



THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

9 Russell Avenue, Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

Phone: (617) 924-9420

June 6, 2020

Dear CGS family,

We, the leadership of the Church of the Good Shepherd Watertown, like many of you, are horrified by the vicious, degrading nature of George Floyd's murder. Mr. Floyd, while handcuffed, was slowly asphyxiated by a police officer's knee to his throat while three other members of the Minneapolis police force looked on. The incident is shocking, but we should not be surprised. Mr. Floyd's death is one of the latest in a long, sad history of lynching and state-sanctioned violence against people of color in the United States. We are in the midst of a reckoning in this country. Every few days, a video surfaces through social media that proves what Black people have always known—African Americans continue to be oppressed today, as they have been throughout the entire history of the United States. The sudden explosion of protests is the convergence of outrage over the many unprosecuted killings of people of color by law enforcement officers and pain due to the disproportionate health and economic impacts experienced by minority communities during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Violent, discriminatory policing and unequal suffering from COVID-19 have the same root: widespread systemic racism.

We believe Jesus stood with the poor, the rejected, the different, the stranger, and the neglected. With Christ and in Christ, we stand against white supremacy, and we stand in solidarity with minority communities fighting for their rights. Inaction is no longer an option. Inaction is complicity. It is up to all of us, but especially those of us who move through the world with the freedoms and privileges of "whiteness," to make changes and actively engage in anti-racism. We, in our homes, in our communities, and in our church, commit to doing the work necessary to recognize and correct the influence of unconscious racial bias in the things we say and do.



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Now is a time for action.

We commit to educating ourselves about the daily injustices and oppression faced by our Black brothers and sisters. There are countless books, documentaries, podcasts and other resources to help us understand the embedded, systemic racism and oppression that minority communities have faced for all of the United States history. Here are a few:

1619 Project, New York Times

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

Race Matters by Cornel West

Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race by Debby Irving

So You want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

The Case for Reparations and *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

I Am Not Your Negro or *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin

White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo

The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein

The Kerner Report: A Divided Nation 50 years Later

The Cross and the Lynching Tree by James Cone

Jesus and the Disinherited by Howard Thurman

White Rage by Carol Anderson

We also commit to engaging with organizations doing work in line with our values, and we encourage you to do the same. Find one that speaks to you and support them with your presence, your time, and your funds. There are many different organizations working for equity and justice in the Boston area. A few such organizations are listed below:



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<https://www.massbailfund.org>

<https://www.violenceinboston.org>

<https://blacklivesmatterboston.org>

<https://antiracismproject.org>

We hold all members of our community in our hearts and pray the Lord bless us in our struggle to be free of the sin of racism. Please reach out to us to let us know your thoughts and feelings. This is the beginning of a conversation about how we, as a parish, respond to injustice in our world.

Katherine Gyllensvard, Co-warden

Melva T. James, Ph.D., Co-warden

James Donna, Treasurer

Nicole Leonard, Assistant Treasurer

Constance Holmes, Clerk

Patricia Ahern, Vestryperson

Sally Hajjar, Vestryperson

Lise Paul, Vestryperson

Peter Rosenmeier, Vestryperson

Stephen Steadman, Vestryperson

Allison Vander Broek, Vestryperson

Rev. Kenneth Schmidt, Deacon

Rev. Katharine Black, Priest (bridge)