We are writing on behalf of the United Reformed Church and our partner church in the United States of America (the United Church of Christ), and in solidarity with Native American communities, out of a shared concern about the urgent need to address the racially demeaning name, mascot, and imagery of the Washington national football league team, the ‘Washington Redskins’.

This team is expected to play at Wembley Stadium, London, on 30th October. We wish to register both our disappointment at the team’s failure to change its name, mascot and imagery, despite international and national concerns that have been raised over the racism and insensitivity towards Native Americans, as well as, the fact that the game is allowed to be played here at Wembley Stadium.

The use of racist imagery, language and stereotyping is an affront to all that makes us human, undermine the dignity and human rights of fellow human beings, and negatively impact upon self image, self awareness, and self esteem. Moreover, the continuing misappropriation of Native American cultural names and images, as apparent in this NFL team, is exploitative as it is degrading. As you may well be aware, the derivation of the term 'Redskin' is known to be offensive, as it pertains to the historic abuse of Native American people. It has been used to deride and insult their culture, heritage and identity.

Wembley Stadium, as an organisation, has a clear list of regulations which include the strict banning of “racial, homophobic or discriminatory abuse, chanting or harassment”. The Football (Offences) Act 1991 also prohibits racial chanting in stadiums. Wembley also says it will confiscate flags that carry “offensive, discriminatory or inflammatory messaging”, which surely would include those brought to the game.

We therefore call on Wembley stadium, already committed to ‘showing a red card to racism’, and NFL UK to re-consider their decision to host this game here. Such a decision suggests to the wider global public an insensitivity and complicity in the marginalisation of a minority group for entertainment and financial gain.

We are confident that you would agree with us that there should be no place for racism, stereotyping and marginalisation within British sport and in society. Therefore, in solidarity with our Native American sisters and brothers, we join every major Native American organization, along with churches, civil rights organizations, media outlets, sports writers and journalists, President Obama and politicians in the UK, to voice our support for changing the team’s name.

To this end we therefore express our deep concern for this upcoming game and call on the sporting bodies to be mindful of their own commitment to human rights and to take necessary action.