

Cover Letter for the Eastminster Presbyterian Church's letter
from the Peacemaking Committee.

September 6, 2018

The Peacemaking Committee of Pittsburgh Presbytery received the following letter from the Pittsburgh Ecclesiastical Committee for comment.

After much discussion at our Wednesday September 5, 2018 meeting, we decided to commend the July 23, 2018, Eastminster Presbyterian Church's letter from their session addressed to the Rev. Sheldon Sorge for action at the Pittsburgh Presbytery meeting, Thursday September 20, 2018 at Crestfield Camp & Conference Center.

Their session's letter shares the trauma, pain, anger and frustration their members feel with the several topics mentioned. Many more Allegheny County citizens share this crisis of Christian conscience. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men. "Chapter 20 - Westminster of Faith."

As followers of Jesus, we are to be a healing and peacemaking community. We commend their letter. Their session also forwarded a motion for Presbytery action. They will introduce their motion as New Business at the September 20, Presbytery meeting. The Peacemaking Committee hopes that the Presbytery commissioners will share an appropriate expression for Eastminster's anguish and desire for social healing.

LETTER TO PRESBYTERY:

Eastminster Church motions that Pittsburgh Presbytery send a copy of this letter to all our elected leaders in Washington D.C. and ask that our leaders develop a policy about humane treatment of asylum seekers which includes not separating families and time limits for a hearing to occur. We are also requesting a federal investigation into police departments and district attorney offices that have a record of police brutality and racial profiling without appropriate action and accountability. We demand our policy makers to establish reasonable gun control laws.



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Rev. Sheldon Sorge
General Minister to the Pittsburgh Presbytery
Pittsburgh Presbytery
901 Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

July 23, 2018

Dear Rev. Sorge;

Eastminster Church in East Liberty PA is concerned about the events happening in our community and country. We are equally concerned about the Christian voice that seems to have dominated our media no matter what media source. We, as believers in Jesus Christ, want to communicate our faith perspective.

We, as believers in Jesus, clearly believe that the violence in our communities is unacceptable and can not be justified by our faith. The police as enforcers of public safety can never be seen as a threat to public safety. The police shooting of Antwon Rose Jr. in the back 3 times while he is running away, unarmed is unacceptable. It does not matter what crime he has or has not committed. The Police are not a jury or a judge to pass judgement on a person. We, as a nation, believe in justice being handled by a trial amongst peers and sentencing by a judge. The action by the Police in the Antwon Rose Jr. situation can only lead people to feel that the police are not a part of the solution of public safety but instead they are a part of the problem. Our Christian faith tells us that each person has been created by God, immortal, and is to be treated with respect. We will hope and pray that our community leaders especially the District Attorney's office will prosecute any individual who treat our young, Black men with disrespect and universally see them as a threat to public safety. We are pleased to see that the District Attorney has acted on this situation. We want to see the officer's bail revoked. We were distressed at how slow this action was and the lack of concern immediately following the event.

We also want to acknowledge that we are actively concerned about the violence in our community. Jesus loves every person in our community and we find all people to be precious, unique, and sacred. The death culture that surrounds us; that is especially seen in our young people killing each other, needs to be addressed. Silence is giving our young people permission to continue to be violent. We need to have reasonable gun control laws. Violence is an evil we must attack with love, mercy and truth.

We are also appalled with our nation's policy on immigration. Christianity is a faith which is called upon to be hospitable to those in need, who are struggling, or are being persecuted. The faith was founded by our savior as a people who would feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty and to clothe the naked. We desire for families to be loved, refreshed and cared for. The idea of separating children from their parents who cross in to our borders is appalling to us. To see children in cages; handcuffed, no legal representation, no outside contact, being treated like animals, has no place in our faith and should not be allowed in our country. We call on our leaders to make policies that show our love for the downtrodden and our commitment to basic human rights that show the compassion of our nation which is the compassion that Jesus showed in his life and the early church exemplified. We believe the idea of building a wall, separating families, putting people in cages, shows no hospitality and is antithetical to our faith and the teachings of Jesus. We call on our policy makers to develop a policy that does not treat asylum seekers as law breakers.

Sincerely,

Rev. Paul Roberts
Pastor and Moderator of Session

Ms. Laurie Miller
Clerk