



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Katie Clark, Director of Communications, Episcopal Diocese of Maine
207.233.2230; kclark@episcopalmaine.org

June 11, 2020

Bishop of Maine Shares Statement on Racial Justice

The Right Reverend Thomas J. Brown, the tenth bishop of Maine shared the following statement regarding racial justice and the Episcopal Church in Maine today. The statement was released via video on YouTube and Facebook with a transcript of remarks, which are included below:

On Sunday we read that beautiful poem in Genesis, the story of God's creating the world.

Throughout that story, we hear the phrase, "God saw that it was good"—and that included God's making humankind in God's image—God saw that it was good.

Today, in the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic, we face another global disease: systemic racism and the unjust and inequitable treatment of black, indigenous, and people of color.

We are a church in all 16 counties of this beautiful state, and we hold a variety of political views. While the pandemic of racism certainly has political implications, the church's response to join in the movement to eradicate racism is rooted in our Baptism, at which we ask,

"Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons? Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being?" And we state our agreement by saying: "I will, with God's help" We speak often about our Baptismal promises—rightly—because they are the foundational principles of how we live our faith.

For those of us who are white: we need to listen, hear the sadness, and join in the cry for justice. For those of us who are black, indigenous, and people of color: know that we hear you, and we want to be united with you, and make sure your voices are amplified.

For our church: Let me say unequivocally: We condemn discrimination, racism, and racial injustice in our communities and in our churches. We are going to work together to redress the structures that elevate white privilege and subjugate people of color.

[Statement continues on next page]



[Statement continued below]

We are well aware that words are not enough. We're reminded of St. John the Divine's words "Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."

We will, and must, take action:

Some of us have the capacity to join in allyship with the Black community in the streets as part of peaceful protests

Some of us will, along with police officers and others in authority, symbolize our penitence and solidarity by literally bending on one knee as a sign of our commitment to change

Some of us must stay at home due to the virus, not looking away, but participating in other ways to support the movement

All of us will educate ourselves by talking at church and at our dining tables in what might be challenging conversations; it's okay to be challenged.

And all of us, I pray, will listen to the voices of those who are hurting, and to the Holy Spirit who guides and governs us.

In the coming weeks I will announce the formation of the Diocese of Maine's Racial Justice Commission, that will integrate existing committees and networks, such as Episcopal Peace Fellowship and the Committee on Indian Relations with new initiatives to equip us for the hard work of listening, learning, and joining together to work for racial justice.

There is a quotation circulating on the internet, it reads:

Some are posting on social media

Some are protesting in the streets

Some are donating silently

Some are educating themselves

Some are having tough conversations with friends and family

A revolution has many lanes – be kind to yourself and others who are traveling in the same direction.

Just keep your foot on the gas

God saw that God's work in creation was very good, now, we join God, and God's new creation in Jesus Christ, to take our sadness, our resolve, and our love, and to work for justice.

We can do this, with God's help.

###