



Presbytery of Charlotte

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Dear Presbytery of Charlotte Leaders,

Across America and the seven-county Presbytery of Charlotte, people of faith were outraged over the murder of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia. Now, we are all witness to the brutal police slaying of another black man, George Floyd in Minneapolis. As people of faith, we must not allow Ahmaud Arbery's modern-day lynching and George Floyd's shocking death to become two more footnotes in the long history of unanswered violence against black and brown people.

Only people of color can know the deep trauma of this repeated pattern – but it's time for the rest of us to rise up. Tolerance, complacency and silence in the face of such acts only encourages the institutionalized racism that is baked into our city, state and nation. We pray urgently for an awakening in the hearts of all to heal America's original sin and its life-robbing legacies.

Scripture commends those who run the race and keep our faith that is built on the twin pillars of God's love and justice. We honor how many have acted in solidarity with Ahmaud and his family by running 2.23 miles in recognition of his birthday, February 23. Dismantling racism, however, requires that we run a far longer, more demanding distance, one that calls those of us in positions of privilege and power to name the unmistakable, toxic truth of white supremacy. In our churches and across the community, we must strive for the long-term and just cure that will require sacrifice if we are to transform the institutions and systems that shape our every-day living.

As a Matthew 25 presbytery, our promise to follow the Prince of Peace demands that we confront racism when we see it, in any form, however subtle or obvious, public or private. To follow Christ's command to love neighbor as self is to ensure that ALL of our neighbors not only can walk or run down the street without fear for their lives but that they enjoy true equality and equity in our nation's promise.

Yes, in these pandemic days, we are confronted with a new challenge. The truth is that Covid-19 is only deepening old, racial disparities. We must recognize how these times will heighten the anxiety and fears of some who may be more prone to act violently. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the longer challenge to bring about repair, restoration and reconciliation of all of God's people, just as we are reconciled to God in the risen Christ.

We are far, far beyond "enough is enough." On this Pentecost, let us receive anew the gift and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to close the gaps that divide us individually and structurally. We urgently pray that a new, lasting fire of conviction will burn in all of our hearts to make black lives matter once and for all.

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Rev. Dr. Jan Edmiston
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