

STATEMENT ON THE MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD

ANNAPOLIS – As the largest multiracial, interfaith organization in Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT) is grieving and we are angry. The murder of George Floyd has sparked outrage across the country and our own hearts. We will not stand idly by as the sacred bodies of black and brown people are desecrated by insidious white supremacy that is woven into the fabric of our great nation.

Sadly Mr. Floyd's death is nothing new. The social contract that governs our community has been ripped up each and every day for black and brown people. Hard work and prayer do not overcome generations of inequity and trauma. As COVID-19 continues to hit our shores, black bodies are disproportionately affected. This is not because of some genetic marker: it is the result of social conditions and demands upon black bodies that have been passed down since 1619, when the sin of racism and slavery crashed upon our shores. We condemn violence, and the fires that burn in our cities are terrible to behold. But our faith teaches us that God has spoken alongside fire since the beginning of history. We are listening to what God is saying in those fires.

Prior to Mr. Floyd's death, we talked about how this quarantine offered an opportunity to "build back better." As people push to return to a so-called "normal," we recognize the old powers of hate and injustice resuming their former positions. We are not building back better. Voices young and old cry out. The anger in our neighborhoods, small businesses, synagogues, mosques, and churches reflects the moral wrongness of this reality.

As we listen, ACT is continuing what we have done since our launch in a thunderstorm in October 2018: build power through relationships and take action. Our leaders are organizing around education inequality, the digital divide, housing opportunity, gun violence, criminal justice, and good jobs. Our Feed Anne Arundel program has so far fed over 20,000 people delicious, nutritious meals since the quarantine while providing a lifeline to small businesses and working people. It is now expanding to work toward ending food insecurity and hunger in Anne Arundel County in robust, sustainable ways. We have asked and gotten eviction prevention. But we have more to do.

Mr. Floyd's death, and the lynching of black bodies since the start of this year, serves to highlight how urgent change is needed. ACT is building power to see this change through. We invite you to join us, put your hand to the plow, and work for and demand better for Anne Arundel County and America.

Rev. Dr. Karen V. Johnson, First Christian Community Church
Rev. Tim Stern, Ark and Dove Presbyterian Church
Co-Chairs