

Dear Siblings in Christ,

We are in a moment in history where the pain, suffering, and murders of Black Americans such as Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Dreasjon (Sean) Reed, and George Floyd at the hands of police have rightfully taken center stage. We stand by our Black siblings in Christ by opposing the many layers of systemic racism in our society. Black lives matter. Most of us making this statement do not fully comprehend the daily reality faced by many siblings of color, but we are committing ourselves to actively listening and to learning. We condemn blatant white supremacy as well as the more insidious and subtle forms which pervade the world around us. We invite all to join us on this journey of education and action. It will not be easy. But we believe this is what Jesus wanted when he commanded us to "love your neighbor as yourself."

Along these lines, the council is preparing ways to have tough conversations and grow as a congregation. Please expect more information from us in the coming weeks and months. If you have ideas, or if you're interested in leading a discussion, we are open to your input. Again, we do not have all the answers, but with God's help, we are committed to continue searching, growing, and taking action.

We encourage all who read this to do what they can to help now. If you are able, we encourage you to donate what you can to any of the organizations listed below which are working to help dismantle white supremacy and actively fight injustice.

NAACP

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/naacp-1>

Black Lives Matter

https://secure.actblue.com/donate/ms_blm_homepage_2019

Southern Poverty Law Center

<https://donate.splcenter.org/>

Alliance for Justice

<https://afj.salsalabs.org/donate/index.html>

National Urban League

<https://nul.org/donate>

We also encourage you to read any of the books and resources below to educate yourself on anti-racism and what you, personally, can do to combat white supremacy. As Maya Angelou said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." Use these resources to know better so you can do better.

Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Slavery_Apology_Explanation.pdf

Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture by the ELCA

https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture?_ga=2.97661023.1539079957.1591219567-714824286.1590791828&_gac=1.152459595.1591231874.Cj0KCQjwIN32BRCCARIsADZ-J4uObdfo2zInch6EjYZLLEyAdTDEDpynRbq-JXArU_bN-1xlqFOdAd4aArgvEALw_wcB

Dear Church by Lenny Duncan

<https://lennyduncan.com/order-dear-church>

How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X Kendi

<https://www.ibramxkendi.com/books-1>

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo

<https://robindiangelo.com/publications/>

More reading recommendations can be found here

<https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/books/must-read-books-to-learn-more-about-black-history-racism-and-social-justice/>

This will be posted on our website after 24 hours. Please feel free to contact Pastor Tim or any council member at any time if you would like to discuss it.

May the peace, healing and calm of the Holy Spirit guide us,

Council of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church