



Christ Church Charlotte

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

June 17, 2020

Watching the horrific murder of George Floyd, many of us were reminded of when our colleague, Deborah Ann Franklin, who has worked at Christ Church for several years, endured the pain of losing her son, Danquirs Franklin, after he was shot and killed last year in Charlotte ... and Keith Lamont Scott before him, and Jonathan Ferrell before him, and on and on over the generations. Every story is different, but every story radiates the pain, and the fact that black Americans have no choice but to order their lives in different ways than white Americans do. They live with the ongoing trauma imposed on them by over 400 years of slavery, prejudice, discrimination, and systemic racism.

We don't profess to have ready answers to the hard questions that confront us today. And it is an important fact that the questions are not new – they are just asked today more urgently and with greater clarity. But it is the heart of Christ Church to be a safe place to face hard questions and to always ask where God is alive in those questions, and where God's heart breaks, and where we can be His hands to effect change.

As Clergy and Vestry, we are committed to redoubling our efforts to confront and dismantle racism.

We pledge:

1. To invest in consistent, ongoing opportunities to engage the parish in self-examination of implicit bias, the history of racism, and how it affects individuals and institutions.
2. To listen and learn first-hand how racism impacts people on a personal and institutional level. This relationship-building work must be done by deep listening to black voices who have much to teach us - including the voices of our own members and staff who live with the outcomes of racism every day.
3. To provide the parish opportunities, in a nonpartisan way, to understand and engage with practices, systems, and policies that have enabled discrimination and inequality in the places and spaces where we live and work in order to re-create those practices, systems and policies in a way that makes Charlotte a place that is equitable for all people.

We are pilgrims on this journey. We have started, and yet we have not realized our full potential. We are reminded, as Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has written:

“Our long-term commitment to racial justice and reconciliation is embedded in our identity as baptized followers of Jesus. Opening and changing hearts does not happen overnight. The Christian race is not a sprint; it is a marathon. Our prayers and our work for justice, healing, and truth-telling must be unceasing. Let us recommit ourselves to following in the footsteps of Jesus, the way that leads to healing, justice, and love.”

As we prepare for our next steps on this journey, you may ask, what can I do now? Remember the challenge Bryan Stevenson offered us when he visited Christ Church four years ago: First, get proximate, or get near, to people who experience the pain of racism every day. Second, listen to their stories, and consider the misleading narratives we carry in our own minds that persist divisions and discrimination. Third, be willing to do uncomfortable things. And fourth, stay

hopeful. With the Holy Spirit as our guide, we will live into this crucial time, and make it a turning point for the good of all.

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Chip Edens, Rector
The Reverend Joshua Case
The Reverend Joan Kilian
The Reverend Emily Parker
The Reverend Dr. Fred Paschall
The Reverend Lisa Saunders

Jane Showalter, Senior Warden
Sally Mitchener, Junior Warden
Louise Bonner
Jane Coulter
Nikki DeVillers
Doug Ey
Susan Hamilton
Alex Kelly
David Kern
Julie Marr
Randall Mountcastle
Geoff Peters
Ken Thompson
Chris Ullrich
Betsy Zarzour