The Lands Council expresses solidarity

The Lands Council stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter efforts

Logo

Our hearts have been hurting for the last two weeks as police brutality has once again exposed the deep-rooted systematic racism that is so prevalent in this country. We are outraged by the racial injustices occurring and we are frustrated with the response from our leaders and the media. It is heart-wrenching to watch police brutalize black and indigenous people, and those who are standing up to racialized oppression. Our hearts go out to all who are hurting, grieving, angry, and exhausted during this time.

The Lands Council stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and everyone fighting for racial justice across the US and the world. We are in full support of the protesters who are fighting to dismantle white supremacy and demanding an end of state sanctioned violence against black people. We stand with all who are calling for accountability and demilitarization of the police. We are with you in imagining a society that prioritizes compassion & restorative justice over excessive force and incarceration.

Our work to restore our environment is inextricably connected to racial justice. Dismantling the systems of oppression that exploit land and communities of color is crucial. We know that climate change, as well as water and air pollution, are impacting black, indigenous, and people of color more than others in our Spokane community. We will strive to ensure that climate justice is at the forefront of our efforts.

We cannot ignore how climate change, environmental degradation, and air and water pollution disproportionately impacts communities of color. We as The Lands Council must do more to ensure an end to racism and social injustice. We believe that a safe and welcoming access to our natural world is not a privilege – it is a right for all people.

Our commitments to being allies and an anti-racist organization:

• 5% of our budget will be allocated directly to supporting environmental justice efforts in the Inland Northwest.

• TLC staff and board will reevaluate our strategic plan, mission, and vision to include commitments to environmental justice and racial equity.

As of June 2020, all TLC board and staff members will participate in racial justice training.

Please donate and support local efforts to address racial injustice, environmental injustice, and police brutality:

[Spokane NAACP](https://landscouncil.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e130e6bd2a9919820fb746316&id=8ab9e40566&e=ef60ab7e97), The [Black Lens](https://landscouncil.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e130e6bd2a9919820fb746316&id=b700932a79&e=ef60ab7e97), [Front and Centered](https://landscouncil.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e130e6bd2a9919820fb746316&id=80bbb24f96&e=ef60ab7e97) and [The Bail Project](https://landscouncil.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e130e6bd2a9919820fb746316&id=f5877037c0&e=ef60ab7e97)

[Smart Justice Spokane](https://landscouncil.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e130e6bd2a9919820fb746316&id=ab2b52ae94&e=ef60ab7e97) - sign this petition to ensure that Covid-19 relief funding is spent properly

List: [Black Owned Businesses in the Inland NW](https://landscouncil.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e130e6bd2a9919820fb746316&id=405708f388&e=ef60ab7e97)

We mean it when we say Black Lives Matter and Native Lives Matter. Today, The Lands Council is doubling down on our commitment to be anti-racist, not just through our words, but also our actions.

June 10, 2020 - The Lands Council

Lutheran bishop calls for anti-racism work

Lutheran bishop calls for anti-racism work in Northwest Intermountain Synod

photo

In the last few weeks we have watched our country (and much of the world) explode in protests following the death of George Floyd while in custody of officers from the Minneapolis Police Department. Three of the five synod staff called the Twin Cities home for at least a portion of our lives, so we have watched this while seeing familiar landmarks & neighborhoods burn, while hearing of congregations we were once a part of stepping in to support those whose lives have been shattered by the violence, & keeping in contact with friends and family still living in the area. This is not simply happening in a city. It is happening in our hearts.

Mr. Floyd's death (along with the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor & many others) has reignited conversations around racial inequality in our country, often in ways that cause white people to react defensively. The existence of systemic racism is not up for debate. The existence of white supremacy is not up for debate. Our neighbors of color are impacted in ways that white people cannot see—not because we are bad people, but because the systems in our country were designed to prioritize & preference white people. We cannot see all the places the system is repressive because the system does not repress us.

This is not to say that the lives of white people aren't difficult. But it IS to say that our skin color doesn't make our lives more difficult.

Our synod encompasses the area in Northern Idaho that was once the headquarters of white supremacy in the United States. It is naive to believe that white supremacy ended when the headquarters was taken away. It is naive to think that white supremacy exists only in Northern Idaho. It is naive to think it is the responsibility of people of color to adapt to the white system. I believe it is critical for white people to begin to educate themselves around things such as white privilege, systemic racism, inherent bias & complicit racism. It is vital for the Church to take Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" seriously. From my perspective, this commandment is non-negotiable. And while yes, Jesus advocates for peace, he was also not above flipping a table or two in his day when people were being oppressed by those in authority.

In the years since my election in 2017, God has been speaking to me about anti-racism work in our synod. When I have brought it up with others, I have been told "No, the synod is not ready for that." and I have gratefully accepted that excuse, because I know how hard the work will be, and how much conflict it might kick off. I confess that I took shelter in my white privilege. God has placed teacher after teacher in my path. Guiding me and encouraging me to engage this work. My excuses might sound familiar. I am a nice person. I have never used the "n word". I believed that people of color had all the same opportunities & resources that I did growing up—and the fact that they didn't achieve as much as I did said more about them than it did about the systems that surrounded us both (but, I have come to learn, treated us very differently). It has only been through work begun before the call to bishop was even a consideration that I am able to see that the system does not work. I can't always identify where it does not work, that is part of my continued learning. I am still learning. I am still making mistakes. I am still asking forgiveness. I try very hard to show up. Especially when what I really want to do is slip back into my privileged life and let others do the hard work. Because for our siblings of color all too often showing up and doing the hard work looks like death. For me, it looks like a hard day. For them, it can look like the last day. That right there is what I hope you can begin to understand about inherent white privilege. Not only can we choose NOT to do the work of racial reconciliation, if we DO choose to do the work: it most likely will not cost us our lives.

Even then, racial justice work can be terrifying. We are afraid to ask questions we feel expected to know the answer to. We don't want to expose our ignorance, or we are afraid of saying the wrong thing. We are uncertain how to engage this work, or reluctant to engage this work because it makes us angry or embarrassed or depressed. We may be tempted to say "All lives matter!" because lifting up black lives at this time seems wrong to us, and we may not understand why that elicits the response that it does. Perhaps we are afraid of what will happen if true racial equality comes to pass—what will it be like to be on an actual level playing field? Maybe, as a friend of color once suggested, we are afraid that if racial equality becomes reality that we will be treated as people of color have been treated for far too long. Maybe we aren't even sure how to begin figuring out what we don't know. Or maybe it's a little bit of all of that.

That's OK. We don't have to be fearless to start. We don't have to know where to start. We just need someone to point you in the right direction.

To that end, I have invited the synod staff to join me in developing an anti-racism program for the Northwest Intermountain Synod. Ready or not: it's time. Beyond time. We will begin to share resources that you can utilize on your own, or in congregational or cluster groups. You will begin to hear synod staff lifting up this issue, asking questions about it, engaging you around your response. It's OK to be angry. It's OK to not know. It's OK to ask us any questions you have. We will answer what we can, and find the answers for you when we don't have them. We will be bringing in people who will help us learn. We will challenge one another, we will learn from one another, we will make mistakes together, we will ask forgiveness together. Because yes, all lives matter. But white lives have mattered most for hundreds of years. We've benefitted from that, without asking for it. We have not only the ability but the responsibility to use what those centuries have given us to help others around us. It is my fervent prayer that you will join me in this work of learning together.

For an easily accessible resource, I encourage you to visit [https://sites.google.com/view/buildingbridges](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001RxqRA4hRuMIOeav9QwAEhCcyvcmUyA2RPvS-KvCSWX0G3bYHwVAgT7Zu4VIo79JuRY7DjzmyLk7KWEQfWdyxlNNqDs_P5p_FZsB9j1mm8m-QOg0MouhSMgYIgpcGanwbmbFmbyEHNKiLToRQtI5w1DDJm4t6wqZyzi4sbVix0SF8w7Znc2zb5g==&c=GDlSeYZI_pKCbQUZl4T8IovRHU0BTkXL7DDdV4ClNmbarSErp-uzrg==&ch=eWcXuEl6WNN7UIHisvf4mywICgrCaKVwaoKAsLL7lDpW-s95ysq8JA==) This curriculum was developed by retired NWIM pastor, the Rev. Alex Schmidt. He has facilitated this training with the Synod Council, in addition to congregations and secular organizations around our synod. The work that Pastor Alex does is work best done when we can safely gather together again, but the website can function as a good starting point. The ELCA also offers wonderful resources around racial reconciliation work at this link: [https://www.elca.org/Resources/Racial-Justice](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001RxqRA4hRuMIOeav9QwAEhCcyvcmUyA2RPvS-KvCSWX0G3bYHwVAgT7Zu4VIo79JuMuzRywNLX8Sczd151vuPeLbmfCtsE3JzmOgsqAFYmKXw1YZFaJ7OnQjwLyWYVaWXTvBu7BIN9pGpLP7A6a3xtg0orUfQdFTuLBwv_ZL4yPQnRpPSy7jgNA==&c=GDlSeYZI_pKCbQUZl4T8IovRHU0BTkXL7DDdV4ClNmbarSErp-uzrg==&ch=eWcXuEl6WNN7UIHisvf4mywICgrCaKVwaoKAsLL7lDpW-s95ysq8JA==)

We can begin this reconciliation work right now, and here are some books I've found helpful in my own education around this topic:

*Revolution of Faith: Reclaiming Public Faith for the Common Good* by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

*Less than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* by David Livingstone Smith

*A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn

*Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S* by Lenny Duncan

*White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Race* by Robin DiAngelo

*Fear+Less Dialogues: A New Movement for Justice* by Gregory C Ellison II

*RACE: Are We So Different*? by Alan H. Goodman, Yolanda T. Moses and Joseph L. Jones

*How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi

*Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* by Drew G.I. Hart

Please be aware that many of these books are in high demand right now, and might be several months away from renewed availability. I encourage you to consider an e-reader version if you can, library or friend if you cannot. These are also just a beginning. As the Synod staff continues to broaden their knowledge on the subject, we will share other resources—podcasts, social media accounts, articles, movies, documentaries.

Follow us on Facebook at Northwest Intermountain Synod.

June 9, 2020 - Bishop Kristen Kuempel – Northwest Intermountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Whitworth offers statement on ‘Racial Violence in America’

Whitworth leaders present a statement on ‘Racial Violence in America’

Photos of Beck Taylor and Lorna Hernandez

There is a deadly epidemic in our country. Unlike the coronavirus, this sickness isn't novel, but as we've been reminded in recent weeks, it's just as deadly.

We write today to unequivocally denounce the sin of racism that continues to plague our nation, our community, and our campus, and we ask every member of the Whitworth family to reflect upon ways we can contribute to a more just, equitable, and humane society. We also ask that Whitworthians pray for the victims of racial violence, their families, and their communities as they grapple with the deadly consequences of injustice.

The recent video of Amy Cooper in New York's Central Park highlights the result of unchecked white privilege, and the senseless and brutal killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd are gruesome reminders that racial injustice is real and deadly.

As Whitworth's Christ-Centered Rationale for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion states, "The gospel resists every form of ideological thinking that conflates the will of God with our own interests and agendas. The sovereign love of the Spirit of God frees us to confess our complicity in structures of injustice and oppression, to become generous conversation partners, to welcome and learn from those who are different from us, and to take comfort in the knowledge that we love because God first loved us."

As Whitworthians, we cannot fully honor God, follow Christ, and serve humanity if we stand by while our brothers and sisters of color are treated in unjust and cruel ways. This includes being silent when we see oppression and unjust structures, practices, and behaviors. We encourage each of us to speak up, speak out, and demand that every person be treated with the respect they deserve as children of God, created in God's image. We encourage all members of our community to engage in education, learning, and advocacy that will help us eliminate these inequities.

We do well to remember in these painful times that, as our rationale statement reads, "Christians bear witness to the mystery of Christ in words and actions. We seek reconciliation across all the boundaries that divide us because Christ reconciles sinners to God and has broken down the dividing wall that separates people and communities from one another. We seek peace because Christ is our peace and calls his people to be a community of peace. We seek justice because Christ is our justice and calls his people to do justice."

We urgently call upon all members of the Whitworth community to seek God's wisdom and discern the ways each of us can repent from the sin of racism, and to identify actions we can take today to create a just and inclusive community.

May 30, 2020 - Beck A. Taylor, President • Lorna Hernandez Jarvis, Chief Diversity Officer

Gonzaga speaks out on death of George Floyd

Gonzaga University presents a statement on the death of George Floyd

Like so many of you watching the national news last evening and the days before, we at Gonzaga, and I personally, are very affected and troubled by the graphic images of George Floyd being traumatized, enduring physical harm at the hands of those assigned to protect people, and then dying in their custody.

It is but the latest in a series of recent such incidents and I share the outrage expressed by protestors, so many of them our students’ age, protesting in multiple cities across the country.

Gonzaga University is a community that has chosen to focus on and pay attention to systematic injustice. Our work is aided and supported by colleagues in areas such as the [Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=lh1EqYmfCWD6rRcwmDokZQUbuV4R3VmZU1oGMw1rgLU8WPJlcV_vB2KKFQ-vh-EEdiUvYdYaBEaLvVTuOHW5lHZWvVpNRCjS3qrr-UQEEyt5Q3bqS8Oji62-AXHFnti-tyArb2NxHm5SXdU-Reci0PROYcWiyou-NpwvfcqrPdNBwOv4ck5EAyK2o29huLLB81XXH9AgHjK4fhw9icdOJ0jzwwnGBZ48A8pM5lqVUyQ0VWgbSE4AgTmeoKMRtffcxdH0wk8R1rHvXiC7TWN09E8LsE-o7iN5sJ) and the [Unity Multicultural Education Center (UMEC)](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=w30_qrhXDci4Xyaz92ZNeQ5Wx--sUNBjM9bEj9NZC9Wmbl5t1CmWDktKa-wQ5K5dRg51ABSTJ9EwjtPtRXghusKMNRGDnXeSUpoAkdkfeyTMlo0pwFei5CByXCS-AQjMmqoaFaRI6ZoH7xl9ujO0ULM59HsYLSPpYIkGdzBgVRgeqnHOWse2EfSlwTizrwBsjlAcpQPgHqKbBkWh-cU_AdcyLetnkLg4oLtLDVUd4m6s4JRS-N-5IsAVtNS-2RSQ5H2PcOxW1RpRXiIWfVUgffA7BZOcErjG9C) within Student Development. We are blessed to have entities such as the [Institute for Hate Studies](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=74NPxcnIivaTxNNFL3I09wsjf40aypaWhLIz_Ei1q41cerxnSf3377WlCNMV0XCpXEafwD8HXBjuV89UQ4yKKQrPWgBVyer1GA71nbvqYmCF7oBik-exoRF9X05t7SVONRjE_-5XkyY8HRBz04vZjAqwai-zEsHAJT5dzMmmnlaG_RURlxIQ_6SYIVw509vMJDGZIP_MVyDeyCC6yM10KBzwCHeXEI-J9jEgkNTWRytmOtudsFpA7x2LqdF-U_dFcPOlhw2ERpISo), and the Center for Human and Civil Rights, that track and interpret events, like the murder of George Floyd – an action whose impact may well result in increased expressions of prejudice, racism, and bias.

The work of these Institutes and Centers, as well as the courses and pedagogies developed in the [Department of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES)](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=XEWU5MOcjeuy3GohBSDtxgC648P1BYG8a1JyIctPBC8T9YCP3q37O2ZpQaEvqTNSivUboVRGZizVvfCP5_CQHnUhGMTZDDdibWH0BsgominbgKSu2lHj8tDBxoQu6wrJiM_qMEtm1RKEnGnj05938HdHxmH-om21VftMqwP7D6gABJ9lZys9fiO-Ov2JFHcuftPu3pWz-8ym4o072yOwULJNR7hfj_1Fgzy7mWE1i0XHN4lvA38JGUFlQf7qZ9NXww5SDLcbceGKFrxtCLrDA3lKp5ZQmkaFhn), [Native American Studies](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=VgP8bUsDiZ9gFCTK93UPag3fG-feuBAtiR0hogQwhndKPdesoHrXOE5_CKyXNm867cHv-zu3zCazlwM1SF_60FMQ_a4w2f5-u4Mnf2RQ_siAOs6QT4vGU7i0mTM9Mca2TTB452_zcUO_vlYYr3zjKCAdlVloUHx106rNZM0xV9XBZlp0sv37ooTHTjVYj2sMRSI3-AFbSzFcXrebKwYxKtLky7IkMcix0NwDYFwlhl8Rp6Yzow4T2OZXS9QpoT8Q7nfuljB6qyDD4) and in many other departments, from [History](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=M5cXNrYucM21mslpwLvFkgsQJokmAvpD7wfcrfTMo6wcdWlPC7s7-qwKEmUka2P0bel04dXYBYZ2jUNhICpShnZMzdb6x4T9zYI63xPscy4vZ9IpkJakQay1DmZJVUCzUWW1t52pa9zPeOmrqJoQkDIQpYA8ZXMrqgfEz-tfGDCdb5KCemImU-W0SUezCjdM0On6HvIzy0B70uw-Q1ie2iyzFGjR2YPBV3wLcobPCs4gXWUoFV1OLxjQ) to [Women’s and Gender Studies](http://app.bronto.com/t/l?ssid=9368&subscriber_id=buaemhqgbqrmxkejsytsqfftjeqabmn&delivery_id=bpifruiofavzuhpexzqwthvoewztbma&td=VoeHIOdJ4FdHsmP4xIysUgQzezgbnhQ1SfNd6WuLIfYBhBqu57MTFyDCvdqGEeXCI9hICF4GVLwi03QE7wzNSo3DxyIKQKGtTh40xVdNxlVkP15ZJNS3MmL-SW1gmR6uMUzdxpzv_uXAR4eYYDifj7uYejZHT4N1RARL9esPa4apXH2oI6PIKqFoE82XBtKYyXH-lfz_OJP_WqFqvsKu7fuysKckq1JSqbFJLDDXDILdTrkMMGFB5PZSZrwF-ZBEYo7Q54H4M8tuQ), aligns with and animates our mission to educate students for and with others.

At this critical juncture in US racial and ethnic history, it is important to remember that a founder of the Jesuits, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, was a member of a group now minoritized in their nation; a respect for difference is also at the heart of many Ignatian teachings.

The fear equated with differences based on color, in this country, is profound, and has a particular pattern of having been codified and institutionalized in law, in practice, and in social and cultural values; it is a fear worthy of acknowledgment and of analysis. We are called, as is stated sometimes in common vernacular, to “own” this history as much as we obligate ourselves to resisting, interpreting, and evaluating behaviors borne out of racialized pasts.

The Gonzaga community joins with so many others in offering our condolences to the family of George Floyd, his brothers and sister who have shared their grief publicly, and share as well our concern for protesters displaying their grief and anger in ways that have also claimed lives and injuries.

We are all cognizant of the impact destruction of property has on cities, in neighborhoods, and on the business owners who are in the path of the outrage expressed. While it is never appropriate to set fires, loot or respond in physically injurious ways to officers of the law and to first responders, we have witnessed this level of emotion and destruction repeatedly across our nation’s history.

Applicable to far too many events in the racial past of this country is what Martin Luther King Jr. named in one of his many exacting speeches: “What is it that America has failed to hear?”

Increased militarization to “restore” order has its own problematic history; and as many seek a way to express their emotions or politics about George Floyd’s death, and that of so many others before him, as a Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic university, we can offer prayers, but we can do even more: to practice a faith that does justice, whether we endorse or support, or not, what is happening right now in this country’s cities.

I remember as a child in rural New Mexico hearing MLK’s speech before the Los Angeles Democratic Club – to paraphrase but deeply etched in my memory: how the hot, burning fires of one summer, we must remember, followed a cold, cold winter of despair.

It well may be that this, too, is what we are seeing before us, amplified in contexts of self-isolation or social distancing, and with far fewer visible outlets to mark poverty, anguish, and need.

As our university president stated in the context of the racial violence in Charlottesville, Gonzaga stands in solidarity with all those who oppose hate, who oppose prejudice, who oppose racism – and daily affirms its commitment to working proactively and constructively to create a culture and society where the dignity of each and every individual is treasured, honored, and celebrated, and the words “equity,” “inclusivity” and “justice” are truly hallmarks of our way of proceeding.

Even as our own emotions are likely running high, may we listen carefully to, and help, one another, in this difficult national moment.

Black lives matter,

May 30, 2020 - Deena J. González, Ph.D. Provost and Senior Vice President, Gonzaga University

YWCA gives Racial Equity, Social Justice Challenge

YWCA Spokane announces [14-day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge](https://ywcaspokane.org/challenge/)

graphic

Eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all is the Mission of the YWCA.  As we witness the suffering in our community and our nation, we at the YWCA Spokane continue to turn to our Mission for guidance.  While most are familiar with the exceptional work that the YWCA does to serve victims of domestic violence and families living in poverty, fewer are familiar with the social justice lens of our work.

There is a heaviness throughout our community and throughout the nation, as we all grapple with how to respond to the actions and images of injustice and violence. We have watched anger and hopelessness continue to escalate and we are watching the unrest growing here and in communities across the country. Our friends and families across the nation and the world, our co-workers and neighbors here in Spokane, are all impacted by racism, by discrimination, and by the use of power and control to inflict violence and harm, including the horrible harm we have seen inflicted by instances of police violence.

It has been two weeks now since protests began in reaction to the graphic videos of the brutal torture and death of George Floyd.  Protestors invoke his name and the names of Breonna Taylor, Dreasjon Reed, David McAtee, and countless others who have tragically died at the hand of police officers who had sworn to uphold their rights, regardless of race, gender, religion or any other factor.

We salute, and we support the peaceful protestors speaking out on behalf of victims of social injustice everywhere.  We stand with you as you protest against racism and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. We also applaud the honorable law enforcement officers who have knelt in solidarity with protestors and those who work to protect your rights, especially the right to engage in peaceful protest.

We strongly condemn acts by those who promote racism, bias and hate, especially those who betray our trust and faith in our system of laws, whether violating an oath to uphold the law or taking the law into their own hands.

As an organization of strong, diverse women committed to building better communities, we take the issues that are gripping our nation and our community seriously. The events of the past weeks have underscored that our work toward advancing racial equality and justice is far from finished. We must step up to the challenge of our Mission to bring greater peace, justice, freedom and dignity into our homes, our businesses, our friendships, our neighborhoods and our entire community.

As civic leaders, we are committed to speaking out against racism, injustice and violence of all kinds, engaging in difficult conversations, raising awareness, learning from one another and building community. As we speak out, we acknowledge the unique burden and privilege we hold in doing so.  We CAN speak out.  We each have the right, the power, the opportunity and the wherewithal to speak out against injustice, not just for ourselves, but for the victims of violence who don’t have the same power and control over their own voices.  We MUST continue to speak out for EVERY victim of injustice, but especially now on behalf of our black and brown brothers and sisters.

YWCA Spokane is kicking off our [14-day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge](https://ywcaspokane.org/challenge/) this month, and we urge the community to join YWCA Spokane in committing to dismantle racism in all the insidious, deeply-ingrained ways it has infected our country. Maybe that means joining peaceful protests, reading literature on how to recognize racism and injustice, taking action to prevent and stop hate and injustice, having tough conversations with loved ones, or engaging with our elected officials to improve our society and our laws. Our work together can root out injustice, transform institutions, and create a community that sees women, girls, and people of color the way we do:  Equal. Powerful. Unstoppable.

YWCA is on a mission to eliminate racism, and your voice is vital to ensuring we live up to this legacy in Spokane. Whatever you do to join us in our Mission, SPEAK OUT FOR JUSTICE.

June 10, 2020 - Laura McAloon, YWCA Spokane board chair, [laura@mcaloon-law.com](mailto:laura@mcaloon-law.com), 509-434-8705

Environmental justice is racial justice

Earth Ministry/WAIPL asserts that environmental justice is racial justice

As people of faith, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves and to put our faith into action for justice. So let me be clear: Black Lives Matter. Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light unequivocally condemns racism, police brutality, and state-sanctioned violence against Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other people of color.

Environmental justice is deeply interwoven with social and racial justice. We work toward climate justice because all beings deserve a healthy environment, and because we strive to preserve our planet for generations to come. The violence of white supremacy strikes at the heart of our vision, and it withers our work toward a sustainable planet.

Systemic issues like corporate power and roadblocks to democracy place the burden of environmental pollution on Black communities first and hardest. These same systems perpetuate the marginalization and killing of Black people. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Indigenous people, the health disparities of people of color due to pollution, and the significant impact of the climate crisis being felt by these communities are all part of broader institutional racism that permeates our nation’s past and present. The climate crisis is a racial justice crisis. We know we will only achieve an environmentally just future for all when we build a racially just one.

As a historically white organization, Earth Ministry/WAIPL is doing our own work to educate ourselves, shift our status quo, become better allies, and advocate for justice. It takes intention, and we will stumble along the way. But our faith calls us to take these steps to reject systems of white supremacy that oppress, marginalize, and outright kill people of color every day.

We stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and Black- and people of color-led organizations at the forefront of this fight. We honor and support their leadership, and encourage you to give of your time, energy, and money in support as well.

Here are some immediate ways to help those on the frontlines.

Donate:

• Donate to the Official George Floyd Memorial Fund started by his brother, Philonise Floyd.

• Donate to Black-led groups

• Donate to environmental justice groups

• Donate to the all-volunteer, Native-led Navajo & Hopi COVID-19 relief fund and the Washington State Undocumented Workers COVID-19 relief fund.

Act:

• Call for justice for George Floyd, for Breonna Taylor, for Tony McDade, and for Ahmaud Arbery.

• Sign up for updates from the national Movement for Black Lives network.

• Engage with your local Black Lives Matter chapter, contact through BLM Seattle-King County.

• 75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice

Learn:

• So You Want to Talk about Race by Ijeoma Oluo

• How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X Kendi

• Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla Saad

• Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

• White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism by Robin Diangelo

• Dear Church: A Love LeCer from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US by Lenny Duncan

• Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment by Manish Mishra-Marzef and Jennifer Nordstrom (Editors)

Join us in working to dismantle structural racism to help build a more

healthy and just future.

LeeAnne Beres, executive director, Earth Ministry/WA Interfaith Power & Light