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Rev. Sarah Scherschligt, Senior Pastor

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June 5, 2020

Dear Church,

Peace be with you.

In the midst of this pandemic, when tensions are frayed and many are looking for comfort and stability, the past week has been terribly difficult. The leadership of Peace Lutheran Church condemns the racism and inequity woven into our justice and economic systems, indeed our whole society. We believe black lives matter and we believe saying that statement without action is hollow. Enough people in our country are demanding change that we are hopeful. Perhaps, this time, things might turn out differently. The question is before us all: what will we do now?

As a church, we always look first and foremost to the grace of Jesus as our source and guide. The pattern of our lives as his followers is to confess our sin— ‘all that we have done and all that we have left undone,’ receive God’s forgiveness, and be freed to love the neighbor in word and deed. In this case, that means we reject racism in all forms, trust God’s forgiveness, and claim that forgiveness by living differently in the future. Our service toward our neighbor, as Lutheran Christians, is not only interpersonal; it is also connected to the systems in which we live. We engage with governments and institutions as tools God gives us to love our neighbor.

The Holy Spirit is inviting us to look closer and see how each of us can be part of dismantling racism and white supremacy personally as well as in our institutions and governments. This takes courage, forgiveness, humility, and grace. We will each have different points of entry and different journeys. For the many of us who are white, it starts not with action but by stepping back and listening, reading, learning, hearing. But action also must come.

Here are four initial steps the Council is leading the church to take to move Peace members on our journey of anti-racism. There will be more.

1. Participants in our [Troubling the Waters group](#) for dismantling racism will give testimonies during worship services in mid-June.

*Sharing God's love, growing in faith, and creating community...*

**Be at Peace.**

2. We will take part in some event (still being organized) to honor the June 17<sup>th</sup> commemoration of those slain in Mother Emanuel AME church in Charleston, S.C. in 2015.
3. Starting in July, we will have an all-church book study on the book [“I’m Still Here” by Austin Channing Brown.](#)
4. Council will assemble a more robust racial equity team to advise our church on how to not only confront racism in the world outside, but also within our congregation.

One of the things we value most about Peace is our political diversity. This is a congregation where our most important identity is as God’s children. From that comes everything else.

One of the other things we value about Peace is that the strength of our relationships with God and one another makes us able to handle difficult conversations. Time and time again, this congregation has engaged with the hardest stuff of life, trusting one another and being transformed by the word of God for the sake of the world.

We ask you to join us in prayer, to study scripture, and to keep worshipping regularly. We also urge you to be overly kind and forgiving to others and to yourselves. Eat well. Rest. And join in this movement of God’s Holy Spirit for the healing of the world.

Be at Peace,

The Church Council of Peace Lutheran Church

Pastor Sarah S Scherschligt  
Natalie Cain, President  
David Whitten, Secretary  
Dan Hanner, Treasurer  
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Itosi Maraelle  
Sarah Schill  
Margo Tlusty  
Kathleen Wage (incoming member, term starts July 1)  
Stu Whitehead (incoming member, term starts July 1)