

“Our Siblings’ Blood is Crying Out:” A Call to Listen & Action

Friday May 29, 2020

Statement from the Massachusetts Council of Churches Executive Director Rev. Laura Everett & President Rev. Jennie Barrett Siegel

*“Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ He said, ‘I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?’ And the Lord said, ‘What have you done? Listen; your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!’
~ Genesis 4:9-10*

From the ground of Minneapolis, from the ground of Louisville, from the ground of Satilla Shores in Georgia, our Black siblings’ blood is crying out. Even from the ground underneath our feet in Massachusetts, our siblings’ blood is crying out to God and kin.

The systems and structures in America soaked in white supremacy lead to the death of Black people. God asks, “What have you done?”

As our nation grieves with over 100,000 deaths from COVID19, in recent days more death and trauma compounds, with multiple Black people shot while simply going about their lives. God asks, “What have you done?”

Our siblings’ blood is crying out from the ground, and as kin in the Body of Christ, we know that we inherit the leadership of an institution that has been far from the full unity and dignity to which Christ calls. We hear the Lord’s command in Genesis to “Listen.” After we listen, we are compelled to act. To the churches in our network and all who might hear, we invite you to:

Listen: when the Body of Christ says, “I can’t breathe.” No one should live in fear that a traffic stop, a walk in the park, a jog or merely sitting in their own home may result in their death. We condemn unequivocally the killing of unarmed Black civilians and join the call for systemic reform, beginning with accountability of those involved in these killings.

Listen: to our colleagues demanding systemic reform from the racism of this country, including [the Rev. Dr. Curtiss DeYoung, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Churches \(MCC\), and the Rev. Dr. Iva Carruthers, general secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.](#)

Listen: to the parts of the Body of Christ that are calling out in pain. In November 2016, Massachusetts Council of Churches committed [“we will listen to the pain in the Body of Christ and prioritize.”](#) “We borrow the wisdom of poet [Maya Angelou](#) who said, “there is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you,” as our mandate to invite and listen for untold stories of suffering. Every person deserves to live without harassment and bigotry.” Every person deserves to live. We commit to conversations around anti-Black racism, and continued investigation of our own [institutional racial history](#).

Listen: in every language and tongue that we need each other. God designed the Church to be diverse. “Pentecost launched the church as a multicultural and multilingual community of minority, oppressed, colonized persons who soon embraced even people from dominant and privileged groups.” ~ Curtiss Paul DeYoung, [Becoming Like Creoles](#)

And as we listen, we are compelled to act.

Act: by attending the [Boston NAACP and partners](#) conversation Friday May 29 at 5pm: Zoom.us: 847 4819 8903 password: 069725

Act: by continuing to scour, examine, confess, and repent from the places where white supremacy has entered our theology, our prayers, our preaching and our institutions. Act by reading more widely.

Act: by including the names of those killed in [officer-involved shootings](#) and other shootings in the “Prayers of the People” when your church gathers for worship this Sunday, especially those killed in recent weeks including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Amaud Abrey.

Act: by calling for Monday, June 1 as a National Day of Mourning, as over 100,000 people have died from COVID-19, with disproportionate rates of death occurring within communities of color due to systemic lack of testing, equitable health care and ability to physically distance. Join with the [U.S. Conference of Mayors](#) in this effort. Use #DayofMourning, #Lament100k.

Act: by coming before Almighty God in a posture of prayer to cover our Commonwealth in this time of trial.

Let us pray,

Hear, O Church, the wail of Black mothers. Hear, O Nation, the sobs of Black fathers. Hear, O People, in every tongue and language, the desire for life and breath. Hear, O America, the cries of 400 years asking, “How Long?” Hear, the gasp and the cries and weep.

Oh God, guide our steps. Transform our hands, our hearts, our tongues in the ways of justice and peace. Let not a word slip from our lips that would denigrate any of your beloved children.

Kindle in us anger at structures and systems that hold your people down. Make us bold to commit our whole lives to the liberation and healing of all. Reconcile us to one another, and to You.

Heal us, O Great Physician, from the racism of our systems and structures. Banish the viruses that seek to destroy. Equip us for the work that must be done. Strengthen us for the days ahead. Jesus, guard and guide us. Do not let us go until we are done. Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Amen.