

MHCH PRAYER VIGIL FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND RACIAL JUSTICE



Overview and welcome by Rev Bert Newton

Welcome by Pastor Paul Jones

Opening prayers by Pastor John Stewart, Blair Miller, Ibrahim Naeem

Reflection/Story by Dr. Gilbert Walton

Words of support by State Senator Anthony Portantino, Pasadena Councilmember John Kennedy

READING OF SCRIPTURES.

- 1. Hyepin Im** (Faith and Community Empowerment): *"If there are any poor in your towns when you arrive in the land....do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Instead, be generous and lend them whatever they need. Do not be mean spirited and refuse a loan because the year of release is close at hand."* Duet.15:7-9.
- 2. Michelle Bailey** (Friendship Church): *"They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build and another inhabit, they will not plant and another eat."* Is.65: 21-22
- 3. Rev. Marcos Canales** (Pasadena Nazarene Church): *"Then you want a certain piece of land, you find a way to seize. When you want someone's house you take it by fraud and violence....you have evicted women from their homes and stripped their children of their God-given rights."* Micah 2:2,9.
- 4. Rev. Sally Howard** (All Saints Church): *"Destruction is certain for you who buy up property so others have no place to live. Your homes are built on great estates so you can be alone in the land. But the Lord almighty has sealed your awful fate. With my own ears I heard him say, 'Many beautiful homes will stand deserted'"* Isaiah 5:7-9
- 5. PJ Johnson:** Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of this, they will be severely punished." Luke 20:47
- 6. Rev. DeRon Johnson** (Calvary Christian Center): *"Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid."* Micah 4:4
- 7. Rev. Brita Pinkston** (Pasadena Foursquare Church): *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* Luke 4:16-18
- 8. Pam Wilson** (Lincoln Avenue Christian Church): *"And there was no poor among them, because people who owned land or houses sold them and brought the money to the apostles to give to others in need"* Acts 4:34.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND COMMITMENT

Rev Bert Newton: We confess that our city and other cities like ours have had a shameful history of racial injustice and discrimination that has harmed people of color in our city and all of Pasadena. We have treated people as if we are not equally deserving of God's bounty and a descent home. We repudiate all forms of discrimination and stand in solidarity in support of fair housing for all.

- 1. Rev. Connie Tamkin** (First United Methodist Church of Pasadena): *"We confess the injustice of a massive land transfer from Mexicans to Whites from the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. California's constitution had a Free-Soil provision, allowing whites to claim and own land while banning slaves, yet disallowing free Black people to claim land. This land which today is Pasadena was not exempt from this injustice."*

ALL TOGETHER: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic wrongs.

2. **Rev. Liz Murphy** (Throop Unitarian Universalist Church): “We confess the injustice of 1862 Homestead Act: US citizens were granted 160 acres free if farmed for five years. African Americans and Native Americans were not given citizenship status; therefore, were not allowed to participate.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic wrongs.

3. **Pasadena City Councilmember John Kennedy**: “Ezra Seymour Gosney founded the Human Betterment Association in Pasadena “to improve the human race,” resulting in over 6,000 sterilization operations in California, from 1909 to 1929, referenced by officials in Nazi Germany who adopted this practice. We denounce this horrific injustice and ask that this practice is ended in our prisons and detention centers today.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

4. **Dr. Margaret Lee** (Professor, Azusa Pacific University): “Mortgage Interest Deduction (MID) was created in 1913 to encourage homeownership. The US spends over ten times more on housing subsidies from these deductions for wealthy homeowners than on affordable housing allocation. This policy has allowed many in Pasadena to have deductions on first and second homes, while too many people of color have never been able to access homeownership.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

5. **Patrice Marshall McKenzie** (Immediate Past President, Pasadena Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.): “In the early 20th century, zoning laws were introduced to “protect” largely white, single family neighborhoods. Because multi-family zoning was allowed in certain neighborhoods and only single-family zoning in others, Pasadena became economically and racially divided.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

6. **Lawrence Davy** (Deacon, New Hope Baptist): “At one point 65% of Pasadena had racial covenants recorded on their home deed disallowing ‘non-Caucasians’ from purchasing their homes. This was to ‘protect’ their property, fearing ‘encroachment’ of African Americans, who were only allowed to live in NW Pasadena. The long and lingering shadows of segregation persist in Pasadena, especially in our school district.

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

7. **Dr. Gilbert Walton** (Deacon, New Hope Baptist Church): “By 1950, real estate sales were prohibited that would be ‘detrimental to property values’ if Black people were to move into a community. Racial steering for home purchases is illegal today, but it continues. For example, in Pasadena, realtors say to potential homeowners that they need to have enough money to send their children to private schools.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

8. **Andre White** (Mitchelville Real Estate Group): “Without explicitly mentioning race, exclusionary zoning was still practiced long after racial covenants were made illegal in 1968. African-American neighborhoods were often zoned for uses such as ‘industrial’ or ‘commercial’ and used as a buffer to segregate the community by race. This led to a high number of liquor stores and other less desirable businesses along Orange Grove. The less desirable businesses encouraged and supported illegal businesses. To correct this injustice, we must rezone these areas to allow for affordable housing and mixed-use development to improve these neighborhoods by removing less desirable uses.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

9. **Dr. Anthony Manousos** (Orange Grove Quaker Meeting). “Redlining prevented access to financial services and loans in predominantly African American neighborhoods. To obtain loans, enterprising African Americans created Family Thrift Saving and Loan which later became One United Bank on N. Lake and Washington Blvd which closed

its branch in Pasadena but is nonetheless the largest Black-owned bank in the United States. Many banks such as Wells Fargo and One West targeted seniors and people of color for bad loans during the Great Recession, causing many to lose their homes and assets.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

10. **Dr. Phlunté Riddle:** “The 1949 Housing Act no longer required one-for-one replacement of housing units cleared. Money from this Act provided for ‘slum clearance’ and ‘urban renewal.’ But some called this ‘Negro removal’ because so many Black residents were displaced from their homes in name of ‘renewal.’ Approximately 100 homes were demolished to make room for Parsons Engineering. Often, not enough money was paid to families to afford another home in Pasadena.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

11. **Teresa Eilers** (Union Station) “The 1959 Highway Act created a car-reliant society with highways that sliced through thriving Black communities across the US, leaving wealthier white neighborhoods intact. The 210 Freeway, which was built in the 1970s, combined with urban renewal, displaced thousands of mostly African American Pasadenans. This led to the decline of a Black Business District on N. Lincoln Ave that has never fully recovered. On the other hand, mostly white and wealthy residents of South Pasadena were able to block the 710 Freeway extension and preserve their neighborhood.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

12. **Rev. Dr. Larry Campbell** (Pastor, First AME). “The 1968 Fair Housing act had unintended consequences. African Americans of means living in NW Pasadena could now move anywhere, but it began to unravel much of the mixed income fabric needed for a healthy community. Due to redlining and this unexpected outcome, property values plummeted, opening the doors for gentrification. Today many professionals own homes in NW Pasadena, pushing property values high and pushing out long time African American families.”

ALL: God, hear our confession of this injustice. We commit ourselves to correct such historic and present wrongs.

Moment of silence

Rev. Bert Newton: Please take a minute and silently reflect on other ways that as a society we have allowed racial injustice and ask God to help us to remove these barriers to an equitable and fair society.

PRAYERS OF PETITION

Rev. Bert Newton: We confess that we have not done enough to repair the damage caused by racial injustice in our city, and we renew our commitment for each of us to do our part. Now we will focus on prayers of petition for those without a home and for God to allow congregational land to be part of the solution. Let us pray:

1. We pray for our brothers and sisters who are experiencing homelessness. At last count, in January of 2020, over 500 of our brothers and sisters were experiencing homelessness, almost 300 were completely unsheltered, living on our streets.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

2. 54% of those counted reported having lived in Pasadena an average of 21 years. Although African Americans make up 10% of our population, they accounted for 31% of people counted on that night.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

3. 24 households with children were experiencing homelessness on the night of the 2020 count, all of whom were staying in sheltered locations.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

4. 700 students in PUSD are also considered homeless by the McKinney-Vento Act, and a separate count found that approximately 19% of PCC students are experiencing homelessness.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

5. There has been a 62% increase of homelessness among seniors in the past 3 years. The average age of death among people experiencing homelessness is 51 years compared to 73 years for the general population.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive. The majority (67%) of people counted on the night in 2020 count identified as male, while 33% identified as female and less than 1% identified as transgender; 8% identified as LGBTQ.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

6. 56% of youth and 14% overall reported having been in foster care.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

7. 13% stated that they were currently fleeing domestic violence.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive.

8. 38 persons identified as veterans.

ALL: We pray for homes they can afford and for all that they need to thrive

9. We pray that our city will allow churches to do what is right and fulfill their mission by providing the right zoning so that affordable housing can be built for those who are low income or experiencing homelessness.

Moment of silence

Rev. Bert Newton: Please take a minute and silently reflect on others in our city who suffer from the high cost of housing, the high cost of medical expenses, the loss of jobs pushing too many in our city into homelessness or who are on the edge on homelessness, causing them to live with constant anxiety. Ask God to help us to do what we can to prevent housing insecurity.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: Rev. John Williams, Fellowship Monrovia (Please say "AMEN" after each expression of gratefulness.)

- We are grateful that cities like Evanston and Manhattan Beach are making reparation for injustices committed against African Americans, restoring land and hope and opportunity. (AMEN.)
- We affirm our city's beautiful vision that "all Pasadena residents have an equal right to live in decent, safe and affordable housing in a suitable living environment for the long-term well-being and stability of themselves, their families, their neighborhoods, and their community." (AMEN.)
- We thank God for how affordable housing beautifies and strengthens our community by requiring local labor, local materials and local contracts thereby infusing millions of dollars into Pasadena's economy. (AMEN.)
- We are thankful that members of our City Council are committed to affordable housing and that they have the support of churches, homeless service providers and concerned citizens. (AMEN.)
- We are thankful for the Housing Task force and ask for your wisdom and courage to exercise faith to be bold in their Imagination to bring about housing justice. (AMEN.)
- We are thankful that churches want to be part of the solution to our housing crisis and are willing to use their land for affordable housing. (AMEN.)
- We are thankful that Pasadena's homeless count has decreased 56% over the past decade. (AMEN!)

Moment of silence

Rev. Bert Newton: Please take a minute and silently thank God for all the opportunities we have to make Pasadena a model for other cities. Thank God for all the nonprofits, faith congregations and those who give of themselves to bring about housing justice.

Closing words and call to action by Dr. Jill Shook

Closing prayer by Rev. John McCall, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church