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PUBLIC STATEMENT

Since 1836, Asbury United Methodist Church has stood at the corner of 11&K Streets NW, Washington, DC. We are a resilient people who have trusted in God through slavery and the Underground Railroad, Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement, and now as we face an apparent rise in white supremacy.

Last night demonstrators who were part of the MAGA gatherings tore down our Black Lives Matter sign and literally burned it in the street. The sign burning was captured on Twitter. It pained me especially to see our name, Asbury, in flames. For me it was reminiscent of cross burnings. Seeing this act on video made me both indignant and determined to fight the evil that has reared its ugly head. We had been so confident that no one would ever vandalize the church, but it has happened.

We are a people of faith. As horrible and disturbing as this is for us now—it doesn't compare with the challenges and fears the men and women who started Asbury, 184 years ago, faced. So, we will move forward, undaunted in our assurance that Black Lives Matter and we are obligated to continue to shout that truth without ceasing. We are assured that our church is surrounded by God's grace and mercy.

Sadly, we must point out that if this was a marauding group of men of color going through the city, and destroying property, they would have been followed and arrested. We are especially alarmed that this violence is not being denounced at the highest levels of our nation and instead the leaders of this movement are being invited to the White House.

Asbury United Methodist Church abhors violence of any kind. We call upon all to join us in prayer for our community, church, and the people who are responsible for this hateful behavior. We believe this is a wakeup call for all to be more vigilant and committed to anti-racism and building a beloved community, and we invite you to join us. Our congregation will continue to stand steadfast—***“we will not be moved.”*** We press on in the name of Lord!

Rev. Dr. Ianther M. Mills
Senior Pastor
December 13, 2020

