June 5, 2020

President Trump, Vice President Pence and Administration:

On behalf of faith communities across the United States, we are writing in response to your failure to condemn the plague of white supremacy and anti-Blackness that has been woven into the fabric of this country since its inception.

As faith leaders representing a diverse group of spiritual and religious traditions, we are unified in our commitment to justice, equity and liberation for all peoples. However, the Black and Brown community in particular has been subject to centuries of brutality and terror at the hands of the state. The recent violent killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade and Ahmaud Arbery are just a few recent examples of an ongoing tradition of violence against Black people in the United States.

This epidemic of violence against the Black community must end. We demand justice.

Speaking specifically to President Trump: While your continued inaction on the work of justice for the oppressed and disinherited -- a core tenant of the Christian faith you claim to hold, and of all faith traditions -- is deeply disappointing, it is unfortunately not surprising.

Your vicious, hateful rhetoric and actions against Black and Brown communities are not new. And though you claim to be a person of faith, your actions betray the values held by people of faith across the world: tolerance, love, inclusivity and justice.

Your recent abuse of sacred symbols -- namely, violently attacking peaceful protestors for the purpose of a photo op with a Bible outside of an unconsenting church in Washington, D.C. -- goes beyond simple disregard and contempt for ecclesial leadership and the faith communities that worship at those holy sites. Your actions were an assault on the fundamental ethics of justice that those sites represent, and the human dignity they strive to defend. At the heart of every spiritual tradition is an ethic of justice. The witness of your life, as well as your tenure as President of the United States, could not be more oppugnant to this ethic.

We condemn your ongoing support for white supremacy and anti-Blackness and find your actions an anathema to the communities of faith that we represent. We call on you to repent, turn away from evil and injustice and move to enacting comprehensive justice for the Black community.

We declare with our voices, our lives and our ministries that Black Lives Matter, and will do everything in our power for the defense of Black lives. We demand that you and your administration do the same.

Signed,
Aleidra Allen, Founder, Black Greeks for Black Lives
Lexi Baysinger, MSEd, Faith For Justice
Rev. Traci Blackmon, United Church of Christ
Rev. Tiffany Brooks, Deacon
Alphonso David, President, Human Rights Campaign
Rev. Fred Davie, Executive Vice President, Union Theological Seminary
Bishop Yvette Flunder, Presiding Bishop, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries
Rev. Darrell Goodwin, United Church of Christ
Rev. Cedric A. Harmon, Executive Director, Many Voices: A Black Church Movement for Gay & Transgender Justice
Lisa Sharon Harper, President, Freedom Road
Terrance Hawkins, Founder, Drum Majors Alliance
Rev. Susan Henderson, United Church of Christ
Andre Henry, Program Manager, Evangelicals for Social Action
Rev. Michelle Higgins, Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) + Faith for Justice
Dr. Mike Higgins, Pastor, South City Church
Rev. Gabrielle Kennedy, Pastor, Burden Chapel AME Church
Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister, Middle Collegiate Church
Rev. Michael-Ray Mathews, Deputy Director, Faith in Action
Bishop James L. Mills, Sr., First Congregational Church of Fair Haven, VT, United Church of Christ
Michael Milton, Co-Director, Faith for Justice
Rev. Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Darren Phelps, Senior Pastor, Disciples of Christ
Rev. James D. Ross II, Pastor, Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ
Fr. Martini Shaw, Rector, Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
Rev. Aaron Tinch, Rivers of Life AME Church
Bishop Joseph Tolton, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries-Global
Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes, Dean, Vanderbilt Divinity School
Pedro Valentín, St. Paul’s Free Methodist Church
Rev. Andrea Vassell, United Church of Christ + The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries
Rev. Sean M. Watkins, Four A Consulting
Venneikia Williams, Principal & Project Director, Sanctuary Consulting
Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams, Founding Spiritual Director, Transformative Change
Lisa Allgood, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Cincinnati
Professor Imam Abdullah Antepli, Associate Professor of the Practice of Interfaith Relations, Duke University
Rev. Andrea Asselmeier, Pastor, United Church of Christ
Kathy Baldock, Canyonwalker Connections
Edward Barker, New Life Church, Colorado Springs
Grant Barnes, Youth Pastor, Peoples Church
Rev. Bonnie Beckonchrist, Retired Clergy, United Methodist Church
Jonathan R. Brander, United Church of Christ
Rev. Wendy Bruner, Pastor, Peace United Church of Christ
Rev. Jennifer Butler, President, Faith in Public Life
Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director, Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Rev. Shaye L. Champ-Correl, Disciples of Christ
Rev. Andrew Cheung, Washington Community Fellowship
Chan Ik Choi, Pastor, Urban Village Church
Stosh Cotler, CEO, Bend the Arc
Rev. Alice Connor, The Edge House Campus Ministry
Christian Coon, Pastor of Emerging Ministries, Urban Village Church
Danny Cortez, Estuary Space
Rev. Dr. Chris Davies, United Church of Christ
Norm Davey, Elder
Josh Dickson, Colorado Faithful Democrats
Rabbi Denise Eger, Congregation Kol Ami
Rev. Kristin Aardema Faigh, Zion United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Susan Fredrick-Gray, President, Unitarian Universalist Association
Rev. Dr. Justin Fung, Pastor of Leadership & Spiritual Formation, Christ City Church
Rev. Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli
Rev. Barbara Gerlach, Minister, United Church of Christ
Erwin F. Goedicke, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Cincinnati
Mitchell Gold, Spiritual Activist
Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, Fellow, Center for American Progress
Erin Green, Co-Executive Director, Brave Commons
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Christopher Grundy, Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship, Eden Theological Seminary
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Rev. Tina Hubert, Director of Faith Formation, Knox Presbyterian Church
Nathan Davis Hunt, For Shalom
Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Executive Director, T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Rev. Hannah Kardon, Urban Village Church
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Sr. Anna Koop, Denver Catholic Worker
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Bishop Gene Robinson, The Episcopal Church
Carlos A. Rodriguez, CEO, The Happy Non-Profit
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Mandy Smith, Pastor, University Christian Church
Mindy Smith, Associate Director Office of Church Engagement, Whitworth University
Kevin C. Stainton, Pastor, Heritage Presbyterian Church
Erica St. Bernard, Your Life's Well, LLC
Dr. Robert Taber, Co-Chair, Latter-day Saint Democrats of America
Sandy Taylor, Christ Congregational Church
Mark Tidd, Co-Pastor, Highlands Church Denver
Ms. Sue Torfin, Faithful Democrats
Rev. Rebecca Turner, Christ UCC, Maplewood, MO
Rev. Louisa W. Umphres, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Thomas Van Brunt, Chaplain, Episcopal Church
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Paula Stone Williams, Pastor, RLT Pathways
Rev. Seth Wispelwey, Pastor, Rincon Congregation, United Church of Christ
Ryan Zhang, Assistant Pastor, New City Presbyterian Church
James Zogby, Arab American Institute
Ani Zonneveld, President, Muslims for Progressive Values