



May 29, 2020

Beloved Community,

In the United States this week, we reached the grim milestone of 100,000 deaths due to COVID-19. A disproportionate number of those deaths were African Americans. While the coronavirus does not discriminate, the stark inequities in our health care system does lead to racial disparities. And the pandemic of violent Black death has continued unabated during this same time. Among others whose names we don't even know, we mourn the deaths of: **Breonna Taylor**, murdered by a swat team while sleeping in her own bed; **Ahmaud Arbery**, hunted and gunned down by vigilantes; **George Floyd**, killed by the weight of police officers kneeling on his neck; and **Tony McDade**, killed by police in Florida, a state that has been an epicenter of anti-trans violence.

The dual pandemics of disease and violence leave me brokenhearted and I struggle to find hope in the midst of so much pain. God reassured me that being in the struggle, with more questions than answers, is exactly where people of faith need to be.

We must mourn with those who mourn. Mourn with the daughter who was unable to be with her father during the final moments of his life, having to rely on nurses and FaceTime to transit a final goodbye from his hospital bed. Mourn with the mother whose son was killed at the prime of his life, for the "crime" of jogging while Black.

We must practice the ministry of presence. Because the problems are so big and our solutions seems so small, we often find ourselves feeling helpless. But the ministry of presence means serving wherever you. Pick up a prescription for an elder in your community. Donate to places like the [Minnesota Freedom Fund](#), which works to end the unjust bail system. Or write a letter [demanding justice](#) for Tony McDade.

We must resist. Resist the forces of evil, racism, and white supremacy which pervade the public discourse at the highest levels. Resist complacency and being silent. Speak even if your voice shakes. Resist doing nothing because you don't know what to do.

We are called to the struggle. We are called to be in community with the least of these. Know that God is with you in the struggle, giving you courage to speak, act, and do the work of justice.

Dean Pierce