

Dear Servant's Family,

I want to speak about the protests we have seen in Grand Rapids, the death of George Floyd (and so many others), and what these things mean for us at Servant's as a body of Christ followers.

In case anyone didn't see or hear, Saturday night there was a violent riot that caused massive property damage in downtown Grand Rapids. This riot was after a massively attended and exceptionally peaceful march Saturday afternoon protesting police violence and discrimination across the country that has led to the death of many men and women of color, including the murder of George Floyd on May 25 at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. He was only the latest in a long, long list of people of color who have died at the hands of white police officers.

In our city, tensions are high, emotions are strong, anger is fierce, and people are exhausted. This is NOT the world God created and the church needs to look like God more than ever.

Because God created us to love, not hate, and does not sit silently while His creation is murdered.

Because God has room for righteous anger and does not prioritize property over the ability to express anger.

Because God calls us as His hands and feet to act.

I won't claim to know all the ways we can or should act. But I do hope these provide a good place to start.

DON'T let the guilt you may feel stop you. In short, this is bigger than how you and I feel as individuals.

DO sit with the pain and agony our community is feeling that another child of God has been murdered because of the color of his skin and the worry that many in our community carry daily that they or someone they know could be next.

DO learn how our community/Christianity has been part of the problem and more importantly can be part of the solution.

and finally,

DO join me in seeking change to unjust systems so that we may have lasting justice for black and brown children of God within our community and nation.

For those of you that are tired, may you know the rest that God brings to the weary.

For those of you that feel despair over what is broken, may you be reminded that God makes all things new.

For those of you that feel lost, may you be led by the Holy Spirit.

Prayerfully,

Jay Niewiek