



Rev Patrick Kandeh (Chairman) Rev Novette Headley (Secretary)

5 June 2020

Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ

We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as Presbyters, Deacons, and members of the Methodist Church, and members of the Belonging Together Methodist Ministers' Group, a group of ministers of African, Caribbean, Asian and Black British heritage in the Methodist Church of Great Britain. It is with deep sadness and dismay that we have watched the brutal murder of Mr. George Floyd, a US citizen and citizen of Minnesota on 25 May 2020. We would like to express our solidarity with you and to mingle our tears with yours at this tumultuous time in our combined history as people of colour around the world.

We can hardly imagine the trauma that you and the people in your communities are experiencing as you endure the constant onslaught of police and state brutality, over-policing of black and brown neighbourhoods, under-funding of schools and education, voter rights restrictions, mass incarceration that serve an industrialised and commercialized justice system and which targets black and brown people, and a limited health-care system that neglects the poorest in society. All of this, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic which adversely affects black and Asian people more disproportionately both here in the UK as it does for you in the US, due to the socially-constructed conditions that we endure. We are sorry that you have been carrying such burdens of injustice for centuries.

We understand the frustration and anger that has been expressed on the streets of many cities across your nation, and note that the majority of those protests have been multi-cultural, diverse and peaceful, as they have been here in London. We hear your cry; "I can't breathe!" and Black Lives Matter.

At the same time, we are encouraged that people have kept the focus on the true message of justice sought for Mr. Floyd and the hundreds of men and women who have suffered at the hands of the police, and that you are strategizing with grace and wisdom, for a reform of police practice, and for racial justice within the church and society. We pray for the United Methodist Church, for your General Commission On Religion and Race (GCORR) as well as for organisations like the NAACP, My Brother's Keeper Alliance, Color of Change, and others which are working for justice and liberation of African American, First Nations and all oppressed peoples in your country and ours.

Our prayer for you is that, God who is the resurrection and the life, our Creator God who brings creation and beauty out of chaos, will inspire and breathe the Spirit of vitality and hope into your ministry as you care for your communities. We pray that you will stand strong in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, who also suffered rejection and police brutality in his own land, and reminded us that what we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to Him. Our hope is placed in the boundless, unfathomable Universal God, who is Mother and Father of all peoples everywhere, and who is able to save, heal and restore.

To the suffering, faithful, ever-sustaining, all-loving God be honour and praise, as you are held tightly to God's breast.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Patrick Kandeh, Chair – Belonging Together Ministers' Group