

June 3, 2020

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.  
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
I will not accept them;  
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.  
Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.  
But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.  
-Amos 5:21-24

Dear Friends –

How do we put words to such horrific actions that are indescribable, inhumane, and brutal? How do we find the language to describe photo opportunities that are an affront to people of faith? How do we respond when we are living in the midst of a pandemic from a virus that is still very much alive?

We write to you as leaders in the Presbytery of Newark – people of color and people of privilege. But together we join our voices in a call to prayer for our world, for our country, for our state, and for ourselves. June 19 – Juneteenth - is the traditional day of celebration for African Americans over the end of slavery. We invite you to join your brothers and sisters in faith across the Presbytery of Newark – wherever you are – at Noon – to pray. To pray for an end to racism. To pray for an end to senseless killings because of the color of one's skin. To remember the lives lost. As leaders in the Presbytery of Newark, we cry out for justice at the murder of George Floyd and all whose lives have ended in like manner.

We also call to your attention a 21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge which you can find at <https://www.eddiemoorej.com/21daychallenge>. There is another version of this challenge, hosted by Myers Park Presbyterian Church at <https://www.myersparkpres.org>.

The passage quoted at the top of this letter includes a verse that many of us have heard numerous times, asking that justice will “roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” We quote this verse because we long for justice and righteousness, and we turn to this verse praying that God will step in and do something to repair our broken world.

We write to you as leaders in the Presbytery of Newark – as people of faith and morality – to decry the actions taken by, and on behalf of, President Trump at St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. We do not write to engage in a political debate. Yet to use tear gas to

disperse law abiding citizens was unconscionable; to engage in a photo op in front of St. John's sign while holding a Bible was disgraceful. To President Trump we commend the words of Micah 6:8 – "...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

In Christ,

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