

Statement Against Systemic Racial Violence by St. Philip the Deacon

As an historically African-American church, the struggle for social, economic, and racial justice has been the daily experience of our congregants at St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church. We stand with those who are protesting the death by police of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many other black and brown persons who have been unjustly victimized and murdered by those who serve or served in law enforcement. Such violence has touched our parish family: a grandson of a long-time parishioner was shot in the back by a Portland Police officer, who continues to be employed as an active officer of the PPB, and we continue to mourn his death.

Protests are meant to challenge and change the systemic racism built into our governing and 'peace'-keeping organizations. Alongside protests, real change to policies and practices is required.

To that end, at the city-level:

1. **We support the long-standing demands** made by the **Albina Ministerial Association, Portland Jobs with Justice**, the Portland chapters of the **Urban League**, the **NAACP**, and other civic and faith organizations regarding police oversight and the renewal of the Portland Police Association contract.
2. **We support the defunding of "Special Units" from the PPB.** With the support of Commissioner Hardesty, we request that the City Council cut funding for so-called "special units" that have been shown to be ineffective in the long term, target low-income communities and communities of color for over-policing, and are part of the school to prison pipeline.
3. Finally, we reject the use of militarized force and chemical weapons of any kind within our city.

At the State level, **we support the three actions requested by The People of Color Caucus** in the Oregon State Legislature:

1. To prohibit the lessening of disciplinary action against law enforcement officers who have committed misconduct (Senate Bill 1567).
1. To require the attorney general to investigate and prosecute any death or injury that results from law enforcement action.
2. The creation of a bipartisan work group to recommend changes to state law regarding the use of physical force by law enforcement.

We believe that brown and black lives matter. In the face of ongoing persecution and lynching, God stands in solidarity with them. As Christians, we sing with Mary that our "Lord has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly" (Luke 1:52). As followers of Jesus, a man of color executed by the state, we stand with God in solidarity with those who are oppressed. We stand troubled and emboldened by the Spirit, not just to cry out for justice but also to work for systemic change. God loves all; love requires us to practice justice so that we can live in a world where all can flourish without fear.

See <https://www.stphilipthedeacon.org/2020/06/statement-against-systemic-racial-violence/>