



Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM) is struck by the senselessness of the death of George Floyd and devastated to see once again such careless disregard for human life. His death is a painful reminder of the injustice of racism and inequality that permeate American society.

At LMM, every aspect of our work reflects a commitment to Micah 6:8, “to seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly” in our service to this community. We *MUST* seek justice for George Floyd’s death, and fight for change in our justice system to prevent others from experiencing a similar fate. Anything less than full accountability and sensitivity in the justice system is tacit approval of an unjust system that continues to contribute to unnecessary loss of life. Change must be intentional and swift.

When LMM was established 51 years ago it was intended as one of many community responses aimed at meeting the needs of those in the African American community who were hurting and frustrated due to years of inequality and racism in Cleveland. Since then, some progress has been made, but on the whole, the change has been glacial and unequal. As a community committed to serving and advocating for our neighbors in need, we can and must do more.

The death of George Floyd brings to mind the death of Tamir Rice, who was an African American boy just 12-years-old when he was shot and killed by a white police officer while on a playground in Cleveland. It also brings to mind other evidence of systematic racism and discrimination in our community. From a high rate of black and brown babies who don’t make it to their first birthdays, to a disproportionate number of black and brown men who spend their nights at LMM’s Men’s Shelter at 2100, to a high percentage of black and brown men and women who are locked up in the county jail or a state prison, racism and discrimination permeate our community.

We implore our funders, community partners and civic leaders to work together to get to the root of this racism and discrimination, and forge a path to end this senseless violence. We implore our faith communities and individual supporters to examine the danger of racial privilege, and to serve as allies to those who are most directly impacted by racism and discrimination.

Perhaps Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said it best in his [*Letter from a Birmingham Jail*](#): “Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”

LMM stands ready and willing to engage in this effort, by serving as a tenured social justice organization that convenes community and brokers honest and often uncomfortable conversations about inequities in the justice system. Let’s work together to be advocates for change and allies for those fighting discrimination – and not just people of good will. In doing so, we can seek justice, and true progress.

In Peace,

Nicole Braden Lewis, Chairperson
LMM Board of Directors

Maria A. Foschia
LMM Acting CEO & Chief Operating Officer