

# HOWARD COUNTY

## *clergy alliance*

---

June 2020

### **STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY, RESOLVE, AND LOVE**

The *Howard County Clergy Alliance*, founded in 2018, is a monthly gathering to build relationships and interfaith understanding. We do not claim to speak for all faith leaders in our county. However, we hold key values in common for the collective welfare of our nation. As a diverse group of faith leaders, one value that often binds us together is the power of love to heal and overcome even the most deep-seated hatred. We condemn, and deeply grieve, the systemic hatred permeating our culture which results in the repeated devaluing and destruction of Black lives.

On May 25, the world watched the callous murder of George Floyd in horror. An African American human being was mercilessly crushed under the knee of a white police officer in Minneapolis. This terrible event called full attention, once again, to the frequency of such deaths. We witness daily unfolding of more aggression, and violence, against people of all colors, young people, elders, faith leaders—anyone who comes in contact with unrestrained police, military, or governmental power. All taking place amidst a remarkably persistent and hopeful uprising in communities across our country.

The immigrant colonizers of the Americas imported a white supremacy framework that has intensified over time. Native peoples were originally subjugated, and the geographic richness of the United States is on lands forcibly seized from those tribes. The wealth and power of the U.S. comes from the blood, sweat and tears of African peoples forcibly brought here to be sold into chattel slavery. We have profited from the culture, labor, and criminalization of Black people.

White supremacy thinking is codified and normalized into systems over time. With each generation, powerful people use distortion, disregard, and hatred to dominate cultural and institutional landscapes. Many Euro-Caucasian peoples have forgotten, even willfully denied, America's foundation in inequity and violence. We see the tragic results acted out in recent events in Howard County, our region, and throughout this nation.

At this pivotal moment in history we are presented with a sacred opportunity. The destruction of Black communities, culture, and the blatant disregard for the value of Black lives, have risen to the surface for all to see. There are no valid excuses for turning a blind eye. There never have been. The profound evil of racism, and the Black lives lost to white supremacy systems and violence in this country, must be seen and the cost perceived.

The time has come to unequivocally stand against the dehumanizing and lethal injustice that has destroyed Black lives, again and again. We act in solidarity with our siblings of all colors. We come from a variety of global wisdom traditions that uplift love, not hatred.

Let us continue seeing, repairing, and healing.

We must act on the love that unites us, in Howard County and this nation.

Rev. Patricia Abell

Rev. Brian Akers

Rev. Gayle Annis-Forder

Rabbi Craig Axler

Rev. Susan Beck

Rev. Philip Curran

Rev. Tyrone Jones

Rev. Paige Getty

Rev. Louise Green

Rabbi Susan Grossman

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

Shehlla Khan

Rev. Claire Matheny

Rev. Ann Ritonia

Rev. Jane Smith

Rabbi Sonya Starr

Rev. Csaba Szilagyi

Rev. Robert Turner

Rev. Ostein B. Truitt

Rev. John West