

Public Witness Statement passed by 94% of the vote on October 2, 2016

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church-Unitarian Universalist
Congregational Public Witness in Support of
the Black Lives Matter Movement and Racial Justice**

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists have a goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

WHEREAS, allowing injustice to go unchallenged violates our principles;

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter movement has gained powerful traction in conjunction with recent tragic events involving, in particular, police brutality and institutionalized racism that target the black community;

WHEREAS, Tanisha Anderson, Rekia Boyd, Michael Brown, Miriam Carey, Michelle Cusseaux, Shelly Frey, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Kayla Moore, Tamir Rice, and Tony Robinson are just a few names of people who were recently killed by the racism that exists in the United States today;

WHEREAS, people of all ages and races are killed by law enforcement, yet black people ages 20-24 are seven times more likely to be killed by law enforcement;

WHEREAS, mass incarceration fueled by for-profit prisons and racially biased police practices drive the disproportionate imprisonment of black and brown Americans;

WHEREAS, the school-to-prison pipeline is an urgent concern because 40% of students expelled from U.S. public schools are black and one out of three black men is incarcerated during his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, we must continue to support the Black Lives Matter movement and Black-led racial justice organizations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church-Unitarian Universalist calls members to action, to become closer to a just world community, and to prevent future incidents of this nature;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church-Unitarian Universalist of Charlottesville, VA urges members to engage in intentional learning spaces to organize for racial justice with recognition of the interconnected nature of racism coupled with systems of oppression that impact people based on class, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and language;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church-Unitarian Universalist encourages members to work toward police reform and prison abolition (which seeks to replace the current prison system with a system that is more just and equitable); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church-Unitarian Universalist recognizes that the fight for civil rights and equality is as real today as it was decades ago and TJMC-UU will take initiative in collaboration with local and national organizations fighting for racial justice against the harsh racist practices to which many black people are exposed.

No matter who you are, black lives matter, and a system of fair, transformative, and restorative justice that is accountable to communities is something to which each of us has a right. Unitarian Universalists and our greater society have the power to make this happen. Let's do it!