



April 16, 2021

Dear Richfield UMC,

We pray this letter finds you safe and secure in this emotional week for our area and beyond. The Derek Chauvin trial continues to reopen fresh wounds. Daunte Wright was killed during a police interaction in nearby Brooklyn Center. We are once again confronted by the trauma of Black men and police having deadly interactions in our area. The many layers of trauma and hard questions in this stretched-out period grow thicker and weightier. Beloved children of God, every day we bring our whole selves before the one who loves us with our thoughts, feelings, questions, and actions. We are beloved of a God who listens to us all and is with us all our days. **Lord, in your mercy.**

The sin of racism that contributes to unnecessary deaths and community divides is a virus; it must be eradicated. The struggle between a need for public safety and a need for public safety reform is palpable; it must be addressed. God calls us to action; it must be now. The Constitution of the United Methodist Church as outlined in the UM Book of Discipline challenges us all to “confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large.” (UM Book of Discipline, ¶ 5, Article V. Racial Justice) May we live into our membership vows, may we live into the General Rules of the United Methodist Church to do no harm, to do good, and to grow in love with God, and may God show us the way. **Lord, in your mercy.**

As your clergy team, we continue our commitment to partnering with you, the ministers of the church. We commit to listening to seek understanding, asking honest questions, building meaningful relationships, offering tremendous grace, and supporting our collective and individual faith-filled journeys. We rededicate our commitment to this and we ask you to please rededicate your commitment to the same, thank you. **Lord, in your mercy.**

As a church, we are responding to immediate needs of the community through compassion ministries in four key ways: presence, prayer, financial generosity, and food sharing:

Ministry of Presence: Pastor Nate is active as a non-anxious presence holding space at George Floyd Square (GFS) and other areas of the metro with Twin Cities Interfaith Movement Chaplains (TCIMC). Many church members have not yet been to GFS for a variety of reasons and there will be an organized pilgrimage for anyone who wants to meet there as a church. Please reach out to Pastor Nate by May 9. In the meantime, if you feel safe of body, mind, and spirit to be present at GFS, at 63rd Ave. N. and Kathrene Blvd. where Daunte Wright was killed, or other areas where the community is gathering publicly in grief, please be situationally aware and mindful of your surroundings. You can reach out to Pastor Nate for tips from his TCIMC training on entering these spaces well.

Showing up happens in many ways. Parents/Guardians, consider the book [Something Happened in Our Town](#) to process recent events with your children. If you're online, follow [TCIMC](#) and the [Minnesota Annual Conference Rapid Response](#) group, and [The Upper Room](#) has three live events this week: Rev. Dr. Ron Bell of our MCCI cohort church Camphor Memorial UMC in St. Paul hosts “A Call to Prayer” on Friday, April 16 at 11:00 am, there is a panel discussion on Monday, April 19 at 11:00 am (panelists TBA), and Dr. Bell and Tyler Sit of New City Church, a United Methodist church in Minneapolis, host a “live from the chapel” event on Wednesday, April 28 at 11:00 am.



Ministry of Prayer: All Christian action starts with prayer. We pray to a resurrected Jesus who is ready to partner with us for compassion and justice so God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Pray for Daunte Wright, his family, and the Black community in trauma and grief. Pray for Officer Potter and her family. Pray for neighbors with neighborhoods turned upside-down. Pray for public servants, officials, and elected leaders responsible for (re)building justice-laden systems. Pray for your own holistic health as you wade through your own trauma in these events. May prayer bring you the Holy Spirit - first for comfort in assurance and then strength for action.

Rev. Seth Martin of The Brook Community Church, a clergyperson who Pastor Nate met at George Floyd Square last summer, made this powerful statement about prayer this week: "Some people don't know what to do. Some people feel like there's nothing they can do. Some people wonder are they doing enough. Some people feel like there's nothing to do. Prayer is something you can do. Prayer is not nothing. It's often in prayer where God assures us that we've done enough or leads us to new ways to be effective. It's in prayer where God convicts us and shakes us out of apathy to do something. So, I offer the same encouragement someone gave me this week. Go pray. Prayers may not be the only thing but it is something. Believers should know prayer is powerful."

Ministry of Financial Generosity: In addition to ministries such as technology improvements, the 2021 Easter offering is designated to the West African Food Pantry ministry of Brooklyn UMC, a food pantry open to all specializing in foods with dietary and cultural appeal to those of West African ethnicity. The Brooklyn Center area is fast becoming a food desert due to recent unrest. **In response to the immediate needs of the community, we have disbursed \$1,000 of the Easter offering to the West African Food Pantry.** Likewise, we gave \$1,000 of the 2020 Christmas Eve offering to the [Just Love](#) fund of the Minnesota Annual Conference and this week \$5,000 of that fund was disbursed to the Brooklyn UMC food pantry and community needs fund. **Friends, it is a conflux moment that your Ad Board selected these critical ministries for special offerings and you have responded with extravagant generosity.** Your faith is changing lives! The Easter is extended through April 26 and a portion will supplement this immediate disbursement. **Give at richfieldumc.org/give today.**

Ministry of Food Sharing: We raised over \$1,500 and 3,500+ lbs. of food to fight hunger in the last six months and we're not stopping now. **Our next food drive is Sunday, May 23 at 10:30 am - 12:00 pm on campus for the West African Food Pantry.** The May issue of *The Heartline* newsletter will have a shopping list of food staples. As an act of cultural competency and growing in love of God and neighbor you are asked to please donate items relevant to the community, thank you. Many area churches are holding food drives this week. Our "phase one" is our Easter offering and our food drive will be a "phase two" to help a neighborhood that will need long-term sustainable response.

We are proud to be your clergy team and be in ministry with you. **Lord, in your mercy.**

In Christ,

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