;” and be it further

RESOLVED (33) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province calls upon Moravians across the Northern Province, as a people of faith, to recognize that it is inconsistent with our faith to perpetuate false narratives related to the Second Amendment of the US Constitution that spread misinformation to convince the public that calls for an end to gun violence are meant to restrict all gun use; and be it further

RESOLVED (34) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference to encourage congregations and members of the Northern Province to not only affirm the right for United States citizens to keep and bear arms but to also be advocates for responsible fire-arm legislation at the national, state, and local levels of government. These include, but are not limited to:

³ The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

⁴ NCC Resolution on Mass Shootings [<https://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness-ncc/ncc-resolution-on-rampant-gun-violence-and-mass-shootings>] / minimally adapted

- Mandating universal background checks for all gun sales.
- Extending waiting periods for all fire-arm sales and require firearm safety training.
- Establishing the minimum age of 21 to purchase a firearm.
- Prohibiting sales of military style assault weapons and banning high-capacity magazines and all weapons and modifications that enable multiple rounds to be fired each time the trigger is pulled.

and be it further

RESOLVED (35) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province laments the lack of legislative action to prevent further loss of life from gun violence and encourages US residents in the Moravian Church Northern Province to hold public officials accountable for their inability to enact meaningful legislation; and be it further

RESOLVED (36) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders' Conference to make resources available to the congregations of the Northern Province to raise awareness, educate and promote advocacy of measures that aim to eliminate gun violence and mass shootings. One example is the June 2023 edition of *The Presbyterian Outlook* magazine devoted exclusively to gun violence and entitled, "Gun violence – How people of faith can stop this uniquely American epidemic"; and be it further

RESOLVED (37) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province asks Moravians from the Canadian District to support their Moravian siblings in the United States with prayer, encouragement, and action, in efforts to end gun violence as followers of the Prince of Peace.

Respectfully submitted,
 Committee on Church and Society
 Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
 Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
 June 23, 2023

Ninth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: Affirming and Building the Work of Justice

Whereas in March 15-22, 2023, Moravian bishops representing many Unity provinces gathered in Doorn, Netherlands, for the 2023 Unity Bishops' Conference. The topic of their gathering was, "Learn to do good, seek justice" (Isaiah 1:17). From their work together, they shared a pastoral letter calling for justice with all congregations of the Moravian Unity¹, excerpts of which include:

"We have listened to reports which describe structural injustices, corruption and malfunctioning of whole societies. Wars are raging, more weapons are made and used. Violence against and oppression of women and children continues. Modern slavery is still going on and even increasing. Self-inflicted climate change is destroying God's creation and the habitat of all living. The poor, who have caused the least of this, suffer the most and their opportunity for a dignified life is reduced. Tens of thousands of people are refugees as a consequence.

"we say clearly: All this is against God's will.

"We would like to encourage you to speak up against such injustices and destruction, and to look out for opportunities that lead towards the restoration of God's creation and towards functioning societies. In this way we can begin or continue a pilgrimage of grace towards healing. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED (38) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province, in light of the many injustices and destructive forces currently facing the world and creation, expresses its gratitude to the Unity Bishops who gathered in Doorn, Netherlands, in March 2023, for their pastoral letter² with its call to justice and affirmation of justice work, and encouragement to "speak up

¹ A copy of the 2023 Pastoral Letter from Unity Bishops meeting in Doorn, Netherlands, March 15-22, 2023 is attached to this proposal.

² Ibid

against injustices and destruction and to look out for opportunities that lead toward restoration of God’s creation and toward functioning societies,” and be it further

RESOLVED (39) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province affirms that God calls us as individuals, congregations, and as a province to work for justice for the healing of the world, and encourages congregations to look for opportunities to seek and to do justice in its purpose, worship, community, spiritual formation, stewardship, leadership, mission, and service ministries; and

Whereas, The Book of Order of the Moravian Church Northern Province in Paragraph 202 (f) 3, entitled *Peace, Justice and the Care of Creation, The Ordained Minister in Relation to the Community and World in The Standards and Responsibilities for Ordained Ministers of the Moravian Church*, states:

“Ordained ministers work for peace and justice, recognizing the complex interrelation of these issues. They appreciate the gift of God’s creation and promote its preservation as a sacred trust. They uphold the dignity of all people, recognizing that they are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). They are open to God’s call to be advocates for the poor, the oppressed, and the outcast. They seek reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Ordained ministers are called to be witnesses for Christ and by word and deed communicate the Good News of God’s love to all.” Therefore be it

RESOLVED (40) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encourages all ordained (and licensed lay) ministers with their congregations and entities to discern ways in which they may deepen their relationship to the community and the world; become aware and knowledgeable of, and prepared to address justice concerns in their communities, explore congregational passions and resources around mission and justice, identify needs in their communities that are not being adequately addressed, work alongside community and ecumenical partners to develop ministries to help address those needs, and engage in training on justice building; and

RESOLVED (41) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province urges congregations to explore the charity and mission work they undertake and educate themselves on the causes and systemic issues rooted in history, stereotypes, laws, and policies

that cause the work to be continually needed, and prayerfully discern ways to advocate as a congregation for those impacted by those issues to bring about social transformation; and

Whereas the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living reminds us of the following:
Considering it a special privilege to live in a democratic society, we will faithfully fulfill the responsibilities of our citizenship... among which are intelligent and well-informed voting, a willingness to assume public office, guiding the decisions of government by the expression of our opinions, and supporting good government by our personal efforts, and

Whereas One of the places we are called to “speak up against injustices and destruction,” is in the public square, and our ecumenical partners have information on advocacy and current advocacy issues such as The United Methodist Church’s <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/take-action>; the ELCA Advocacy Action Center; and the Episcopal Church’s <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/advocacy-resources/>; and in Canada, congregations may visit angelican.ca, elcic.ca, cpj.ca; and

Whereas Ordained and licensed ministers, and congregational leaders and members would benefit from an explanatory statement regarding Church and State matters for distribution to congregations; therefore be it

RESOLVED (42) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province invites its congregations and members to explore the advocacy resources and consider action items available from our ecumenical partners by visiting United Methodist Church’s <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/take-action>; the ELCA Advocacy Action Center; and the Episcopal Church’s <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/advocacy-resources/>; and in Canada, congregations may visit angelican.ca, elcic.ca, cpj.ca, and be in further

RESOLVED (43) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province requests the Provincial Elders’ Conference to identify or direct the preparation of a statement on Church and State issues, advocacy, and related information and distribute these documents to congregations; and

Whereas A number of Moravian congregations and emerging ministries across the Northern Province, including congregations in the Western District, are engaging in extensive justice work, and their stories would be helpful for others to hear; therefore be it

RESOLVED (44) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encourages congregations and emerging ministries to share their experiences and best practices of justice and organizing work and local restorative and healing ministries on social media and websites; with other Moravian congregations and with the Interprovincial Board of Communication for sharing and publication; with local ministerium and community groups; and with their wider communities, and be it further

RESOLVED (45) This 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province 2023 commends the ways in which the Provincial Elders Conference and other leaders, and provincial and interprovincial agencies and entities, have led and supported the work for justice, and encourages the Provincial Elders Conference to continue to give sustained attention to the work of justice and advocacy to which God calls us, moving justice and advocacy work forward with intention and action, through its own commitment to the work of justice; the collaboration with and support of collaboration between Provincial and District Teams and Committees engaged in justice work and advocacy; and the ongoing support and encouragement for congregations and their ministers, leaders, and members to engage in justice work and advocacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 23, 2023

Tenth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: Commitment to the Work of Racial Justice and Healing

Whereas, The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province (“MCNP”), recognizing that “institutional and systemic racism continues to devastate the lives of people of color,” and acknowledging our past failure to “work diligently to develop programs and efforts which move in the direction of the elimination of institutional racism, and the fostering of diversity in churches in the Northern Province,”¹ passed legislation directing that specific steps be taken to dismantle and eliminate institutional, systemic, and personal racism;² and

Whereas, In response to the 2018 Synod’s call for specific steps to be taken by the Provincial Elders’ Conference (“PEC”) to eliminate racism, the PEC in early 2019, after hearing stories of the extensive harm and injury experienced by clergy of color due to racism, and recognizing the church’s implicit and complicit role in this harm, the PEC in April 2019, formed the Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team; and

Whereas, In September 2020, the PEC and the Racial Justice Team created an initial “Action Plan Toward Racial Justice and Healing”³ for the MCNP to prioritize, guide, and “...claim the work of racial justice and healing as integral to our identity;” and in February 2021 the PEC created a one-quarter time position of Director of Racial Justice and Healing, and called the Rev. Sue Koenig to serve in that role to assist with managing and supporting the work of the Racial Justice Team; and with planning for its ongoing work of racial justice and healing; and

Whereas, Since its inception the MCNP Racial Justice Team has worked faithfully to take initial steps in leading and equipping the MCNP in this work, in accordance with the mandate of the 2018 Synod of the MCNP, the commissioning of the PEC, and the goals of the 2020 MCNP Action Plan Toward Racial Justice and Healing⁴; therefore be it

RESOLVED (46) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province (“MCNP”) expresses its deep gratitude to The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller, the Provincial Elders’ Conference, the MCNP Racial Justice Team, and The Rev. Dr. Frank Crouch for

¹ Resolution on Racial Reconciliation, 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province

² Fourth Partial Report of the 2018 Synod Church and Society Committee, 16, 17, 19 and 20.

³ The MCNP Action Plan Toward Racial Justice and Healing is attached to this proposal.

⁴ Please see the attached Report to the 2023 Synod from the MCNP Racial Justice Team, 2019-2023 for details.

their work toward racial justice and healing in the MCNP; and to all who participated in or assisted with the learning and advocacy opportunities sponsored by the PEC and the MCNP Racial Justice Team and those with whom they collaborated; with the recognition that this work is essential to our faith in, and faithful witness to, Jesus Christ and critical to the life and well-being of the church, communities, individuals, and society, and to which we are wholeheartedly committed; and be it further

RESOLVED (47) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province recognizes the work of racial justice and healing as lifelong work and designates the 2018 Synod resolutions of the Fourth Partial Report of the 2018 Synod Church and Society Committee, 16, 17, 19 and 20,⁵and be it further

RESOLVED (48) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province (“MCNP”) commends the PEC for the steps taken in response to the 2018 Synod legislation regarding the dismantling and elimination of racism in all its forms, its formation and support of the MCNP Racial Justice Team, and the creation of the position of Director of Racial Justice and Healing; and affirms and directs the standing continuation and funding of the MCNP Racial Justice Team and the position of Director of Racial Justice and Healing, and expansion of both as needed, so that they may continue and extend the work of racial justice and healing in the MCNP with support and representation from the PEC and the support and ongoing prayers of the MCNP; and

Whereas, In September 2022, the PEC in an initial fulfillment of the 2018 mandate “to require all pastors, licensed lay pastors and candidates for ordination to receive anti-racism training,” planned with the MCNP Racial Justice Team a “Pilgrimage Toward Racial Justice and Healing” to Montgomery, Alabama ; therefore be it

RESOLVED (49) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province commends the PEC for planning the September 2022 “Pilgrimage Toward Racial Justice and Healing” to Montgomery, Alabama as a means of initially fulfilling the 2018 Synod mandate “to require all pastors, licensed ministers and candidates for ordination to receive anti-racism training;” and directs the PEC to provide for ongoing anti-racism, advocacy, organizing, and related trainings and experiences for clergy, lay pastors, and candidates for ordination, including considering adding these requirements to those needed for ordination or licensing, and recommending to Moravian Theological Seminary the development of opportunities for fulfilling these requirements; and be in further

RESOLVED (50) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province, following the 2018 Synod, offers its “support, encouragement, and prayers to clergy as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for all people, name and denounce the sin of

⁵ Fourth Partial Report of the 2018 Synod Church and Society Committee, 16, 17, 19 and 20.

racism, and lead congregations in efforts to understand, dismantle, and eliminate racism.;" commends those who are taking steps in their congregations; and directs the Provincial Elders' Conference and the MCNP Racial Justice Team to identify persons skilled in specialized justice work conflict coaching as a resource for clergy and licensed lay pastors leading congregations in the work of racial justice and healing [and include this coaching in other coaching funding that may be provided by the MCNP and/or provide scholarships for this specialized coaching]; and

Whereas, The PEC and the MCNP Racial Justice Team have collaborated in the work of racial justice and healing with the Moravian Church Southern Province, ecumenical partners, and others; therefore, be it

RESOLVED (51) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province commends the Provincial Elders' Conference and the MCNP Racial Justice Team in their efforts to collaborate with the Moravian Church Southern Province, ecumenical partners, and other organizations engaged in the work of racial justice and healing and encourages the continuation and expansion of these collaborative efforts, as well as continuing collaboration among Districts within the Province; and

Whereas, The Rev. Dr. Frank Crouch's historical research and scholarship on Moravians and slavery, and his related presentations, have broken the hearts of those who have heard the truth about the Moravian Church's history of complicit and implicit participation in the enslavement of human beings; and his work is crucial to the work of the MCNP Racial Justice Team, the MCNP, and the world-wide Moravian Church; therefore be it

RESOLVED (52) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders' Conference to support the ongoing research, scholarship, and preparation of resources of the Rev. Dr. Frank Crouch related to Moravians, slavery, and racism through assistance with securing eligible grants and sources of funding; and

Whereas, While the work toward racial justice and healing of the past four years represents a faithful and authentic beginning in the MCNP's work to dismantle and eliminate institutional, systemic, and personal racism, and there has been much courageous, painful, and hopeful participation on the part of many people across the Province, there is still much listening, learning, and dialogue, and extensive, long-term work needed; there is a "fierce urgency" to the work we must do now in light of generational harms and continuing racial inequities, disparities, and violence; there is much awareness and repentance and work to do on justice and healing for harms to Indigenous peoples; and there is great need to heal the wounds and repair relationships with siblings in Christ and others as we repent, pray, and work for God's beloved community; therefore be it

RESOLVED (53) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province commends congregations and members who have established racial justice teams or committees and/or who are actively working in their communities and lives for racial justice and healing; and encourages the consideration of establishing relationships with local organizing groups or larger groups such as Gamaliel, Poor People's Campaign, and others to further the work of racial justice and healing and justice advocacy; and be it further

RESOLVED (54) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province covenants to continue the work of racial justice and healing *until the one who began this good work among us brings it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ* (Phil. 1:6.)

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marion Boyle
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman

With Concurrence of the Finance Committee

Eleventh Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: Combatting White Supremacy

Whereas, Jesus’ teachings exemplified servant leadership (Matthew 20:25) and challenged those who dominated others; and in Acts 10:34 it says, “God shows no partiality between people: in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God; and

Whereas, white supremacy is the belief that white people are superior to those of all other races and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other ethnic and racial groups; and

Whereas, white supremacy is an historically based institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent for the purpose of maintaining and defending systems of wealth and power and privilege;¹ and

Whereas, scholar Frances Lee Ansley clarifies that “By ‘white supremacy’ I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings”;² and

Whereas, the Anti-Defamation League Center on Extremism (ADL) tracked a significant increase in white supremacist propaganda efforts, which included the distribution of racist, antisemitic and anti-LGBTQ+ fliers, stickers, banners, graffiti and posters, as well as laser projections in recent years (data shows a 38% increase in incidents from the previous year, with a total of 6,751 cases reported in 2022, compared with 4,876 in 2021—the highest number of white supremacist propaganda incidents ADL has ever recorded); and

¹ https://www.pym.org/annual-sessions/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/06/What_Is_White_Supremacy_Martinez.pdf

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/the-language-of-white-supremacy/542148/>

Whereas, the PBS News Hour reported on June 10, 2022 that “White Supremacists are riling up thousands on Social Media” and reported that white nationalists and supremacists, on social media accounts often run by young men, are building thriving, macho communities across social media platforms like Instagram, Telegram and TikTok, evading detection with coded hashtags and innuendo.” PBS also reported “that their snarky memes and trendy videos are riling up thousands of followers on divisive issues, including abortion, guns, immigration and LGBTQ rights,” and

Whereas, The Covenant for Christian Living states, “We will not hate, despise, slander, or otherwise injure anyone. We will ever strive to manifest love towards all people, to treat them in a kind and friendly manner, and in our dealings with them to approve ourselves upright, honest, and conscientious, as becomes children of God. Together with the universal Christian Church, we have a concern for this world, opening our heart and hand to our neighbors with the message of the love of God, and being ever ready to minister of our substance to their necessities (Matthew 25:40)” (Part V, Paragraph A), and

Whereas, many of our Ecumenical Partners have adopted statements and policies that speak against the injustices and destructive outcomes spawned by white supremacy (e.g. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resolution entitled “Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric,” as referenced below), therefore be it

RESOLVED (55) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province adopt the following resolution (adapted from the Social Policy Resolution CA 19.04.18 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) to resolve and proclaim that:

- White supremacy is racism and we condemn it;
- The love of God is for all people, without exception, and we proclaim it;
- The justice and mercy of God are for all people, without exception, and we proclaim this;
- Our religious and political leaders have a moral responsibility to condemn racist rhetoric and to speak with respect for the innate dignity of all persons, regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, or faith tradition and we call our leaders to honor this responsibility; and
- Language that refers to people of color or immigrants with words like “invasion” or “infestation” or “white replacement” is racist and we condemn it;
- We are called by Jesus to “love our neighbors as ourselves.” As persons called to love one another as God has loved us, we therefore proclaim our commitment to speak with one voice against racism and white supremacy. We stand with those who are targets of racist ideologies and actions. With them, we demand and will advocate for a more just, loving, and peaceful world where the gifts of all people are appreciated, and the lives of all people are treasured; and
- We call all congregations of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America to engage in communal study of the structures and rhetoric that empower and fuel racism and white supremacy and to take to heart the teaching of Scriptures, so we may all be

better equipped to speak boldly about the equal dignity of all persons in the eyes of God; and ask that the Racial Justice Team of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America suggest resources to congregations for pursuing this study.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 24, 2023

Twelfth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

- Re: *Christians Against Christian Nationalism*
- Whereas, God created humankind in God’s image (Genesis 1:27); and
- Whereas, God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God (Acts 10:34b-35); and
- Whereas, Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-39); and
- Whereas, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living states, “We will not hate, despise, slander, or otherwise injure anyone. We will ever strive to manifest love towards all people, to treat them in a kind and friendly manner, and in our dealings with them to approve ourselves upright, honest and conscientious, as becomes children of God. Together with the universal Christian Church, we have a concern for this world, opening our heart and hand to our neighbors with the message of the love of God, and being ever ready to minister of our substance to their necessities;”¹ and
- Whereas, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living further states, “Considering it a special privilege to live in a democratic society, we will faithfully fulfill the responsibilities of our citizenship, among which are intelligent and well-informed voting, a willingness to assume public office, guiding the decisions of government by the expression of our opinions, and supporting good government by our personal efforts;” and “Though giving our loyalty to the state of which we are citizens, we do recognize a higher loyalty to God and conscience (Acts 5:29).”² and
- Whereas, The Episcopal Church, an ecumenical partner of the Moravian Church Northern Province, has defined “Christian nationalism” as “... a commitment to combining Christian and American identities tied in with white supremacist ideologies...;” and that, “This ideology demands that Christianity be granted special treatment by the state while suggesting that the United States is an inherently Christian nation.

¹ MMCL @2018 The Interprovincial Board of Communication, Moravian Church in North America. V. A. p. 29, *Love Toward All*

² *Ibid.*, IV. B, p. 26 and C, p. 27

This is yet another hurtful ideology and one that draws in Christianity, a religion which we ...know as a movement of compassion, empathy, welcoming, and forgiveness, to overlay it with hurtful rhetoric, racial subjugation, and, too often, violence. The direct violence, intimidation, and distortion of scripture associated with “Christian nationalism” does not reflect the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the Episcopal Church has remained committed to condemning the ideology.”;³ and

Whereas, Christian Nationalism is a distortion of the gospel of Jesus Christ as evidenced in scripture, and the core and fundamental Moravian understanding of humanity, and the God-given equality of all people; and

Whereas, *Christians Against Christian Nationalism* was launched in 2019 and has issued a Statement⁴ expressing concern that Christian Nationalism is a persistent threat both to our religious communities and our democracy; and

Whereas, *Christians Against Christian Nationalism* is supported by ecumenical partners of the Moravian Church Northern Province including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church, and has been signed by heads of both denominations, i.e., The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, and The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church; and

Whereas, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, in an Oct. 26, 2022 seminar at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., “reiterated the Episcopal Church’s position that white Christian nationalism is a gross perversion of Christianity, and that Christians must refute such ideologies.”;⁵ and

Whereas, The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton and The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry have made their own statements as part of *Christians Against Christian Nationalism*,^{6 7} including, “The ELCA is committed to strengthening public space as a just place for all

³ <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr/eppn-series-on-deradicalization-introduction/>

⁴ See Addendum

⁵ <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2022/10/27/white-christian-nationalism-is-not-christianity-presiding-bishop-says-during-panel-discussion/>

⁶ “Christian nationalism identifies a human government with God’s will and seeks privilege for Christians from the state. Lutherans teach that government should be held accountable to God but not ever identified with God’s will. The ELCA is committed to strengthening public space as a just place for all regardless of religion or worldview and will defend the full participation of all in our religiously diverse society. This common statement is an important witness on these matters.” <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/endorsers>

⁷ “As followers of Jesus, his command to love our neighbors means neighbors of every type, of every faith, not just our own. Through our baptism and in our democracy, we are called to a way of love that creates a community in which the dignity of every human being is recognized and respected, and where all can have an equal say in the governing of our civic life. The violence, intimidation and distortion of scripture associated with “Christian nationalism” does not reflect the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, and so I stand with fellow leaders in the Christian community and call for a better way.” <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/endorsers>

regardless of religion or worldview and will defend the full participation of all in our religiously diverse society;” and, “The violence, intimidation and distortion of scripture associated with “Christian nationalism” does not reflect the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, and so I stand with fellow leaders in the Christian community and call for a better way;” and

Whereas, according to a recent survey⁸ conducted and compiled by Public Religion Research Institute (“PRRI”), “a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to conducting independent research at the intersection of religion, culture, and public policy,” Christian Nationalism is associated with racism⁹, antisemitism¹⁰, and violence;^{11 12} and

Whereas, in light of the rising threat and potential violence related to Christian Nationalism,¹³ and its distortion of the gospel of Jesus Christ, members of the

⁸ <https://www.prri.org/research/a-christian-nation-understanding-the-threat-of-christian-nationalism-to-american-democracy-and-culture/>

⁹ For example, the PRRI survey reports, “A majority of Americans (53%) believe that “generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for many Black Americans to work their way out of the lower class,” compared to 45% who disagree. However, 66% of Christian nationalism sympathizers and 70% of adherents reject this idea. Disagreement rises to more than three-quarters among white Christian nationalism sympathizers and adherents (77% and 83%, respectively).

Around four in ten Americans (41%) agree that discrimination against white Americans is as big of a problem as discrimination against Black Americans and other minorities, compared to 58% who disagree. Approximately two-thirds of Christian nationalism sympathizers (66%) and more than three-quarters of Christian nationalism adherents (77%) agree with this statement. Among Christian nationalism sympathizers and adherents who are white, agreement with this sentiment rises to 73% and 85%, respectively.

¹⁰ For example, the PRRI survey reports “fourteen percent of Americans say that the statement “Jewish people hold too many positions of power” somewhat or completely describes the United States today, while 82% say it describes the U.S. a little or not at all, including 67% who say it does not describe the country at all. The share who believe this antisemitic stereotype rises to 19% among Christian nationalism sympathizers and 23% among Christian nationalism adherents.”

¹¹ The PRRI Survey concluded, “These results give us confidence in the accuracy of the Christian nationalism scale we have developed here, where we show 9% of Americans qualifying as Christian nationalism adherents and an additional 19% qualifying as Christian nationalism sympathizers. If anything, the list experiment — which shows that nearly one in five Americans assert not only that the United States is a white Christian nation but also that they are willing to fight to preserve it — would suggest that the 9% estimate of Christian nationalism adherents may be conservative.”

¹² “The survey also examines “...how Christian nationalist views intersect with white identity, anti-Black sentiment, support of patriarchy, antisemitism, anti-Muslim sentiments, anti-immigrant attitudes, authoritarianism, and support for violence.”

¹³ <https://www.prri.org/research/a-christian-nation-understanding-the-threat-of-christian-nationalism-to-american-democracy-and-culture/>

Moravian Church would benefit from resources to study and discuss Christian Nationalism in order to address this grave and urgent concern; therefore be it

RESOLVED (56) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province rejects Christian Nationalism, which supports racism and white supremacy, and encourages the Provincial Elders' Conference to prayerfully consider joining our ecumenical partners in endorsing the Statement of *Christians Against Christian Nationalism* and issuing its own statement rejecting Christian Nationalism and calling for a better way; and be it further

RESOLVED (57) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province recommends curriculum, webinars, discussion guides, and other resources on Christian Nationalism available from *Christians Against Christian Nationalism* (<https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/resources>) for use by congregations and members; and encourages the reading and signing of the Statement prepared by *Christians Against Christian Nationalism*; and be it further

RESOLVED (58) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Northern Province Racial Justice Team to monitor educational resources and advocacy opportunities available from *Christians Against Christian Nationalism* and other ecumenical sources, and update congregations and members as resources and advocacy opportunities become available.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee on Church and Society

Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff

Secretary, Brenda Hoelman

June 24, 2023

ADDENDUM

Statement from Christians Against Christian Nationalism

As Christians, our faith teaches us everyone is created in God's image and commands us to love one another. As Americans, we value our system of government and the good that can be accomplished in our constitutional democracy. Today, we are concerned about a persistent threat to both our religious communities and our democracy — Christian nationalism.

Christian nationalism seeks to merge Christian and American identities, distorting both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be

Christian. It often overlaps with and provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation. We reject this damaging political ideology and invite our Christian brothers and sisters to join us in opposing this threat to our faith and to our nation.

As Christians, we are bound to Christ, not by citizenship, but by faith. We believe that:

- People of all faiths and none have the right and responsibility to engage constructively in the public square.
- Patriotism does not require us to minimize our religious convictions.
- One's religious affiliation, or lack thereof, should be irrelevant to one's standing in the civic community.
- Government should not prefer one religion over another or religion over nonreligion.
- Religious instruction is best left to our houses of worship, other religious institutions and families.
- America's historic commitment to religious pluralism enables faith communities to live in civic harmony with one another without sacrificing our theological convictions.
- Conflating religious authority with political authority is idolatrous and often leads to oppression of minority and other marginalized groups as well as the spiritual impoverishment of religion.
- We must stand up to and speak out against Christian nationalism, especially when it inspires acts of violence and intimidation—including vandalism, bomb threats, arson, hate crimes, and attacks on houses of worship—against religious communities at home and abroad.

Whether we worship at a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple, America has no second-class faiths. All are equal under the U.S. Constitution. As Christians, we must speak in one voice condemning Christian nationalism as a distortion of the gospel of Jesus and a threat to American democracy.

<https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/statement>

Thirteenth Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: A Call for LGBTQIA+ Justice and Healing

Whereas, the 2018 Northern Province Synod, in an effort to be more accepting and affirming of the children of God, passed a resolution on Human Sexuality/Gender Identities which:

- affirms the dignity and rights of persons of all gender identities;
- reaffirms its open welcome to all people by specifically recognizing that persons of all gender identities are also under God's care;
- recognizes that persons of all gender identities can be members of our church because they are children of God and seek to know God's grace which is freely given to all people who have faith in God;
- supports and affirms persons of all gender identities allowing them to celebrate their lives as individuals, couples, and families within the bounds of the church and under the grace which our Creator imparts to all persons;
- encourages the church shall continue to enter into dialogue in a loving manner with persons of all gender identities in order to understand their lives and their spiritual walk; and encourages pastors and church leaders to engage in training and education related to the understanding of and care for persons of all gender identities." (R&E 2018, pp. 17-18, R. 21-26); and

Whereas, many LGBTQIA+ persons in the Moravian Church have been harmed by past and current church policy and behavior; and therefore be it

RESOLVED (59) The 2023 Synod of the MCNP acknowledges behavior that has caused harm to the spiritual growth and emotional lives of LGBTQIA+ persons; and therefore be it

RESOLVED (60) The 2023 Synod of the MCNP requests the Provincial Elders Conference of the MCNP to explore and discover how past and current policies and behaviors have harmed and may continue to harm LGBTQIA+ church members, clergy and candidates for ordination and initiate a process for acknowledgement, healing, and to affirmatively seek reconciliation with those siblings who have left the church; and be it further

RESOLVED (61) The 2023 Synod of the Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders Conference (PEC) to encourage all Northern Province Churches to follow a process of becoming open and affirming of all Human Sexuality and Gender identities via the process, reconciling in Christ (RIC), provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rolhoff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 24, 2023

Church and Society (#2 Bright Lemon)

Fourteenth Partial and Final Report
of the Church and Society Committee

RE: A CALL FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

Whereas, Jesus had compassion for all people and his ministry included "healing every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 9:35); and

Whereas, In May 2023, the US Department of Health and Human Services issued a report stating that the US "is facing an unprecedented mental health crisis. [and] The crisis isn't just affecting adults, it is devastating young people, and people from every background are impacted."¹ and

Whereas, In March 2023, the Canadian Mental Health Association reported that, "Recent research indicates Canadians' mental health is worsening due to rising cost of living. Canadians affected by inflation are experiencing: higher self-rated anxiety (33%) and depression (32%), higher rates of recent diagnosis of a mood disorder since the pandemic (14%), and higher suicidal ideation (31%);² and

Whereas, Dr. Vivek Murthy, the U.S. Surgeon General, released an advisory declaring loneliness a new public health epidemic in the United States, with significant negative impact on physical and mental health;³ and

Whereas, the church of Jesus is called to offer the healing power of God's love to those suffering from mental health concerns, loneliness, and isolation; therefore be it

RESOLVED (62) The 2023 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province urges its members and congregations to take steps to address the current mental health crisis, loneliness, and isolation including, becoming knowledgeable about mental illness and helpful ways to respond; offering support and encouragement to those experiencing mental health concerns and crises and their families; and advocating for adequate and accessible mental health care.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Church and Society
Chair, Marian Boyle Rohloff
Secretary, Brenda Hoelman
June 24, 2023

¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/fact-sheet-celebrating-mental-health-awareness-month-2023.html>

² <https://cmha.ca/news/budget-2023-out-of-touch-with-mental-health-crisis/>

³ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>