

*“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”*

Isaiah 56:7

Dear Trinity Community,

Our society is changing - a turning point from what we have known. With this change, there is a deep sadness within our community. It is a sadness that is difficult to see and to hear. We all have lived with it for generations, some aware and others unaware. Yet, here we are in the epicenter of consciousness. In our beautiful state, filled with good people, George Floyd was murdered in front of our eyes for all the world to see, a life extinguished, a child of God taken from us. We are left with unsettling feelings of grief. 8 minutes and 46 seconds changed our lives and perhaps for the first time, many of us are realizing, to varying degrees, that our world is not black and white - but black vs. white - a recognition of division.

As a vestry, we are called to speak a truth. At a time when we need to come together and support each other, we are seeing hurt and we are causing hurt. This letter serves to call awareness to this concern and bring us closer together. Our new bishop has called all of us to listen, pray, and act during this time. This is an invitation to love and support one another. We acknowledge that we don't have all the answers, but know that through listening, responding, praying, loving, and working towards a common good, our community will grow in spirit, love, and appreciation for each other. We are committed to this, just as we are committed to you.

*“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”*

- 1 Corinthians:12

At Trinity, our mission has always been and continues to be to be a parish of welcoming and belonging, regardless of who you are or where you are in your faith journey. Our baptismal promise is primary to our spiritual foundation. As Devon framed it so beautifully for us: “At the core of our theology as Episcopalians is our Baptismal Covenant, in which we promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves. We also promise to respect the dignity of every human being. Living into these promises is a lifetime pursuit, a way of life that takes many forms and requires different things at different times.”

So here we are at a “different time”, a time of division, a time of sadness. Grief comes in stages. It is a journey, one that is deeply personal and yet shared by all. We grieve for George Floyd and his family, we grieve for our community and the deep wounds ever so visible in the charred ruins that were once buildings in Minneapolis, and we grieve for ourselves - a deep sorrow etched into our hearts. As a faith community, we acknowledge that all of us are on a different journey. For some, we might just be recognizing injustices for the first time; for others, injustices occur on a daily basis.

As we move forward together during this “different time”, we all understand change is challenging and it sometimes makes us feel uncomfortable - feelings collide - denial, anger, sadness. When they do, we must be careful to not discount people’s truth, either through argument or through silence. This only causes hurt and fails to bring us together in our humanness. In the words of Martin Luther King, "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people.”

This is a time when many of us want nothing more than to return to what feels comfortable, turning our eyes away from injustice. We must do more. As a vestry we are committed to drawing strength from our diversity - to learn about injustice, whether that is racial injustice, poverty, opportunity gaps, or mass incarceration of people of color. We are faithful to looking inward and moving towards inclusion, so all can be heard. On issues of human dignity, we will not stand by idly. To our black and brown Trinity members, we see you, we support you, we love you. You matter and your life matters to us.

We will continue to encourage spending time listening to one another and praying for deeper understanding. Our website now includes resources to help us reflect and move towards diversity and inclusion. We support our clergy preaching about this, our town hall meeting on racial equity, and the pilgrimages to George Floyd's memorial. These are all just small steps, but they are steps in the right direction. We will continue as a church to Listen, Pray and Act.

In peace and love,

The Vestry