

Kenmore United Methodist Church

January 7, 2021

STATEMENT OF CARE
In Response to the events of
January 6, 2021 in Washington, D.C.

Early Wednesday afternoon, January 6th, we completed the recording of today's worship service. A very short time later, an angry mob stormed the nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C. This statement is offered in response to that event.

On EPIPHANY, Wednesday, January 6th, a group of persons who had been protesting outside of our nation's Capital Building in Washington, D.C. stormed the building, breached the security barriers, and wreaked havoc on the functions of our democratic government. The event has been called a coup attempt, an insurrection, domestic terrorist attack and the like. What had been a relatively peaceful protest turned violent, lives were lost, property was damaged, governance ceased, and a whole nation was struck by a blatant display of white supremacy and white nationalism. This assault on the nation's seat has had a far-reaching impact on us and the global community, sewing seeds of anger, mistrust, intimidation, disgust, fear, and, quite frankly, bullying at the highest level.

As I address you today, in the wake of this attack on the soul of our nation, I am concerned for your well-being, our wellbeing, and our future together. I find myself in a place of vacillating anger, grief, spiritual woundedness, and wondering "What next?" What should I feel? What should I do? Who do I trust? What will "they" do next?

In times of distress, I turn to Scripture first. These verses have helped me to function today:

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 (CEB) *...if my people who belong to me will humbly pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.*
- Ephesians 4:2 (CEB) *Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness and patience. Accept each other with love and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together.*
- Matthew 18:6 (CEB) *As for whoever causes these little ones who believe in me to trip and fall into sin, it would be better for them to have a huge stone hung around their necks ...*

So, I first follow the imperative to pray. And I invite you, too, to pray for the soul of our nation, to pray for our elected officials and their staff, to pray for those carried away by the activity of those with mob mentality, pray for those wounded

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by fear, intimidation, racism, and victimization. Please pray for the healing of our nation and the journey toward becoming a beloved community.

Then, may we turn the prayers of our hearts to the labor of our hands. Commit to being tender with yourselves and others today. Then roll up your sleeves, for we have work to do as we seek to become anti-racist, to restore the integrity of our institutional systems, and lift up each person as one of God's beloved creatures. Call for justice, respect, honor and dignity of all people and democracy.

Perhaps you will take the time to contact an elected official just to let that person know you care about their wellbeing and will pray for their safety and integrity in service to the public. Perhaps you will have a conversation with a person of color, asking how you may be supportive and work to eliminate racism. Some have the gift of writing letters to the editor, or engaging in conversation on social media which will make a positive impact on others. Put your prayers into action!

And if you find yourself sinking into an emotional pit of despair, reach out for help: someone to listen, someone to pray with you and for you, someone to help you focus your feelings into positive action. Your pastors and members of our faith family are there to support one another. Know that you matter, and it is our desire to offer spiritual care.

Would you please pray for me now?

God of us all, we place before you our genuine selves: gifted and called, frightened and angry, despairing and yearning. We deplore the desecration of the U.S. Capitol building, the shedding of blood, the loss of life, the fracturing of what was designed to be a peaceful, respectful process of governance. These tragedies remind us that even institutions are fragile, words have great power, and the building up of community is entrusted to us all. Help us to see in each other a common humanity, for we believe all are made in your image. Show us how to partner with you to bring unity in our hurting land. Guide us along the path of peace, we pray. Amen.