

*Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in," (Isaiah 58:12)*

### **A Moral Summons to Be Seen and Heard in STL**

In the wake of the killing of Michael Brown and the violence that has followed, we concerned clergy of STL feel called to **consecrate the streets of St. Louis as safe places for all our citizens**, and in particular our black and brown children and brothers and sisters. We are called to discern and name all systems, institutions, and processes that dehumanize black and brown people and that **distort the purposes of justice, peace, and equality that we believe God intends for this region**. In this work we do not seek to demonize police officers, but rather criticize and hold accountable a system of policing and criminal justice that stigmatizes black and brown people. We **support and defend the rights of all, no matter their rhetoric or level of anger, to participate in non-violent protest**. For this reason you will see us and hear from us in the days and weeks ahead as all of STL anticipates the announcement of the Grand Jury decision of whether or not to indict Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson. While we yearn that justice be served in this case, we **also believe that God's purposes transcend this case, and call all of us to work for systemic justice and peace in our community**.

- **You will see us and hear from us in the streets** as we seek to hold sacred the space of non-violent protest and the witness that has been voiced in our region for more than 70 days. In the chant "Black lives matter," we hear and proclaim that STL has too long been structured to demean the lives of black and brown people. We believe that standing with the protesters in vigilant non-violent witness in the streets is a vital way to call our region to account for our systemic racism and structural oppression. We believe that such an accounting is necessary before the people of STL can build a better community.
- **You will see and hear from our communities of worship** as we gather in prayer and witness after the Grand Jury announcement. Our places of worship will witness to the sanctity of black and brown lives in STL, and will be spaces of sanctuary for people to gather to mourn, to call on God, and to prophesy. Our sacred houses of worship will be open for those who seek to discern the presence of the Holy in this crisis, and to imagine how we are being called to create a more just region, nation, and world.
- **You will see and hear from us in prophetic witness and action** sharing our vision of the moral mandate before our region to dismantle practices of profiling, predatory, and provoking policing, and structures of systemic racism. Our faith traditions demand that we not stand idly by when we hear the cries of those who suffer most. We are called to transform our region into a place – a sanctuary -- that reflects God's justice and love for all people.

You will see and hear us as we are summoned by the prophetic witness of our young people have been making for over two months in our region. We **believe that nothing short of a movement for human freedom is being rebirthed in our town, calling us as individuals, worshipping communities, and as a region to see one another as beloved children of God and to live our lives that way. We believe that God is in this, and we pray that you will join us.**

**PROTOCOL FOR FUTURE JUSTICE RESPONSES:** Incidents for prayerful consideration: any high-impact (lives endangered, basic faith principles compromised, violence) justice crisis where concerned faith communities exist.

Who or what organizations will reach out to each other during a social justice crisis?  
Is there an established communications protocol (ex. Phone trees, email lists, twitter?)  
Are there established networks for emergency response? (Clergy, Lawyers, Medics)  
Are there churches/faith communities designated to be sanctuary in major neighborhoods?  
How will you handle the media as a group, what will you use to guide responses?

First 24-48 hours: ○ Region representative contacts local congregations to assess situation and needs ○ Local congregations get out on the streets and assess needs of affected persons ○ Congregations and other Faith communities (i.e. schools, social service ministries, etc.) contact Regional Contact and use any shared regional communication tools to share information and offers of assistance in the immediate area. ○ Faith communities consider the need to open designated safe places and sanctuary space ○ If asked, provide immediate relief to affected communities with (ex. food, counseling, medical, legal assistance).

First 72 hours: ○ Region contact hosts local gathering with all concerned faith communities to share collected information, assessing crisis and its justice-related realities/needs. If possible, national leadership is present to provide additional resources for crisis ○ Connections are made with congregations/leaders nationally who have experienced similar crises. Ways that other people of faith can support the affected community are gathered and shared widely across networks.

First 7 days: If requested by the local affected areas, Region contact arrange for partners to be dispatched to the area for an agreed period. This person/team should have gifts, knowledge, and skills appropriate to the crisis at hand to assist Regional congregations further organize for action . DJAN has already expressed interest (via Jack Sullivan) in being one of these dispatched parties. Examples of needed gifts/skills are: community organizing, trauma response/care, disaster response, and networks, etc.

Days 7-13: ○ Dispatched individual(s), locals, along with national representatives appropriate, arrives in affected area. ○ Gathering of congregations/communities is planned, led by locals and supported by regional leaders and dispatched individual(s).

Days 14-30: Local strategic gathering of faith people takes place, addressing critical questions: ○ What is the issue at hand? What does our faith call us to do? ○ What relevant assets do we already have? What help do we need? ○ Who is already working on this? ○ What can we contribute? ○ How can we show solidarity? ○ How can others outside our region show their solidarity with us? ○ How will we continue to share information?