

Dear Members, Friends & Visitors of St. A's:

2020 has been an extraordinary year; a pandemic, a divisive election, social unrest and reprehensible acts of racial injustice. These events have given us much to ponder. After prayerful consideration, and as the body entrusted with overseeing the mission and ministry of the parish, we believe that we have been called to make a public statement of faith, naming the systemic racism that we see plainly woven into the fabric of our society.

As a first visible step, we have erected a sign on our property to indicate to our community and to remind ourselves that we believe that Black Lives Matter to God and to Us. We thank all of you who shared your thoughts during the parish-wide listening session and in direct communications with us on the initial sign proposal. This process has been essential to our learning just how the Spirit is moving in our congregation. As a result, the original sign design has been modified to include text only, rather than images as well.

As the leadership team of a community that holds diverse political viewpoints, we want to make clear that we do not intend these words as a partisan statement. And they are political only to the extent that they convey a conviction about the ordering of our common life in society. First and foremost, this is a statement of our faith, informed by the teachings of scripture, the example of Jesus, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. We lament that we live in a political, economic, social system in which Black and Brown lives are not valued as highly as white lives. We see a system of white supremacy in church and society that is not in line with our beliefs. Therefore, we believe anti-racism must be a central tenet in our faith as Christians. Until all lives matter equally, we declare that Black Lives Matter.

At St. Augustine's we do not claim to have the perfect answer for ending racism in our world, but we do have clear direction in the life and teachings of Jesus. We know that there is much to do, and our work has just begun.

As the prophet Micah proclaimed,

“The Lord has shown us what is good and what is required of us: ‘To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8).

In this spirit of vulnerability, we take up our work. We have full faith that God will guide us as we work with all members of our community to discern what steps we will take on this anti-racist path. We value strength that is in our community and we look forward to learning, listening, discerning, praying, and acting together against the sin of systemic racism into our future.

In Christ’s love,

The Wardens and the Vestry of St. A’s

- December, 2020