



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

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Office of the Bishop

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"For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." -Ephesians 2:14

Dear Siblings in the Risen Christ,

A little over a year ago, the eyes of the nation and the world were fixed on the events surrounding the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN. We now turn our collective gaze once more to Minneapolis, as the trial of former officer Derek Chauvin moves toward a verdict. Needless to say, fear and anxiety have risen as the trial has progressed and now heads toward a conclusion. For many, the last few weeks have been a reopening of the deep wounds of structural racism and a reliving of racial trauma. There is much pain, there is deep hurt, and yet there is abiding hope.

As followers of Jesus, the one who breaks down dividing walls, we live in the hope that we as the Church are called to be a reconciling presence in our communities and our neighborhoods. Despite the verdict, despite the outcome of this trial, it is clear that there is work to be done, deep work to be done. God calls us to be people of peace, hope and love. God also calls us to be people who seek after justice and not revenge.

There will be anger, fear, disappointment, hurt, and perhaps a measure of relief and grief. As people of faith, we must continue to engage in the ongoing work of racial reckoning in our continued walk with Jesus. The essential work of the church in bringing reconciliation and healing, in being makers of peace and practitioners of justice, must continue.

I invite you therefore, wherever you may be at the time of the verdict, to stop and pray. Pray for peace in our communities, peace for the Floyd family and peace for our first responder sisters and brothers working to protect us. Pray and act for an end to the scourge of racism in our country.

May the risen Christ lead us all to live more fully into our call to engage the work of racial reckoning, of repairing the breach, of mending the walls, of proclaiming peace to the nations.

May God bless and keep you and those whom you love.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson
Eleventh Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri