

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 all people. In this work we do not seek to demonize police officers, but rather challenge 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 for justice to be served in this case, we also believe that God's purposes transcend this moment, and call all of us to work for systemic justice and healing 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 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 our young people have been making for over two months in STL. We believe that nothing short of a movement for human freedom is being rebirthed in our community, calling us as individuals, worshipping congregations, 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.