

From the Depths, We Cry  
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*(Written in memory of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and all other black boys and men, black girls and women killed by those who purportedly exist to keep our communities safe.)*

We hear the cry of Eric Garner's widow: "Hell, no. The time for remorse for the death of my husband was when he was yelling to breathe."

We hear the cry of Michael Brown's mother: "We heard this and it was just like, like I had been shot. Like you shoot me now ~ just no respect, no sympathy, nothing. This could be your child. This could be anybody's child."

We hear the cry of Rachel in Ramah, one of deep anguish and bitter weeping, refusing to be comforted because her children are no more. (Jeremiah 31: 15)<sup>1</sup>

We hear the cry of Maya Angelou: "It is impossible to struggle for civil rights, equal rights for blacks, without including whites. Because equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air: we all have it, or none of us has it. That is the truth of it."

We hear the cry of Rev. Jeff Hood: "I keep thinking about Eric Garner saying, 'I can't breathe.' It made me think ~ that's what Jesus is saying in this culture. Jesus is fundamentally connected to the marginalized and right now Jesus is saying, 'I can't breathe.' I think the church should be saying the same thing ~ that we can't breathe in this culture and we have to change this culture in order for us to have breath and exist in this society."

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<sup>1</sup> If we are to be so bold, someone could actually yell a cry here. It is dramatic, but I think it's appropriate and adds texture to the true lamentation – or, invite a grieving mother to read this line about Rachel.

We hear the cry of the prophets: “Repent, for the kin-dom of heaven is come near! Prepare the way of the Lord, and make the paths right!”

We hear the cries of each other<sup>2</sup>:

How do we live in a world that kills unarmed black boys?

How do we raise our children in world that sets murderers free?

What does our privilege afford us, and what does our privilege call us to do?

Cries of silence, cries of pain rise up like incense before the Holy One as we sit, as we wait.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy, God hears the voices of grieving mothers and marginalized prisoners and oppressed captives.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy, God attends our needs for peace, for healing, for justice, for love.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy, we sit together, and we wait.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy, we trust and we live.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy, we sing a new song in spite of our fear.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy a child is born.

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<sup>2</sup> Here, I would invite church people, congregants, to voice their questions, their cries, their laments. I would place a few in the congregation as “plants” with something already prepared, but invite people to spontaneously speak aloud a one sentence question or cry or lament.

From the depths, we cry, and from mercy we creatively and powerfully act.

SILENCE

Amen.