This Time, There Must Be Real Change

At this time of anguish and suffering, the Association of Faith Communities of Santa Cruz joins in solidarity with the millions of Americans who continue to demonstrate their passion and express their commitment for a more just America, an America free from systemic racism, police brutality, rampant poverty, inequity, and resulting homelessness. We reaffirm the common bond we share with all of America's faith traditions that we are all created in the "image of God," brothers and sisters commanded to love one another.

As George Floyd's final words continue to ring in our ears and echo in our consciousness, we must acknowledge that our faith alone will not adequately address the challenges we now face. His final words, "I can't breathe," must not be ignored or forgotten. We must now breathe for him by joining together with Black Americans, communities of color, and all concerned Americans who are now crying out for an end to racial discrimination and police brutality.

We must hear the anguish of the oppressed, acknowledge our own anguish, and urge all, especially the white community to respond with love and action to the pain that our Black brothers and sisters are feeling.

And, in response to our nation's long history of brutality against People of Color, particularly Black men, we join others in urging our local community, our state, and our elected representatives to enact laws, as recently articulated by Police Chief Andy Mills, that ensure proper law enforcement training, appropriate and humane use of force practices, and the effective use of data collection and analysis to help address historic and systemic racial injustice.

As Scripture commands, "justice, justice thou shalt pursue," - a justice long overdue for our Black brothers and sisters.

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