



PARKER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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June 4, 2020

Beloved Parker Ohana,

Aloha! How goes it with your soul? It's been two weeks since I last sent these congregational letters home and in that time, so much has happened. The tragic killing of George Floyd has opened wide our deep national wounds borne of systemic racism, police brutality, and the injustices that still exist in a nation that touts "with liberty and justice for all." For too long, we have applied superficial band-aid solutions for these gashes that run deep and what we are witnessing unfold is the collective cries of the disenfranchised and marginalized. *What would Jesus say and do in a situation like this*, some might sincerely ask? Simply put, Jesus would stand for the outcast, for the voiceless, for the powerless. His earthly ministry clearly demonstrated this and his commission to all disciples can be summarized as such: *As you have seen me do, go and do likewise*. And in that spirit, I pray that our church will continue to shine the light of God's Peace, Hope, and Love found in Jesus Christ. May we shine this light brightly.

A couple of books I have found to be helpful in understanding the plight of Black Americans have been *Just Mercy* (a book-turned-movie that you can actually watch for free now. God to www.justmercyfilm.com) and *The New Jim Crow*. Bishop Grant Hagiya recently sent out an email where he encouraged everyone to read *White Fragility*. In addition to educating oneself about the issues at hand, I also ask that our church remain faithful in prayer. Perhaps some of you have heard of this illustration but allow me to share: the Chinese word for CRISIS is actually the combination of two characters: DANGER and OPPORTUNITY. In this crisis of Covid-19 and race relations, our nation is undoubtedly in a perilous situation. However, let us pray for God to give us the eyes of faith to also see the opportunity for breakthrough, for lasting change, and for systemic transformation to take place as we navigate the crisis of our lives together.

One last note: this will be my final letter sent home to you as your pastor. I have moved up my final day of working at the church office to Friday, June 5, but I will continue to lead all the Sunday worship services on YouTube through the month of June. Over the past three years, it has been an honor to serve as your pastor. To help the incoming pastor transition well into his new role, I want you to know that I am going to curtail my interactions with the members of Parker UMC for, at minimum, one year. Some of you may see me on social media or perhaps even randomly at a grocery store. In those instances, please don't hesitate to say hello. I'm not a robot; I *will* give you a hug or a fist-bump. I love you all. May God's grace and peace sustain you and guide you through the remainder of 2020. Ofa Atu. Aloha Ke Akua.

Because He Lives,

Rev. Samuel Nam