

Statement from members of the Wayland Interfaith Leaders Association Released June 1, 2020

As leaders in the interfaith community of Wayland, we grieve the losses in recent days of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other victims of violence aimed at People of Color. We stand in support and solidarity with People of Color in our congregations, in our Wayland community, and across our country, who have been subjected to pain and violence rooted in centuries of persistent, systemic racism.

We add their names to the list of too many others who have gone before them—including Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Oscar Grant, Philando Castile, Walter Scott, Terrence Crutcher, Samuel Dubose, Michael Brown. We do so even as our nation mourns over the more than 100,000 lives lost to COVID-19, during which time the disproportionate rates of death occurring within communities of color have stemmed from this same systemic racism, with members of these communities more likely to be in positions that disallow physical distancing, and less likely to have access to equitable health and healthcare.

Though our faith traditions use different words to express it, we are united in our belief in the dignity and equality of every human being. We know that we must not stand idly by while People of Color are deprived of that dignity, but must speak out—for, if we do not, we are complicit in perpetuating racism and its resulting violences.

As spiritual leaders, it is our obligation to model reflection, examining our own souls for the racial assumptions and messages that we each carry within us. And, it is upon us to speak out, leaning on the righteous voices of our ancestors, because we know that none of us is immune to the racist messages that we in this country have been fed since birth and that, even though we may not be individually guilty of racist intentions or actions, we are all responsible for the blood of our brothers and sisters due to racism.

We pray for the victims and the families of those affected by the violence of racial injustice, and we pray, too, that we may continue in our roles as spiritual leaders to speak this moral truth.

Rabbi Katy Z. Allen, Ma'yan Tikvah
Rabbi Jordi Schuster Battis, Temple Shir Tikva
Rabbi Danny Burkeman, Temple Shir Tikva
Rev. Rebecca Cho, Community United Methodist
Alex Jensen, First Parish in Wayland
Pastor Jeffrey Johnson, Peace Lutheran Church and Community Arts
Malik Khan, Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland
Rev. Dr. Stephanie May, First Parish in Wayland
Janot Mendler de Suárez, Wayland Baha'i Community
Fr. Dave O'Leary, Good Shepherd Parish
Rabbi Louis Polisson, Congregation Or Atid
Cantor Hollis Schachner, Temple Shir Tikva
Amer Syed, Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland