Aware | Prepare | Act
RESOURCES & TOOLKIT for MCC CHURCHES
Responding to Racism, White Supremacists, and Hate Rallies

MCC
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
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AWARE – PREPARE - ACT

18 August 2017

Dear MCC Colleagues,

We are all reeling from the onslaught of blatant white supremacist groups attacking Charlottesville, Virginia, and receiving cover from the White House. More than ever, we are required to show solidarity and respond both to blatant expressions of hatred but also to dig deeply beneath the surface of a country built on the genocide of Native peoples and the enslavement of people of African descent.

If you have any doubts about the urgency of this situation, please watch HBO’s up close coverage of all the events in Charlottesville: https://news.vice.com/story/vice-news-tonight-full-episode-charlottesville-race-and-terror

More white supremacist actions are occurring across the country. You will need to decide how to respond at the local church level, and we are beginning a process or providing resources to you. Right now, we are providing:

- List of upcoming events and opportunities to resist white supremacist groups.
- Sample media release from MCC Richmond, Virginia
- Sample letter to the editor
- MCC Statement of Faith and Core Values
- Additional resources

As you write sermons, as your letters and op-eds are published, and when you discover valuable resources, please share them with us. We will also update you with quotes from MCC leaders, which can be used in your publications, talking points, and additional resources. Our work will be ongoing.

Gratitude is extended to those who assisted with the collection of resources for this toolkit: Rev. Candy Holmes, Rev. Dr. Roland Stringfellow, Rev. Brendan Boone, Rev. Dr. Elijah Nealy, PAD Working Group, MCC Richmond, Rev. Elder Rachelle Brown.

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(SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE from MCC Richmond)

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE:

Contact: Name Email Mobile Phone

(Title of Statement)

The Metropolitan Community Church of Richmond joins in solidarity with all those affected and impacted by the racist hate, violence and injustice of white supremacists and alt-right activists this past Saturday in Charlottesville. We believe that acts of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and hatred, as well as any form of violence and marginalization, are evil and cannot be ignored.

As people of God, we boldly proclaim and share the beauty of God’s inclusive love, hope, grace ... and so much more ... with ALL people. We do not and will not endorse racism, hate or systems of violence and injustice of any kind. Instead, we are a public voice bringing hope, change and courage to one another, our city, our country and our world by radically sharing God’s love with ALL people.

Metropolitan Community Churches around the world are no strangers to acts of violence, bigotry, intimidation, sexism and racism. For nearly 50 years, we have stood against hate and violence even as homophobic troublemakers burned our churches and gathering spots killing innocent people while local officials and the mainstream media were largely silent. None of this defeated us for we are a people who believe God’s love is stronger than hatred, violence or any act of terror or injustice. We believe God’s gifts of love, grace and acceptance are for ALL people regardless of skin color, race, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity. We strive to be a place of safety for ALL people to be accepted, loved and valued just the way we are. We are a voice for God’s inclusive justice and equality for ALL people and we will not be silenced.

We pray for those whose hearts are filled with racism, violence, bigotry, hatred, ignorance and injustice. We pray that God’s love will break through these barriers and help us see each other as human beings worthy of respect and kindness.

In tragedies of violence and hatred, we are reminded that whatever our differences, we can accept and honor those differences while also sharing love and grace with one another ... standing firmly in Jesus’ teaching to love one another as God loves us. In this, we celebrate the diversity and beauty of ALL God’s people.

Because we trust in God’s love and the teachings of Jesus, there is no need for fear. As a faith community, we stand together against hate, bigotry, violence and injustice of any kind while sharing the beauty and light of life ... believing the light of our Creator’s love shines in darkness and the darkness will not extinguish it.

To learn more about the Metropolitan Church of Richmond review our website: mccrichmond.org.

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Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

- Print versions are usually only about 100 words
- Online commentary can be longer, but sometimes briefer is better
- Have singular focus; drive that point
- Hook reader with strong first sentence.
- End with memorable last sentence and/or call to action

Sample is provided below:

Cities across the U.S. are being targeted by white supremacy groups carrying their message of hate. In Charlottesville, civic leaders took stock of public monuments, which paid tribute to slavery, and made the right choice to remove them. In response, white supremacists attacked the city. We need to do the right thing today in each U.S. community. Each of us must ask, “Where are the buildings named for racists and statues honoring bigots?” Place them in a museum. Create a movement to name buildings and hoist statues to honor people of all races who made this city a better place.

MCC Statement of Faith

Preamble

Metropolitan Community Churches is one chapter in the story of the Church, the Body of Christ. We are people on a journey, learning to live into our spirituality, while affirming our bodies, our genders, our sexualities. We don't all believe exactly the same things. And yet in the midst of our diversity, we build community, grounded in God's radically inclusive love for all people. We are part of an ongoing conversation on matters of belief and faith, shaped by scripture and the historic creeds, building on those who have come before us. Our chapter begins when God says to us: "Come, taste, and see."

Our Faith

"Come, taste, and see." Jesus Christ, You invite all people to Your open table. You make us Your people, a beloved community. You restore the joy of our relationship with God, even in the midst of loneliness, despair, and degradation. We are each unique and we all belong, a priesthood of all believers. Baptized and filled with Your Holy Spirit, You empower us to be Your healing presence in a hurting world.

We expect to see Your reign on earth as it is in heaven as we work toward a world where everyone has enough, wars cease, and all creation lives in harmony. We affirm Your charge to all of humanity to care for the land, sea, and air. Therefore, we will actively resist systems and structures which are destroying Your creation.

With all of creation we worship You—every tribe, every language, every people, every nation. We know You by many names, Triune God, beyond comprehension, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, who invites us to the feast.

Amen.
MCC Denominational Core Values

**Inclusion** Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We want to continue to be conduits of faith where everyone is included in the family of God and where all parts of our being are welcomed at God’s table.

**Community** Offering a safe and open community for people to worship, learn, and grow in their faith is our deep desire. We are committed to equipping ourselves and each other to do the work that God has called us to do in the world.

**Spiritual-Transformation** Providing a message of liberation from the oppressive religious environment of our day or to those experiencing God for the first time is what guides our ministry. We believe that when people are invited to experience God through the life and ministry of Christ, lives will be transformed.

**Justice** Working to talk less and do more, we are committed to resisting the structures that oppress people and standing with those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems, being guided always by our commitment to Global Human Rights.

**Websites**

**Southern Poverty Law Center:**
https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/08/07/extremists-unite-right-rally-possible-historic-alt-right-showcase

**Anti-Defamation League**
https://www.adl.org/

**Color of Change**
https://www.colorofchange.org/

**Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation**
https://www.glaad.org/

**RESOURCES**

**Southern Poverty Law Center:** "Ten Ways to Fight Hate"

**Auburn Seminary:** There is No ‘Alt Left’ – There Are Just We The People Seeking Justice For All
http://auburnseminary.org/no-alt-left-just-people-seeking-justice/

**Western States Center:** Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups
http://bit.ly/2uQuYDf

**Auburn Seminary:** Will America Pick Up Its Cross?
http://auburnseminary.org/will-america-pick-cross/

**Auburn University:** What I Saw in Charlottesville
http://auburnseminary.org/what-i-saw-in-charlottesville/
Additional Resources for Social Action and White Supremacy
Black Lives Matter Fall 2016 Syllabus, © 2017 Frank Leon Roberts
http://www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com/fall2016/

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
https://nationalseedproject.org/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack

Showing Up for Racial Justice
http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/

Additional Resources for Ministry
“Black Bodies, White Souls” by Austin Channing
http://austinchanning.com/blog/2014/8/bodies-souls

Emily Scott on Preaching on Ferguson and How to Begin

Resources on Preaching on Racism
https://politicaleconomyofmisery.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/resources-for-preaching-on-racism.pdf

Crass, Chris. Towards the “Other America”: Anti-Racist Resources for White People Taking Action for Black Lives Matter
Download the free e-book here: http://www.chriscrass.org/books.html

Founded in 1968, Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) has been at the vanguard of civil and human rights movements by addressing issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, economics, climate change, aging, and global human rights. MCC was the first to perform same gender marriages and has been on the forefront of the struggle towards marriage equality in the USA and other countries worldwide. MCC recognizes a state of need around the world in the areas of human rights and justice. As people of faith, MCC endeavors to build bridges that liberate and unite voices of sacred defiance. MCC leads from the margins and transforms.