



Episcopal Retirement Services

June 2, 2020

Good evening,

The events in our country over the last several days has been nothing less than heartbreaking.

First and foremost, my condolences go out to the families of George Floyd, Arnaud Arbery, and Brionna Taylor. As a mother myself, words cannot express the sadness I have after watching how our children have been killed. There is not a day that I do not worry about my husband or son returning home safely. I am left wondering what more direct evidence could we have that in 2020 it is still unsafe to be Black or Brown in America?

I am reminded of a letter I sent to you in August 2017 when we were reeling from the events in Charlottesville. I have read that letter this week, and I am distressed that not much has changed. We remain a divided, broken country. We are no closer it seems to a society where we are all equal partners and treated as such.

Our community, Shawnee Place, in Springfield, OH, was damaged by a small group of individuals, not associated with the peaceful protest that was held earlier in the day. Thank goodness no one was hurt. Glass can be replaced; human life cannot. In Louisville, the Governor called in the National Guard, and in most cities where we live and work, there have been curfews put in place.

Centuries of racial injustice has resulted in cultural and systematic bias against people of color that can be seen across the American society—in our laws, our data sets, our workforce, services, and in health outcomes, which has been made abundantly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During difficult times, I turn to our values and ways of working for how we should respond. Our core value of inclusion guides our behavior. Inclusion means valuing collaboration and diversity of thought, experiences, and perspective. It is appreciating that we are better together, leveraging our strengths and differences. There is no room for division, hatred, or racist views in a culture that values inclusion. Because of this, I want to celebrate working for an organization that affirms the following:

1. We believe all individuals have infinite worth, deserve respect, and should be treated equally.
2. ERS is a safe place for all persons, regardless of race, religion, background, and sexual orientation.



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ERS cannot solve racism in the larger community, but we can begin here to make sure that we are creating a culture that consciously practices anti-racism.

- *We can* do this by learning about the realities of implicit bias, enforcing hiring practices that reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of our communities, and striving to provide healthcare for all of our residents despite racial disparities in access.
- *We can* participate in peaceful demonstrations and protests.
- *We can* extend our hands in love and peace.
- *We can* uphold our shared values about the worth and dignity of each human life, and our community must be united against the racism that is killing our fellow humans.
- *We can* strive to listen to people with different perspectives and experiences with open hearts
- *We can* be smart and safe in this time because more than anything, I want you to go home to your family each and every day.

Despite my sorrow, my faith tells me that love and understanding will prevail even during these dark times. I will leave you with the quote from Nelson Mandela I shared in 2017 as it still rings relevant in these times.

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

We will be there for one another and walk this journey together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura R Lamb".

Laura Lamb  
President and CEO