



The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

*A loving community in relationship with God, serving Christ
and respecting the dignity of all.*

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He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:4

Dear Ascension family,

I write to you after a night of mostly peaceful protests that follows days of civil unrest in our country. Though I spoke of the sin of racism in my Pentecost sermon, still, it has taken me a few days to process through my thoughts and emotions that swirl around the horrific murder of George Floyd and the ensuing responses across our nation.

Our parish theme, "Walk in the Way of Love," was chosen by Senior Warden Barb Ammon and myself at the end of 2019, not knowing how important this message would become. I believe that if we are to be a community who follows Christ, then this is the work we must be doing: walking in love with all of God's children. We must be one that works towards justice and mercy for all of God's children. This is how we live into our Baptismal vow to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being" (Book of Common Prayer, page 305).

Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, wrote a piece in the *Washington Post* published on May 31st in which he said, "Love looks like all of us, as a people of every race and religion and national origin and political affiliation, all of us standing up and saying, 'Enough!' We can *do* better than this. We can *be* better than this" (emphasis added). How can we do better?

One important way we do better is by beginning with us: anti-racism work most beneficially starts at home and grows outward from there. I urge you, therefore, to join with me in learning more about the ways that the evil of systemic racism infects our institutions. Our Diocese will be holding a 3-hour virtual anti-racism workshop from 9-12 on Saturday, June 13th and Saturday, July 25th. You can register for this [here](#) or by calling Canon Toneh Smyth at the Diocesan office at 215-627-6434.

Bishop Gutierrez has called for a diocesan Day of Prayer on Monday, June 8th from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. As a Diocese, we will penitentially pray the Great Litany found on page 148 in our Book of Common Prayer, naming those slain by acts of violence in this time (to submit a name to the Diocese, please email prayer@diopa.org). To participate in the Day of Prayer, you may visit the Diocesan Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalPA/> or our parish Facebook

page at <https://www.facebook.com/ascensionparkesburg> where I will be hosting a Watch Party. You do not need a Facebook account to watch these livestream services.

Finally, if you have not listened to my sermon from Pentecost Sunday, May 31st, I urge you to do so. We who have privilege and voice must look within ourselves for our own biases, acknowledge them, and then exorcize them. You can access my sermon on our parish Facebook page. It begins around 10:30 in the worship service video. You can also watch and share the sermon by clicking on the "Videos" link in the left-side menu on our page.

May we all learn to do justice, to love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

In Christ's peace,

Rev. Jill