

Becoming the Body of Christ, Where All Bodies Are Valued

By Isaac Warner, *CtK Council President*

Over the past few years, we have turned our focus toward becoming the beloved community—the body of Christ—and what that means for Christians today. We listened to each other for weeks in order to gain a better understanding of ourselves. We crafted statements proclaiming that we value Building Community, Engaging Worship, Growing Compassion, and Nurturing Faith. We publicly welcomed all people regardless of circumstance to join our family. In the last 48 hours, it has become clear to me that, though grounded in our understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ, it is not enough. We cannot truly become the body of Christ until all bodies are valued.

Christ the King grieves the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of the police and joins his family, our community, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and Lutherans across the country in demanding justice.

To our black brothers and sisters, we have failed you and we are sorry. Our silence and inaction in the face of systemic racism has made us complicit. We are committed to making real systemic change and leading by example. In consultation with you and black leaders in our community, I am proposing that we commit 5% of our budgeted benevolence to black non-profits who are leading the fight against racism. Thank you for holding us accountable and hear us when we say, you are valuable.

To our Latinx brothers and sisters, we have failed you and we are sorry. We have been so focused on creating a culture of inclusivity rather than representation—as though inclusion is a gift to be given—that we have failed to speak up and act when it counts, combating xenophobia and racism. We are committed to making real systemic change. Working with you and for you, I am proposing that we commit 5% of our budgeted benevolence to Latinx non-profits who are taking a stand against xenophobia and racism. Thank you for holding us accountable and hear us when we say, *eres valioso*. You are valuable.

To our white brothers and sisters, enough is enough. We have failed. We have grown accustomed to the white privilege that has existed in our country for centuries and have reaped the social and economic benefits afforded to us because of it. When black and brown bodies pile up in our communities, we offer our thoughts and prayers and often do little more to stop continued injustice. This must end and it must end now. We must learn about our privilege and teach others the same. We must listen to and amplify black and brown voices, so their stories are told in their voice. We cannot simply reject racism; we must be actively anti-racist. We must always confront racial injustice, in all places, even when it makes us uncomfortable.

And, we must confront our history. Minneapolis is one of, if not the most segregated cities in the United States. Minnesota ranks 2nd in the nation for worst income and homeownership gaps between white and black residents and Black Minnesotans are killed by police at a rate 13x that of White Minnesotans. This is the reality.

I am heartbroken and angry. I am also hopeful that we can and will be better.

We must be better; lives depend on it.