

June 10, 2020

To Our African-American Brothers and Sisters in Greater New Orleans,

Our shared history holds within it moments of powerful partnership between our communities, and it also holds moments of estrangement and points of pain. In full awareness of that complicated history, and for those members of our community whose overlapping identities – Black and Jewish – connect us to each other, we write this letter to express our solidarity at this difficult time.

We abhor the recent murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers and detest the officers' delayed arrests. We abhor the recent murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others.

We mourn alongside you the Black and Brown lives lost to racially motivated violence and despise the institutionalized racism that has continually shielded those responsible.

We see you, we hear you, we love you, and we stand with you in the conviction that Black lives matter. We will strive to be allies with you as our country faces this moment of reckoning, much too long in coming.

The watchword of our faith is *Shema* or *listen*. In that spirit, we commit to listening with open hearts, in the coming days, months, and years, to the voices, truths, and feelings of our African-American neighbors. Furthermore, our Torah teaches that we must not stand idly by the blood of our neighbor, and so we also commit to acting, intentionally and swiftly, to create real and lasting change in our local community and our nation that will dismantle the systems of white supremacy that surround us all as Americans.

Specifically, we commit to:

--**seek a deeper understanding of our history** and how generations of African-American trauma directly relate to the struggles of the present day. We will attempt to fully understand the discrepancy between who we say we are as a nation and who we truly are as regards civil and human rights.

--**be more courageous in our efforts to prevent and respond to future acts of racial and other discrimination** emanating from any source. We will condemn race-based hate and bigotry against Black and Brown members of our society whenever and wherever we see it, even and especially when we find it within our own community.

--**support meaningful public policy** that addresses the myriad of issues that plague minority communities, including the wide healthcare and economic disparities that have become so apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will advocate in particular for much needed policing reform measures, and will seek to be strong coalition partners in the public sphere.

Our shared prophetic tradition instructs us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God and with one another. We will harken to this and other prophetic voices that call us to reject complicity, inaction, and indifference and to put our values into practice with every step and with every breath. We vow to do our best to make eternal the moments of powerful partnership that

our communities have formed at critical times throughout the history of our country to fight bigotry, racism, and hate.

With heartfelt empathy for the pain of this moment, with high hopes for the chance to build a better tomorrow, and in solidarity,

The Jewish Community of Greater New Orleans:

- Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans: Goldring Family Foundation Center for Jewish-Multicultural Affairs
- Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans: Jewish Community Relations Council
- Anti-Defamation League (South Central Region)
- Avodah
- Congregation Anshe Sfard
- Congregation Beth Israel
- Congregation Gates of Prayer
- Hadassah New Orleans
- Israel Bonds (Southeast Region)
- Jewish Children's Regional Service
- Jewish Community Center
- Jewish Community Day School
- Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana
- Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans
- LimmudFest New Orleans
- Moishe House New Orleans
- National Council of Jewish Women (Greater New Orleans Section)
- Northshore Jewish Congregation
- Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation
- Temple Sinai
- Touro Synagogue
- Tulane Hillel