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PASTORAL LETTER – JUNE 7, 2020

Dear friend,

As we are aware, the killing of George Floyd has sparked outrage and the ongoing demonstrations revolving around race and police relations.

The crisis began when an officer was filmed engaged in police misconduct, which led to the death of Floyd and the outrage of an entire nation.

As Christians, we pray for the healing of our nation, for better policy outcomes that address racism and unprofessional police behaviors, and for the safety of the scores of first responders who risk their lives to protect the general public.

As Christians of a Reformed background, we also turn to scriptures to help us grapple with tragedy. In our devotional remarks, we will discuss the weighty subject of the Trinity, and we will explore how this classical Christian doctrine can help us see the work of the triune God (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) in action. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God created the world, has redeemed the world, and will bring ultimate justice to the world.

Here is the link for this week's devotional: <https://youtu.be/W-4TBsQIDsl>

Does this mean that we will solely pray and blink idly before social problems, waiting for God to do for us in the world what we have been called to do as individuals and as a church? Not at all.

We, the Rhinebeck Reformed Church, publicly condemn behaviors that mistreat others and that treat others unfairly. As a matter of fact, we have been addressing hateful aggression during our past lecture series titled *The Rise of Hate: A Jewish and Christian Response*, and we held an educational event at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, where the author of *The War Before the War: Fugitive Slaves and the Struggle for America's Soul from the Revolution to the Civil War* discussed the debasing nature of slavery and how the social and legal

ramifications of slavery continues to afflict the African American community and our society till this day. The author said, quoting Emerson, **“history doesn’t repeat itself, but it rhymes.”** The author’s words, as expressed in his lecture and in his book, have proven to be prophetic.

Furthermore, our congregation demonstrates its faith commitment to social justice by providing an annual scholarship geared to acknowledging and celebrating students who express a commitment to promoting tolerance and social justice in our society.

Granted, we are mindful that more needs to be done, and we look forward to partaking in the struggle to promote the just treatment of all of God’s people. We will be discussing some ideas at the Consistory level on Tuesday. We look forward to sharing those ideas with you, and to learning from you what else can be done and should be done to promote a just community.

Blessings!
Pastor Luis