



Coalition of Elgin Religious Leaders
330 Griswold Street
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The Psalmist wrote, “How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long? (Psalm 13:2)

The Psalms speak the language and emotions of real life. They recognize the pain of people who are hurting, oppressed, angry, and broken. They express what all too often we hope to avoid expressing but need to because our hearts are breaking. Indeed, these words express the depth of longing in the hearts of so many people who long for our world to be better than it is.

Our hearts are breaking. As leaders of different religious communities in and around Elgin, we cannot remain silent after watching the brutal video of a police officer keeping his knee on the neck of George Floyd who gasped for mercy until he could no longer breathe. Such inhumane treatment of another human being requires a collective response from all people of conscience. In addition, this is just one of many stories of racism, death and injustice that we are confronted with each week. In Elgin, images of the death of DeCynthia Clements come to mind for many as we see more of these events repeatedly in the news. It is time to not only speak against any one of these events, but to also speak about the need for a collective change that brings a safe and peaceful life to all the people of this land.

The pursuit of justice is a fundamental tenet of our respective religious traditions, and thus we stand together to declare that all life is sacred and that all people are equal in the eyes of God and before the law in a democratic society. We respect those who want to honor George Floyd’s memory with peaceful protest against the horror, evil, and sin that is racism. We also support the members of Floyd’s family who said, in part, “We cannot endanger each other as we respond to the necessary urge to raise our voices in unison and in outrage. Looting and violence distract from the strength of our collective voice.”

We will offer our many prayers for healing, but we also need real and meaningful action as we work together with all members of our community to find that critical cure for human hatred. As leaders of our respective faith communities, we pledge to engage in conversation and action with people of different races, ethnicities and religious tradition so that we can build a stronger appreciation and love of our neighbors. We commit our collective voices to this effort and pledge our hands and feet as well, so that we not only lament the needless loss of one more life but commit to working toward a world where events like this no longer happen.

Rev. Carol Book, Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Risa Cohan, President, Congregation Kneseth Israel

Rev. Dr. David Daubert, Zion Lutheran Church

Deacon Marlene Daubert, Zion Lutheran Church

Rev. Neris Diaz-Cabello, Chaplain, MDiv. BCC, Staff Chaplain at Advocate Sherman Hospital

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Edmond, Pastor, Second Baptist Church of Elgin

Rabbi Margaret Frisch Klein, Congregation Kneseth Israel

Rev. Melissa Hood, United Methodist Church

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Rabbi Dr. Jonathan I. Kohn

Linda Meyer, Master of Pastor Studies, Saint Laurence Catholic Church

Rev. Michael Montgomery, PhD, United Church of Christ

Rev. Elisabeth Patz, United Church of Christ

Rev. Jon Philips, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Karen Schlack, Blackhawk Presbytery

Rev. Jarrod Severing, Pastor, Journey of Hope – A United Methodist Community

Rev. Katie Shaw Thompson, Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren

Rev. Dr. Jesse Tanner, First Congregational Church

Rev. Denise Tracy, Lead Chaplain, Kane County Sheriff's Office

Rev. Philip M. Trzynka, Christ the Lord Lutheran Church

George Wadleigh, Christian Science Practitioner

Rev. Mark Weinert, First Christian Church