



Rev. Whitney Peper
Pastor of Courage Worship
and Care Ministry

June 19, 2020

Dear members,

We want to say thank you for the overwhelming support that both Pastor Pat and I have received as we have shared our stories of raising children of a different race and the struggles they, and us, have experienced. Your prayers and support for our children and families means a great deal to each of us. But we know there is still so much work to be done regarding racism, social justice, oppression, and racial reconciliation, and we believe that we as the church have a great opportunity and responsibility to make this a reality for Black Americans and other minority groups.

In the Old Testament the prophet Micah gives the people of Israel, and us, a clear and simple but also very challenging formula for how we as Christians are to conduct ourselves when he writes, "... This is what Yahweh asks of you: Only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8).

This way of thinking and acting, we ask every one of you to bring to the discussion of racial justice within our church and within the world – a world that we, as a church, have committed to connect with God's love.

We cannot be the church we claim to be, one that is true to the duties of the Gospel, if we are not a people committed to acting justly by rooting out racism, prejudices, and oppression within the structures of our lives, church, and society. As United Methodists, we believe that we are a Holy Nation, set apart and chosen by God. So, we must ask ourselves, how can we call ourselves such if we do not love and respect all human beings regardless of race, language, nationality, sexual orientation, or ethnic heritage?

Only when we do these things can we expect to walk humbly with our God. For our God is a God of love and justice, who made all of us in his image. Racism and oppression are a denial of that fact. I realize that the subject of race can be a tough one for all of us. Yet, I am convinced that we must address it with honesty and courage. For it remains a significant and sinful reality in our midst. So, we are inviting each of you to journey with us into this topic, to commit to being vulnerable, and opening up within yourself a space for the work of the Holy Spirit to convict you into growth, action, and to become an ally.

We have compiled a list of books, videos, training material, and more, for children, teens, and adults, designed to give you insight and raise your awareness of the reality of racism; what it means to confront your prejudice; how to talk about race; and how to help your children and teens have the conversation as well. While we know this list has many resources, it is not the full list of resources available, so we invite you to keep researching, learning, and growing by finding the area of activism that fits you best and continuing with it. If you would like to see this letter, please email me at wpeper@stpkaty.org.

While we are working to build up leaders in our church who can bravely and confidently facilitate these conversations, we are also developing a curriculum for our Children's Ministry, Student Ministry, and small groups. We are also developing a Town Hall formatted event that we will have available in the weeks to come. We want to provide space and opportunities for growth and desire to partner with you as we continue to be the church that connects ALL of God's people with God's love.

This letter is an invitation to discussion and dialogue. I hope all of you will accept this invitation by participating in conversations within our church, your family, your sphere of influence, and the community. By engaging in such a dialogue, we can all enhance our understanding of the role that race plays in our lives, and we can join together in working to combat racism in all its forms.

Thank you for your commitment to the values of human dignity and racial justice.

Blessings,

Rev. Whitney Peper



Dr. Pat Sparks
Lead Pastor



Rev. Parker Zimmerman
Pastor to the Kingsland Campus



Rev. Alex Zeisig
Pastor to the West Campus



Rev. Dr. David Kim
Pastor of Korean Ministry