June 9, 2020

We, the undersigned students, faculty, and staff of the School of Theology join with the Sewanee Community and so many others in expressing our grief, outrage, and commitment to respond to the ongoing violence against black and brown people. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd are beloved children of God whose lives were unjustly cut short by our country’s ingrained systems of anti-black racism.

We lament “the long line of senseless, racist murders.” We mourn continuing systemic injustices in our country, and we stand in solidarity with Sewanee’s African American students, alumni, faculty, and staff in pain, fear, anger, and work for change.

As current and future leaders of The Episcopal Church, “we repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.” We denounce the powers of white supremacy at work in the world. We call out our silent complicity, privileged inaction, and “premeditated indifference.” We confess that our institutions continue to benefit from systems of oppression.

And yet, we trust in the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ who sustains the suffering, liberates the oppressed, transforms sinners, and calls us to commit to the work of justice.

Following the way of love, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calls us to make “the long-term commitment to racial healing, justice and truth-telling.” So, with God’s help, we deepen our commitment to

- Amplify the presence and perspectives of African Americans in our classrooms, research, and worship
- Expand anti-racist training that equips church leaders to be catalysts for change
- Incorporate the study of how slavery and its legacies have marked the history of our institutions
- Facilitate meaningful cross-cultural ministry experiences
- Transform the seminary’s artistic representation to reflect the witness of the global church
- Recognize publicly the Rev. Joe Green as an exemplary School of Theology alumnus and one of the first African Americans to graduate from the University of the South
- Bear prophetic witness to the oppression of others
- Work with the wider Sewanee community toward collective action for systemic change

With these commitments, and with God’s grace, we hope and work for God’s beloved community.

Faithfully,
Malcolm McLaurin  Mercedes Clements  David Stark
Deborah M. Jackson  Marie Smith  Tommy Drake
Ben Cowgill  Judith Marklin  Michael Harber
Rebecca Walton  Catherine Ann Ballinger  Rachel Eskite
Collin Cornell  Ashley Simpson  Marcella Robinson
Keith Davis  Derek J. Quinn  Andrew Thompson
Allison Reid  J. Neil Alexander  Shari Harrison
Lathrop Mosley  Leigh C. Preston  Meghan J. Mazur
James F. Turrell  Benjamin King  John Simpson
Sarah Hess  Adam L. Dawkins  Andrew C. Sloan
Sarah E. Limbaugh  Melissa M. Hartley  Romulus Stefanut
Paul Schutz  Cynthia Crysdale  Elizabeth Grohowski
Christy Hodges  H. Walker Adams  Julia Gatta
Christopher L. Schwenk  Helen Vanek-Bigelow  Connie Patton
Mary Ann Patterson  Elsa S. Bakkum  Gabriel Perkins-Lawrence
Heather Winkler  James Tengatenga  Shelby Bowles
Ted Clarkson  Graff Wilson  Amy Bentley Lamborn
Mary Foster Parmer  Rebecca Wright  Elizabeth Carrillo
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Charline Butner  David Boyd  Shadreck Kwagwanji
Casey Perkins-Lawrence  Sheri D. Kling  Erica S. Rozolsky
Ian Williams  Charles McClain  Robert Delvin