

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

George Floyd died on Memorial Day, 2020 while pinned down by police on a street in Minneapolis. His death, recorded for the nation and world to watch, shocked the conscience of millions and joined a long litany of racial injustices that stretches back to the origins of slavery in America.

As Christian pastors and church leaders who seek to emulate Jesus Christ in love for people of all nations, tongues and tribes (Revelation 7:9), we stand beside our African American brothers and sisters to lament this interracial violence and all expressions of hate. We acknowledge their special suffering, adding our prayers and outcry for justice for George Floyd and all people of color, wholly beloved and created in the image of God. (Genesis 1: 26-27)

We repent of the silence of white Christians on racial inequities and the inadequacy of our efforts to practice love toward all neighbors. (Luke 10: 25-37)

We commit to pursue the cause of justice so that all people are treated as “members of the household of God.” (Ephesians 2:19)

To this end, we urge our state, county, and municipal leaders require police officers be retrained as protectors and servants of the people and that there be increased accountability, emphasis on de-escalation of conflict and other reforms. Beyond this, we urge all leaders to pursue policies and plans that remove the many vestiges of racism still ingrained in the very structure of our communities.

Racial injustice is not exclusively a problem for law enforcement and elected leaders to address. Here are examples of actions that can be taken by all of us:

- Insist on more effective community-based policing and training to transform our local law enforcement.
- Support efforts of local schools to provide the same educational and extra-curricular opportunities for all students.
- Vote on August 4th to extend Medicaid coverage for Missourians who fall below the eligibility threshold for federal assistance to purchase health insurance, yet are not reached by Missouri’s current Medicaid program.
- Increase our awareness of disparate impacts of all policies and practices across our communities and supporting those which are most equitable for all.

As followers of Jesus Christ, it is our greatest commandment that we love God with our whole heart and love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:36-39). May God shed grace on us all.

- *Signed by the following Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ruling Elders, Deacons and Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):*