

CALL ACTION:

Good Evening! My name is Carol Hill and I am the Senior Minister here at Park Ridge Community Church. Many thanks to my colleagues in our faith community, Action Ridge, Mayor Maloney and Chief Kaminski for being here this evening. We join the broader faith community, marching and praying in Chicago and around the nation.

I am so thankful to see our community joining together, both in person and online to have hard and honest conversations and share prayers to unite our efforts to dismantle racism. I used to say End Racism, but that sounds too simple. All of us need to commit to putting our minds and our hearts and our energy into taking real action to heal and repair the brokenness caused by centuries of racist policies, behaviors, and beliefs. Racism is alive and well in the United States in 2020, and it's up to us if we want it to be different for the future. In the words of Malcom X - "the future belongs to those who prepare for it today." So, as people who speak a language of faith, we start with prayer, calling out to God. But we don't end there. We must put our faith into Action.

Today, I call us all to action - and we start with ourselves:

- Examine your own heart and ways you may have internalized racism that is taught in our society. Ask your friends who are people of color if they have heard any slurs or things from you that they perceived as racist. If you don't have any friends of color, perhaps that is an indication that you might have some work to do too. One of my parishioners asked for easy things to say when someone is being racist - I think you can always start with clarifying? Did I hear you right? I don't agree with you. Try to be careful with language - calling anyone thugs is harmful, and while you may know what you mean, it perpetuates a stereotype that has been used to label Black and brown bodies. Try to avoid generalizations. While condemning property damage, have you spent as much time condemning the loss of life as the loss of property? There's so much more - find a trusted person to talk through what to say...take turns practicing. Do the work.
- Let us work to understand our privilege. Those of us with white skin walk around with privilege each day. Instead of squandering that privilege or

feeling guilty, let's use it. How do you help make a difference in your spheres of influence?

- Read and do your own research. Broaden your mind to understanding the history of racism, allow others' to give input by reading books that might feel uncomfortable but challenge us to do better. Have you read Michele Alexander's book on the New Jim Crow or White Fragility? These books help to expand our minds.
- Let us work together to hold our school boards, principals, Mayor, Police Officers, Politicians, Pastors, Teachers, family members, neighbors, and friends accountable. Are students of color disproportionately expelled or suspended from school? Are persons of color disproportionately stopped in Park Ridge? How do we know if we don't ask? A student from Maine South came in to talk with me this week and shared that she had never talked about racism or any of the racially motivated shootings in school. White people, it is our task to collect information to help advocate. Encourage our teachers and our public leaders - that we have their backs, but this hard work has to be a priority. I think much of Park Ridge does well to treat all people with kindness and respect, but I don't know what I don't know.
- What I do know is that we do not have many people of color living in this City, and I know Action Ridge and others are working on some Affordable Housing initiatives that would be a good start at opening our city to be more inclusive.
- It is not enough to say I am not a racist...we have to work at being Anti-Racist, working against the racist systems at work. I believe we have some highly gifted, compassionate, intelligent people here tonight...and together - we can make a difference, but it's going to take more than one night, more than one task...and we have to start somewhere - so let's start now. Thank you.