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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Cedarville University Focuses on Racial Unity at Service**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Cedarville University will hold a prayer service for racial unity on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 10 a.m. during the university's chapel. The student body will gather around Cedar Lake at the center of campus, while observing proper social distancing in accordance with COVID-19 protocols and the university's Caring Well. Staying Well. plan.

The university's Kingdom Diversity Committee is organizing the event. The prayer for racial unity will be livestreamed on Cedarville's Facebook page and at [cedarville.edu/chapellive](https://cedarville.edu/chapellive).

"Cedarville president Dr. Thomas White began the kingdom diversity initiative, and he wants to see it flow through every aspect of our community," noted Derrick Green, chair of the department of communication and committee spokesperson. "And the best way for us to start is through prayer."

The prayer service for racial unity will begin with White speaking on the importance of this subject for Cedarville, and why it is a priority. Four members of the Kingdom Diversity Committee will then offer Scripture verses and prayers. Those leading prayers include Sarah Gump, manager of digital and social media; Patrick Oliver, director of the criminal justice program; Carolyn Barnett, assistant professor of nursing; and Green. White will then close the service at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Other members of the committee include: Sarah Shaw, a Master of Divinity student; Rahul Jacobs, director of advancement experiences; Dr. Mindy May, director for student development and dean of women; Dr. Kevin Jones, dean of the school of education; and Dr. Mark Owens, assistant professor of New Testament theology.

According to Green, the recent social unrest around the country contributed to the need for this conversation, but it's a conversation that ultimately is happening because of Cedarville's core identity.

"Biblical diversity is a part of living out our faith, and that's what Cedarville is preparing students to do," Green said. "We can celebrate our differences because the gospel unifies us as one. We're all on level ground at the foot of the cross."

"Because diversity is a biblical value, we have the opportunity to lead the way in how Christians address the issue of diversity and how society addresses diversity."

As a multiracial man of Caribbean descent whose academic pursuits explore the biblical position on diversity, Dr. Mark Owens has plenty of interest in the subject. But he is also the father of an adopted multiracial daughter.

"I love Cedarville and all of the students here," Owens commented. "Because I love Cedarville, I've tried to do whatever I could to support minority students and international students in and out of the classroom. And I would love for my daughter to be a student here someday, at a place where she is valued, honored, respected and loved."

The prayer service for racial unity is just the first step in the Kingdom Diversity Committee's efforts to talk about and promote diversity on campus. This committee will plan future diversity-related events and recommend policy improvements.

"The mission of the Kingdom Diversity Committee is to help us live out our theology at Cedarville University," White said. "We are relying on them for wisdom about how to advance diversity within the mission of the university."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,380 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).