



COLUMBIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Connecting people to God
to each other
to the needs of the world



June 18, 2015

Dear Members and Friends of the Columbia Presbyterian Church Community,

Once again we have been horrified at a senseless act of violence and racism directed at African-Americans in our country. Our hearts and prayers go out to all the victims' families, the congregation of the Emanuel AME Church, and the Charleston community. It is a time to grieve. It is a time to pray.

Some Christians have called this an "unspeakable" act of terror and racism against the African-American community. Unfortunately, the adjective "unspeakable" is part of the problem that our nation faces. The very issue of racism and its impact on our society and culture remains largely unspoken by many of us. The status quo does not change.

Yes, it's true that Christian communities rally together at times like this. We offer prayers of support, we send our love to the victims, we even pound our fists and cry out in anger and pain claiming our solidarity with the victims. But then we become silent . . . another horrific act becomes unspeakable again. And the silence is deafening.

But we must not remain silent any longer. Because to do so, means that we accept the way things are.

We have heard many times the words of the prophet Micah to *do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our Lord*. We have listened to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, command us to *love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself*. We cannot fulfill the words of our Living God in silence.

There is a cancer growing in our nation that civil rights laws alone cannot heal. Racism against the African-American community and all peoples of color is wrong. Intolerance against any group of people for reasons of ethnicity, sexual preferences, or sexism is wrong. Unfortunately, our silence only serves to perpetuate the growth of hate and racism in our nation.

So let us take time to pray and grieve with those who are filled with pain and loss. But then, let us honor the dead and those who are mourning by not remaining silent any longer. It is time to follow God's word.

We, as a community of faith, will not solve this horrible plague on our nation. But, we as a community of faith, can get in step with Jesus Christ, and become a part of the cure the people of this land so desperately need.

If you are willing to take such a journey, I invite you to join me on Saturday morning, June 27, at 10 a.m. in our sanctuary. Together, I pray that Christ will show us how to take the first step.

Shalom in Christ,

The Reverend Thomas R. Hagood, Jr., Pastor

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