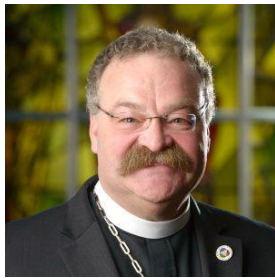




STATEMENT

ON THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD AND THE ENSUING RIOTS



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Discriminatory treatment of human beings on the basis of race is irrational evil and results in evil. It is folly, which can produce only anger and hatred. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” America’s original sin of legal racism, the denial of human rights based on race, has reaped the whirlwind.

God’s Word rejects racism. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “No one is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). All are equally created by God. All are equally accountable to God. The sins of all are equally atoned for by Christ. All are equally precious to God. Racial animosity is the result of sin and is sin in itself. Racism is not acceptable in the church. Jesus Himself bids us love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and did so precisely while rejecting racial preference (cf. Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25–37).

Unity in the church according to the Augsburg Confession is defined by Article VII: “For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached ... and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word.” Christ and His gifts bring unity and equity in the church. Racial discrimination in or by the church is sin. Racial conflict in our nation calls every Christian to introspection. “It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17). “Righteous indignation” without self-reflection and repentance is meaningless, or worse, hypocrisy.

The one who grievously and unjustly took the sacred gift of life from George Floyd — resulting in a charge of 3rd-degree murder — will, ironically, be given the very thing he denied his victim, due process of the law. Justice must be meted out according to the law. Others may be charged.

We weep for George Floyd, for his family and loved ones because he was robbed of life. We weep for our nation. We weep for those across our nation who believe their only recourse is destruction. We weep for police officers everywhere, who carry out their honorable vocations with courage and goodwill but find their task infinitely more challenging and dangerous in the wake of the sad events in Minneapolis. We pray for the safety of all and the welfare of those who have lost property and livelihood. We pray for the police who must stand against mayhem. We support the First Amendment rights of the peaceful protestors.

We deplore injustice. We deplore destruction, robbery and doing physical harm to others. That, too, is injustice. We plead to citizens and governments of this nation for communities beset by poverty, crime and injustice. We plead for rational and unifying policies that will end injustices and address social breakdown, lack of economic access, and other factors that fuel anger, hatred and dissension.

We shall pray, but we shall do even more. We shall follow the ancient mandate of the prophet of Yahweh: “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

And we shall proclaim Christ, “in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:7–8).

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:1–17 ESV).

