

“There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love.”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King¹

The recent unjust deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd; and the harassment of Christian Cooper have outraged us as a faith community. As families and communities grieve their lost loved ones, we join our lament to theirs, crying out to God for justice and peace in our land.

We recognize that this response captures one moment in time. Yet, it bears witness to the long string of injustices that have been intrinsic to our nation’s history, and that have yet to stop. As our nation struggles with the loss of life due to coronavirus and its disproportionate impact on the Black community, we believe that communities of faith are called to speak out and to continue the labor of justice.

The Board of Seattle Presbytery, therefore, offers this Document of Lament and Resolve as a commitment to our ongoing labor to claim our common humanity forged in the image of God until race is not a barrier to the experience of being fully human:

We believe that in Christ, barriers of race, status, and gender have been overcome and that we are called to seek reconciliation both in the church and the world, in Jesus name. W-3.0402²

We lament that our common Scriptures, which uphold the image of God in all human beings, have not formed us to embody the fullest understanding of what it means to be human, nor have they corrected our churches in their conscious or unconscious failure to seek reconciliation at all costs.

¹see p. 16 at http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdf

²<https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/OGA19010/book-of-order-20192021-download.aspx>

We resolve to turn our laments to action and to raise our voices for justice across our communities, that silence may not persist.

We believe in action that embodies what is just and right: in rescuing from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed; in doing no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and in standing against the shedding of innocent blood. Jeremiah 22:3 (NIV)

We lament that this has not been our national vision of justice. We lament that violence persists, that justice is obscured, and that the image of God in people of color is ignored.

We resolve to engage in action, education, and relationships that commit us to become antiracist in our churches, our neighborhoods, our city, and our country.

We believe that whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12 (ESV)

We lament that we have lost the practices of holy resistance that give us a way of putting our faith into action in the face of violence. We lament that our silence in the face of violence diminishes the humanity of all, and erodes our perspective of the image of God in each of us.

We resolve to recognize the places where we have power; and to influence and affect change in our communities. We cry out for ways to labor for our common humanity. We cry out for ways to resist whiteness, its fragility, and its intrinsic quest to preserve power.

**We all need to be outraged at the scope of this ongoing injustice.
Until we are all outraged, we will not find a way forward.**

Appendix:

Resources for Communities of Faith:

We recognize that there are many resources that support the work of Antiracism. This list offers a starting point and is in no way meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive.

A Service of Grief and Remembrance for Ahmaud Arbery:

The Cross and the Lynching Tree: A Requiem for Ahmaud Arbery, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1Q5KbP8vmE2Fs21QvsU8SXmvoYDcpia3EjZzpaecWcFKQ_8igonGdLDkc&v=EWAwMLnZwhY&app=desktop

Resources for Identifying Racism and Implicit Bias:

<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/sites/resourcesharingproject.org/files/DismantlingRacismforSocialChangeGroups.pdf>

<https://www.ibramxkendi.com/how-to-be-an-antiracist-1>

Organizations that help to identify areas of racism:

<https://www.focseattle.org/consulting/>