



Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A Response to the Violence in Charlottesville, Virginia: August 12, 2017

August 16, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

I write today to add my voice of lament and outrage to the cry rising up across our nation for peace, justice and healing in the aftermath of the hate-inspired violence, murder, and attempted murder witnessed in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, 2017.

Along with all of you, I remember with gratitude and bitter sorrow the victims of this violence. I join you in prayers for comfort and hope for the families and friends of those killed and wounded. I call upon you and all the people of our synod to affirm with one voice the principles of human dignity, freedom and justice that provide the foundation for social, religious, and civic life in this nation. And I implore you, along with all people of good will, to continue to speak out boldly against all beliefs and actions which advance the ideas of white supremacy, racism, neo-Nazism, and bigotry against Jews, Muslims, and other religious, racial, or ethnic groups.

I am also mindful, however, that our public declarations of outrage are only one small part of the challenge before us. We have been presented with yet another grim reminder of the pernicious forces of racism, violence and hatred that infects our souls, individually and as a society. Even more alarming, now, is the way in which this cruel demon has been given legitimacy by some of our political leaders.

I am therefore calling you and those you serve not to rest with public declarations of outrage and indignation. The Metropolitan Chicago Synod, along with the rest of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, must continue its commitment to confronting racism and anti-Semitism, in action as well as in words. [The ELCA's social statement "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture"](#) states: "*Racism—a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice—is sin, a violation of God's intention for humanity. The resulting racial, ethnic, or cultural barriers deny the truth that all people are God's creatures and, therefore, persons of dignity. Racism fractures and fragments both church and society.*"

In addition to commending this social statement to you for study and discussion, our synod will be offering an Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism Workshop in October 2017. Our antiracism team stands ready to offer any assistance congregations might request. Learn more about the team and event at <http://www.mtselca.org/what/ministry/antiracism>.

The time is upon us, now, to stand up, to set aside our political differences, our fears, our prejudices, and our bitterness in order to remember that we are, first and foremost, the living body of the Jesus who gave himself completely for the sake of the WHOLE WORLD; the world that God loves, and that we must love for Jesus' sake, so that the power of that divine love might shine upon the waste of our wraths and bring peace in our lives, peace in our homes, peace in our neighborhoods, peace in our nation, and peace in the world.

Bishop Wayne N. Miller
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