

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, MEd, 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
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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 Valentin, St. Paul's Free Methodist Church
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Grant Barnes, Youth Pastor, Peoples Church
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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
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Ani Zonneveld, President, Muslims for Progressive Values