

A Statement from the Deputies of Color of the General Convention

March 23, 2021

The Deputies of Color of the General Convention (Asian Caucus, Black Caucus, Indigenous Caucus, and Latinx Caucus) express deep concern and sadness for the increased racial violence against the Asian and Pacific Islander population. The murders in Georgia on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 reflect the American reality of a society deeply ingrained with racism, white supremacy, and sexism.

We mourn the lives lost and stand with the victims and families. We are hurt that members of our Asian community wake every morning fearing acts of violence and have been the scapegoats for this pandemic. We lament the complicity of silence and we express our gratitude for many who stand in solidarity with the Asians and Pacific Islanders during this troubling time.

It is becoming far too common for people acting through social media or in their day-to-day encounters to encourage such hatred. What is happening and the normalization of violence in any form are not acceptable and need to stop. The destructive power of words has caused lives to be lost. For too many years, ignorance and hate have been weaponized against people of color. This hatred and ignorance are another virus amongst us.

We call on all people across The Church to use their voice and power to stop these acts of hatred and racial violence immediately. We call on all leaders to set an example in their words, their deeds, and all forms of communication to oppose such hatred instead of encouraging it. We cannot see members of our community as “others” but as people we are in communion with.

President Biden in his recent address on Asian discrimination stated, “this has to change, because our silence is complicity. We have to speak out. We have to act.” We echo the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr: “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends”. We appreciate and affirm Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s message calling for the followers of Jesus of Nazareth to “stand up, speak up, and show up when hatred or bigotry is directed at any child of God.” Today, we stand in solidarity with our Asian siblings, and we are committed to reach out to them, offering kindness and love, so that we can become The Beloved Community. Acts of racial hatred need to end NOW.

Submitted by the Deputies of Color Steering Committee for the 80th General Convention:

Asian Caucus

Ryan Kusumoto, co-chair, Diocese of Hawaii

Alan Murray, co-chair, Diocese of Oregon

Canon Barbara Okamoto Bach, secretary, Diocese of New Jersey

Warren Wong, Diocese of California

Black Caucus

The Hon. Rose Sconiers, chair, Diocese of Western New York

Louis Glosson, vice chair, Diocese of San Diego

Krisita Jackson, secretary, Diocese Central Florida

Dianne Audrick Smith, Diocese of Ohio

Joe McDaniel, Jr. , Diocese of Central Gulf Coast

Indigenous Caucus

The Rev. Br. Simeon Powell, CG co-chair, Diocese of Northern California

Minnie Steele, co-chair, Diocese of Minnesota

The Rev. Michael Sells, secretary, Navajoland Area Mission

The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, Diocese of Olympia

Latinx Caucus

Wendy Cañas, co-chair, Diocese of New York

The Rev. Nancy Frausto, co-chair, Diocese of Los Angeles

The Rev. Jose Rodriguez, secretary, Diocese of Central Florida

The Rev. Daniel Vélez-Rivera, Diocese of Virginia