

Solidarity Statement for St. Titus' Episcopal Church

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over-- like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?
--Langston Hughes

Racism, deeply embedded in the psyche of America, has been allowed to exist for far too long in our country. For over 400 years, People of Color have been subjected to systemic and systematic deprivation of basic human rights guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. George Floyd, a black man, was deprived of those very rights during an 8 minute and 46 second lynching witnessed by millions around the world. Sadly, this was but the latest incident of racial brutality and injustice—a callous indifference to human life—as if black lives do not matter. Far too often, the demands for justice, for understanding, for compassion are met with silence or feigned sympathy which can only be interpreted as consent to the continuing denigration and dehumanization of black men and women. But with the death of George Floyd, voices demanding justice are calling the conscience of this country to account. The Church, far too often condoning the sin of racism implicit in its own practices, inaction and silence, has turned a deaf ear to God's command that God's people "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5:24. We believe that in this moment of human crisis, God is calling us to account for our very violation of Jesus' commandment that we love one another as he loved us.

Like many other acts of racism, the death of George Floyd was no less than a modern-day lynching bearing all the vestiges of the brutality and depraved indifference to the value of human life that has characterized the victimization of black people since their earliest days in this country. We are a congregation that has heard the cries of those who thirst for justice and equality. We believe that when a black man can no longer breathe, victimized by racism and injustice, all of God's People are equally victims of that racism as well. We are diminished, deprived of the abundant life Jesus promised. Therefore, we must answer the clarion call to action that will no longer make peace with oppression and will make real God's command to love our neighbors as ourselves.

First and foremost, we as God's People at St. Titus' must seek repentance and amendment of life for ourselves and on behalf of this community for the sin of racism and the destructive patterns and practices it has fostered for generations. For too long, prejudice, discrimination, inequality, and injustice have victimized this community resulting in systemic social, educational, and economic disparities that persist to this very day. And, blacks have a disproportionately higher incidence of, and death due to, COVID19. This is almost certainly due to healthcare disparities causing untreated co-morbidity factors. With God's help and by God's grace, we seek courage and wisdom to stand with this community in the name of God's justice and love for all God's people. To serve our community, devoting our time, talents and treasure to better know and actively engage with our neighbors which includes NCCU and CC Spaulding students, faculty and staff. We also pledge to seek out and foster relationships with the powerless and those whose voices are not heard, and to advocate with them so that the dignity of every human is respected. We honor and celebrate the struggles, the history and complexities of this community and seek to find common ground among groups concerning issues that affect the welfare of our community. We will listen to others, be visible, and speak out in the face of injustice, inequality, and racism. We have never feared working for truth and justice – for what is veracious— especially in opposition to miscarriages of justice and the ruthless deaths of black Americans.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, the time is always right to do what is right. To love our neighbors as we love ourselves, compels us to do what is right. Our liberation from injustice and racial strife springs from that deep rooted love—the fulfillment of God's dream that when people of

all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual identities, and backgrounds RISE up together their faith can move mountains. Continuing to allow the fabric of this country to be destroyed by racism is no longer an option. God is calling us to embrace our better natures—to be free of the shackles of racism that have imprisoned us since the inception of this country. We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us who tirelessly worked for the cause of justice, equality and freedom and we have no less a responsibility to assume their mantle in opposing racial injustice as we embolden ourselves, step out in faith and forge a legacy for future generations. We've come this far by faith; we dare not turn back now.

Adopted by the Vestry of St. Titus' Episcopal Church on July 19, 2020