



Dear CMDA of WNY Community,

June 12, 2020

As our nation continues to face a global pandemic and cares for the thousands who are still struggling with the COVID-19 illness, the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery have revealed another, longer lasting illness in our country: racism.

As a community of healthcare students and professionals seeking to follow Jesus, we want to invite you to join us in responding to racial violence and the systemic oppression of people of color in four ways.

We Confess

We confess that all people of every tribe, nation, culture and ethnicity are created equal in God's image and beloved by God. We confess that racism de-humanizes our image-bearing brothers and sisters and is a tragic consequence of the fall. We confess that racism has been born out of a long, sad history of white culture that has silenced, disempowered, marginalized and murdered our black brothers and sisters. We confess that in the white community, including the church, we have often been slow to listen and slow to confess our sin. We confess that we have often been complicit and complacent in the sin of racism.

We Lament

We lament the ways that racism, which has no place in God's good world, has hurt people. We lament with our brothers and sisters of color who have suffered the painful consequences of racism for decades upon decades. We lament and grieve with the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and the thousands of others who have lost their lives to racially motivated violence. As clinicians we recognize that there are social determinants of health; we lament how racism in our nation's history and the divisions it has produced has made healthy lifestyle choices and access to healthcare more difficult for many black and brown communities.

We Learn

During a recent CMDA of WNY leadership meeting, Leeland Jones, MD shared about his and his family's experience of racial prejudice living in Williamsville. "Non-minority groups in general," Leeland said, "have very little insight and understanding into what it is like in this country for people of color." Let us be a community that grows in our insight and understanding of how our brothers and sisters of color experience life. Let us be slow to speak and quick to listen. Let us seek to learn, not to feel better about racism or to feel shame, but to become aware. In this Spirit, we have put together a list of resources on our website (see: <https://www.cmdaofwny.org/racial-reconciliation-resources>)

We Hope

We have hope, not in any election or political party, but in the true and only king: Jesus, our Lord. In his inaugural speech in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says that he was anointed to "proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). We have hope that Jesus, who has been raised from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father, will make this kingdom vision a reality for all who are poor, imprisoned, blind, and oppressed.

From the Book of Common Prayer:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Grace and Peace,
The CMDA of WNY Local Ministry Council