

My name is Rev. Andy Lewis, and I serve as the Clergy Assistant to Bishop Mike McKee.

I am honored to be here today to represent our bishop and his support of this gathering.

And, I am humbled and privileged to be here – as a United Methodist pastor and a concerned citizen – first and foremost to listen. To listen to the pain, fears and frustrations of my African- American colleagues and the black community.

I have two sons. As I taught them to drive, the honest truth is that it wasn't critical for me to prepare them for potential interactions with the police. We could just focus on parallel parking. Many of the fears and frustrations that have been voiced by the black community once again in the past weeks are not a part of my experience. So, I am here to listen. I need to listen and then to stand with my sisters and brothers.

And, I believe that we – United Methodists of all Colors – are all here to bear witness to who we are as the Church when we are at our best. This is what that looks like.

As the investigation continues, we will be patient...and we will be vigilant because injustice can rear its ugly head at any turn.

We will support the District Attorney and her team and our city leadership...and we will be watching and will hold them to the highest standard of ethics and professionalism.

We are people of prayer, so we will continue to pray for the Jean family and the black community, for Amber Guyger and her family, for justice to be done and for healing to come...but we will not stop at praying. In the scriptures, the prophet Micah calls us to "do justice." In other words, to use our voices and our actions to ensure that all people in our community are treated fairly and equitably.

So, today and in the days to come, we United Methodists of all Colors will ask for justice, and walk for justice and pray for justice. We will lift high the beautiful vision of a justice, we will pursue justice, and we will work tirelessly for a more just community for young men like Botham Jean and for all of our sons and daughters.