



*“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).*

**To Our Neighbors in the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection:**

We are once again deeply saddened and disturbed by the events surrounding the death of Walter Wallace Jr., all the more because they add to an already deep reservoir of grief and angst as a result of so many acts of violence in our neighborhoods.

We confess our hesitation to even share the pain in our hearts, for fear that those among us who may not know the hurt they cause will speak words that relativize our pain in an effort to justify or make sense out of what is senseless.

But we cannot remain silent.

The mounting deaths around us which are beyond our control, where we are forced to be separated due to the pandemic, are being compounded by deaths inflicted among one another by choices we continue to make individually and collectively, consciously and unconsciously.

It is not enough to point the finger at the choices others have made contributing to this moment, for that alone only separates us from one another. We must all examine and confess our role in creating the conditions for the violence in our midst to continue through our actions and inaction.

Then, as those recognizing ourselves as both sinful and forgiven, we must come together in prayer in order for God’s touch to mold and shape us into a people equipped to incarnate the tenacious love we profess. This Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 pm is one such opportunity to join in prayer with the congregation and neighbors of Oxford Presbyterian Church as they host an outdoor service, “Come Pray with Us.” You are invited to bring your own chair and gather safely distanced on the lawn or to remain in your car along Stenton or Gowen Avenues.

Beyond this moment, may we recommit ourselves as a Matthew 25 people who recognize the importance of leaning into Christ’s call to dismantle all structures that compromise our deepening relationships centered on love of God and love of neighbor as ourselves.

May our soul-searching and wrestling for the promised blessing not be in vain. Instead, may our gathering to worship in spirit and truth, and our departing to serve in Christ’s name enliven our neighborhoods as truly as every breath God grants enlivens our bodies.

Come Lord Jesus!

*The Rev. Dr. Janel Dixon, The Rev. Ethelyn Taylor*  
**Co-Moderators of the Philadelphia Chapter National Black Presbyterian Caucus**  
*Elder Vijay Aggarwal, The Rev. Ashley Rossi*  
**Moderator and Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia**  
*The Rev. Kevin Porter, The Rev. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace*  
**Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Philadelphia**