

June 7, 2020

To our neighbors and friends,

Like most of you, the events over the past few days and weeks have led us to a sense of emotional and spiritual exhaustion. This is understandable when we witness the killing of yet another unarmed black man by the people that are sworn to protect us. Yet again we had to watch as an unarmed person of color was tragically taken far too soon by the very sin that stains the fabric of this nation and the combined church of God, racism.

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?” (Micah 6:8)

We commend the protesters and demonstrators for their commitment to justice and calling those of us to repent for the sin of racism. In doing so they bring to light what has been hidden for centuries. The voices calling for justice and the very basic right to live free from harassment and discrimination can no longer go unheard. When we fail to embody the very basic ideals of equality and freedom, we do a disservice to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is antithetical to what it means to be a Christian.

We lament the church’s failure to faithfully, powerfully, and consistently bear witness to racism in our society historically and in our own time. We confess and repent for the times when the church has been silent in the face of racial injustice.

We, the undersigned faith leaders of Delmarva, and on behalf of our individual communities, condemn the killing of George Floyd and all the unjust killings and abuse of unarmed black and brown people across this nation. In addition, we condemn forms of white supremacy and racism in our communities and in our nation. As faith leaders called to repentance, we will engage our individual congregations in the task of anti-racism training and work that will fulfill the Gospel command to love one another.

In Christ,

The Rev. William (Bill) Gohl, Jr., Bishop
Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA

The Rev. Peggy A. Johnson, Bishop
Eastern Pennsylvania Conference
The United Methodist Church

The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown, Bishop
The Episcopal Church in Delaware

The Rev. Jason R. Churchill
Ecumenical Officer DE/MD Synod, ELCA
Pastor, St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Wilm. DE

The Rev. Robert P. Hall, OSL
Ecumenical Officer
The United Methodist Church

The Rev. Canon Martha Kirkpatrick
The Episcopal Church in Delaware

Rev. Shada Sullivan
Pastor, The Church of the Holy City

Rev. Dr. Tracy Keenan
Missional Presbyter
New Castle Presbytery

Elder Bob Schminkey
Stated Clerk
New Castle Presbytery

Rev. Nathaniel W Pierce
Ecumenical Officer
Episcopal Diocese of Easton

Rev. Freeman L. Palmer
Conference Minister
Central Atlantic Conference
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Pastor Barbara Melosh, Dean
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