

Andover & North Andover Interfaith Clergy: Every Black Life Matters

As clergy of various faiths, we seek justice and equity for all of God's people. We are grieved by the brutality and racial injustice in our country, especially when coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that we are called to find our way through this together, with one united voice, standing in solidarity and boldly proclaiming: Every black life matters. This is not a hashtag. This is not a slogan. This is a God-given moral truth.

And within this truth is a call to action that we hear echoing throughout the centuries, from the prophet Isaiah: *"Is not this the fast that I choose? To loose the bonds of injustice...to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke."* (Isaiah 58:6)

As we seek to break the bonds of oppression in our country, our faith calls us to dismantle injustice, to name systems that corrupt and dishonor the human spirit. Our hearts break with the murders of three children of God: George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery and we acknowledge that these deaths are part of the long, violent history of racism and inequality that permeates our nation. It is part of the air we all breathe. We can clearly see the impact of structural racism in the Merrimack Valley as COVID-19 impacts the City of Lawrence in disproportionate and significant ways.

Our faith calls us to see these truths and to name them. For we who are white, we seek to examine our silence and complicity, and to repent, and to do better. As we seek to break the legacy of oppression, inequality, and tragic unnecessary deaths, we will do the work of self-examination and courageously participate in the unfolding of God's vision of wholeness for all people. Because as Dr. King wrote in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

To that end, we, faith leaders in Andover and North Andover, name the sin of racism. We lament the loss of life, safety and opportunity that it has caused and continues to cause. And we call on our communities to stand with our siblings of color, and to do the work needed to be part of the new world trying to be born.

Together, let us commit to that new world, of letting the oppressed go free, loving our neighbors, and upholding the sanctity of each and every life.

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South Church in Andover

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West Parish Church of Andover

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