

Friends and Family of First Pres Church,

We gather in our homes this morning to worship and celebrate Pentecost. First Pres, like many churches, recorded the worship we have to share early this week, before events unfolded in reaction to the horrible death of George Floyd. I want you to know that we are not deaf and blind to these events. A man's life was taken violently by those who were empowered to serve and protect. A gaping wound has opened up across our nation and cities are in uproar. My own heart is broken for the inhumanity and violence, and for the pain of my friends in the black community who feel again that their lives are valued less. I am grateful that the officers involved have been fired and that active investigations are being pursued by the highest levels of authority, and I pray for justice to come—and quick.

Jesus taught us that our love would reveal His character. Our actions always reveal our own character, but Jesus said the way we love one another will also reveal His character, the character of a loving God. A God who sent His own Son to die under injustice. A God whose Son rose again to inaugurate a Kingdom Come where injustice dies forever and we live in harmony and in peace. The way we love one another will bear witness to this. Not in easy times. In hard times. How will we love? “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7)

As we worship today, free your heart to draw near to God. This is not a distraction from the realities of a faulty and violent world. This is reality. This is the cure. Free your hearts to lift up song, to open up prayer, to receive the Word, and for some, to receive the grace of Jesus Christ for the very first time. The Holy Spirit is stirred up and poured out today—and the world needs it now more than ever.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy McConnell

