

RocACTS

Rochester Alliance of Communities Transforming Society, Inc.

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
Baber AME Church
Baha'i Assembly of Rochester
The Cathedral Community
Church of the Ascension
Church of the Assumption
First Unitarian Church of Rochester
First Universalist Church of Rochester
Friends of St. Bridget's
GRCC/Faith In Action Network
Interfaith Alliance of Rochester
Jefferson Ave Faith Communities
(Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian
Church & Graves Memorial
C.M.E. Church)
Lutheran Church of Incarnate Word
New Vision Community Church
Open Arms Christian Fellowship
Ministries
Peace of Christ Parish
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Parish
St. Mary's Church, Downtown
St. Joseph's Church, Penfield
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of St. Joseph
TiLC Ministries
1199 SEIU United Healthcare
Workers East

May 27, 2020

Dear Friends:

It is with great sorrow and despair that we learned about the death of a man identified as George Floyd in Minneapolis, under the knee of a white police officer, on Monday, May 25, the national Memorial Day holiday of remembrance.

Maybe you can watch the video here at <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/man-dies-after-pleading-i-can-t-breathe-during-arrest-n1214586>. If you can't view this recording of a killing, the article describes the documentation of Mr. Floyd's death. Another black man's life, literally crushed out of him. Already handcuffed and on the ground, Mr. Floyd begs for his breath, for his life, as do the people around the scene. Yet, this arrest leads to his needless death.

We are heartbroken. We represent the Criminal Justice Task Force of RocACTS, a community organization in Rochester, New York dedicated to dismantling structural racism and focusing on education, poverty and jobs, and criminal justice, and the Criminal Justice Ministry First Unitarian Church in Rochester, along with many similarly dedicated individuals and organizations. It is our human responsibility to stand with the heartbroken community, family and nation as we witness yet another incomprehensible event in the long history of injustice, abuse and excessive force wielded against black men, women and children by authorities sworn to serve and protect and by vigilantes who take matters into their own weapon holding hands.

We say, how can this happen again? We cry out in protest. We agonize in our hearts. And it happens again, senselessly, heartlessly, wrongfully. We weep with the family, with the community, and with each other. We say, again, not one more time, knowing this is not the last time we will witness such brutality.

We offer our condolences to Minneapolis, to Mr. Floyd's family and friends, and to all who grieve this senseless loss. We support the decision by the Chief of Police, Medaria Arradondo, to terminate the employment of four involved officers and to pursue an ongoing investigation. We, along with you, demand justice. We demand change. We demand an end to the insanity that allows a public servant to ignore a man's dying pleas.

In solidarity and for peace,

Gayle Harrison, PhD
President, RocACTS

Kathleen FitzPatrick and Shanique Byrd, Co-Chairs, RocACTS Criminal Justice Task Force,

Penny Townsend-Quill and Roberta Buckle, Co-Chairs, Criminal Justice Ministry, First Unitarian Church, Rochester, NY

Roc/ACTS is a federation of the Faith in Action Network

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