Dear Siblings in Christ,

To be honest with you I don’t know where to start. The killing of George Floyd by policemen in Minneapolis continues to play itself out across my television screen as I watch it over and over again, not out of a sense of the macabre but out of a place of deep sorrow and disbelief that this has happened again. Only a few days ago we watched videos regarding the killing of Ahmaud Arbery that took place in February and was only now being brought to light. And after Ahmaud Arbery there was Breonna Taylor and last October there was Atatiana Jefferson and before her was…a long, long list of black and brown people whose lives were needlessly taken by violence in a society that continues to not only remain broken but break even further.

On CNN last evening one of the persons being interviewed said, “I think this country has reached a tipping point.” I pray that is so. I pray that the balance tips us into a space where we can no longer ignore the cries of injustice of our black and brown sisters and brothers, no longer stand silent while racist and bigoted remarks are so easily tossed around by leadership, no longer stand speechless as we watch another person, created in the image of God and deeply loved by God, be killed or demeaned or slighted or discriminated against or denied or marginalized because of the color of their skin or ethnic background or family history. We must begin to speak and speak loudly against this ongoing nightmare in which our sisters and brothers live and in which we participate.

And we must begin that conversation admitting our own realities. I confess to you, as I did to two of my colleagues yesterday during two separate phone calls, that I am not free of racism and that I struggle to fully comprehend my white privilege. I confess to you that I was once more complicit in this in my past than I care to realize. And, I confess to you that I have much work to do before I get to where I need to be in this dialogue to change the balance of inequality that exists in this country as we move forward to face these realities and find resolution for the pandemic of racism that runs silently through systems and lives with little recognition or knowledge on our part. It is time to talk, to talk honestly and from our places of great vulnerability, giving voice to our own shortcomings and failures, our own racism and white privilege.

It is also time, in that space of vulnerability to listen. To listen deeply to the realities and stories of our sisters and brothers in the black and brown communities. To listen deeply to the hurt and pain and righteous anger for what is not only occurring now but for what has taken place for centuries. To listen deeply to our own hearts and minds and confess
our sins and failures and silence. Then, and only then, will we be able to move forward in
a conversation that is honest yet painful and, at best, challenging for us to be involved
with in our relationship with others.

In these days I pray for the family of George Floyd, a father, a brother, a friend, a co-
worker, a companion on the way, a bright and shining light. I pray they may find comfort
in the promise of the resurrection. And I pray that they may know that his death will lead
us to new learnings and new life and hope for change and a new direction in this country.

I invite you to join me in this prayer, in vulnerability, in honesty, in perseverance, in
hope, in faith, in conversation and in the hard, hard work we have before us.

May the One who is faithful prod us and motivate us and, if need be, shove us forward
into the hopeful future held out by our Lord Jesus Christ ‘that all may be one.’

In Christ’s Peace and Hope,

John S. Macholz, Bishop