

**STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE
ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES
December 14, 2014**

We, the members of the Ending Racism Committee of the Unitarian Society of Germantown, are deeply concerned about the recent decisions (in Ferguson, MO and Staten Island, NY) not to indict law enforcement personnel in the killing of unarmed Black men.

We believe these decisions reflect and reinforce the stereotyped pervasive fear in the USA that Black men are inherently savage, and therefore can be subjected to harsher police action, sanctioned by the courts and the entire criminal justice system.

As a congregation of conscience, we abhor the unequal treatment of African Americans by the criminal justice system that has resulted in these and similar tragedies that have occurred around the country. These incidents reveal how institutional racism influences the recruitment, training, and supervision of law enforcement personnel.

If this perception, that people have been conditioned to, persists unchecked, it will result in even greater inequality, continued sanctioned murder, and increasing damage to our society.

We are aware of the fact that a majority of police officers are good, hard-working people who often endanger themselves to protect the public.

However, we pledge to join the growing numbers of U.S. citizens who have been outraged and saddened by these deaths, in demanding rapid reform to our criminal justice system. We pledge to educate ourselves and our congregation through study and dialogue to gain greater insight. We resolve to fight against the above-established mind-set through voting, petitioning, picketing, lobbying, and other lawful means - in order to change the racist stereotypes and the catastrophic practices that result from them.

My signature below indicates my agreement with the above statement
