



## ST PAUL'S MEMORIAL CHURCH *at the* UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

### WEEKLY UPDATE

#### **A Note from the Parish Administrator**

Dear St. Paul's,

The language of the Rite I Confession of Sin has always spoken to me, particularly the phrase “we confess that we have sinned against thee in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.” I have come to grips with most of what I have done, but I still struggle mightily with what I have left undone.

We are undoubtedly at a point of racial reckoning in our country, forced upon us by a seemingly constant stream of killings of black men by overmilitarized police. From discussions with my colleagues, I know that many of the participants in our series of Conversations on Faith & Race are wrestling with what to do to help, and I am no different. Like others, one of my initial actions has been to try and become better informed.

I recently came upon a message from the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. The statement begins, “Recent events in a number of American communities underscore the fact that countless citizens have lost patience with the slow pace of response to their legitimate cry for human rights. Pleas of moderation or caution about timing on the part of white leaders are seen increasingly as an unwillingness to face the truth about the appalling injustice which more than a tenth of our citizens suffer daily.”

Later, the statement continues, “Only as we take every step possible to join with each other across lines of racial separation in a common struggle for justice will our unity in the Spirit become a present reality.” And a few paragraphs later the Presiding Bishop writes, “It is a mark of the inversion of values in our society that those who today struggle to make the American experiment a reality through their protest are accused of disturbing the peace – and that more often than not the church remains silent on this our greatest domestic moral crisis.”

After specifying several calls for personal action, his statement concludes “So I write with a deep sense of the urgency of the racial crisis in our country and the necessity for the church to act. Present events reveal the possible imminence of catastrophe. The entire Christian community must pray and act.”

As a Nation, as a Church, and as individuals, there is much that we have left undone. The Presiding Bishop’s message drove that home for me in a startling fashion. The Presiding Bishop who authored the message was the Right Rev. Arthur Lichtenberger. The year was 1963.

- John

John Reid

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