



**MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

*Musical, Liturgical, Welcoming*

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Joseph Crippen, *Pastor*  
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Beloved in Christ,

Our brother, George Floyd, was murdered on Monday night, only seven blocks from Mount Olive's front door. George, in whom God's breath lived and moved, God's precious child, was killed by another child of God in our own neighborhood, amidst our own people. We deeply mourn and grieve this evil. *Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

But mourning and grieving are not enough. This was not an isolated incident. This isn't about figuring out who was where and what their history was, or why this particular moment happened. Our brother was killed in broad daylight in front of our neighbors because the color of his skin was black. This is not a surprise. This is truth and a constant reality. I am privileged in that there is not a moment in any day where I ever fear such a thing happening to me. I am defended by my white skin. But our African and African-American siblings do not have a single moment of a single day where they can stop being afraid that this could happen to them. We mourn the death of our brother. And because we breathe the same breath of God, because we, too, are precious children of God, we must realize that what happens to George, or any of our siblings, happens to us.

If we at Mount Olive only are outraged or grieving and do not seriously ask ourselves what our role is in a system that persistently wipes out our siblings, what we do that perpetuates that system, then we are not entitled to be outraged or to grieve, for we are the ones who are doing this. I know you know this, but we need to keep reminding ourselves of this truth until we find God's path for us to act.

Your Vestry began a conversation about this Tuesday night, sharing our grief and asking ourselves how we saw George as our kin, our brother. But that is just the beginning. We need to listen to our siblings of color first and foremost, and learn from them what they need to have changed so they can feel safe in our society. We need to pray about Mount Olive's role in the system and what we can do to change things. Your leaders will continue to intentionally seek to help lead this community to what Christ would have us be and do in this world so that eventually this systemic destruction will stop.

In the meantime, as your pastor, I ask you to pray. Pray this day and every day going forward. Pray for George, our brother, who even now is embraced in God's death-breaking love and is breathing the joy of God's grace, and for his family and friends and loved ones. Pray for all our siblings of color who live in fear for their lives every day. Pray for the leaders of our city, Mayor Jacob Frey, City Coordinator Mark Ruff, Police Chief Medaria Arradondo, and all who work for justice and reconciliation in our city. Pray for the Third Precinct, its officers and staff, as they work to serve our neighborhood, for the whole Minneapolis Police Department, and for the four officers who are accused. Pray for the city of Minneapolis and all its people who must learn to live in love and justice together. Pray for God's wisdom for our community of Mount Olive, that we find honest willingness to face and do whatever we can and must do to ensure that all God's precious children can breathe safely and freely.

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. Joseph Crippen

*Rest eternal grant George, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on him. May George, and all the blessed dead, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*