**First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak Antiracism Statement**Adopted by Session on October 15, 2024

We declare in our mission statement that “We are always growing as a community of believers, reaching out in love to the world. Our community is centered on the promise of God's grace given freely to all and the love of God in Jesus Christ. Our message is one of hope. Our actions are focused on justice. Our life together is centered in love and compassion.” Look at the key words: community...grace...love...hope...justice...compassion. Racism, whether explicit or in its many and varied implicit forms, is none of these and is antithetical to our mission.

According to 1 John 4:20-21: “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.”

We name racism for what it is: sin. We recognize that racism has been, and continues to be, harmful to people of color and to white people in our church and our wider community. We admit our own participation in racism even when that admission challenges us.

We affirm our opposition to racism in all its forms. We reject racism in our church, both overt and hidden. People of all backgrounds are vital to the body of Christ, and everyone’s participation is of vital and equal importance. We ask God’s forgiveness for our past shortcomings. We ask for wisdom to know when we are failing to love one another as God wants, and guidance in intentionally being instruments of God’s love toward all people.

We reject racism in our community, which is made weaker by enmity, oppression, and segregation. We are strengthened when people of all races and ethnicities work together for the common good.

We will seek to build our capacity for antiracism. We will listen to and connect with others, actively pursuing opportunities to learn from those in our church and community and how their diverse pasts shape them and altogether broaden our world. We will examine ourselves for the ways race and racism have shaped who we are today. As we learn and grow, we will invite each other into greater understanding and practice of antiracist behaviors.

We reject despair and cynicism. We are a people of faith, hope, and love. We trust that God can change hearts and bring reconciliation and renewal. We pledge to follow the path of Christ, seeking to love God and our neighbors.