

IRT's Call to Anti-Racism

In the midst of a pandemic, as we enter the summer of 2020, the nation has been raging because of a series of racist attacks, many of which have led to deaths, and some of which have been initiated by our employees in uniform. Coupled with these abominations have been frequent denials of responsibility. In the 1960s, civil unrest was almost a yearly occurrence. In more than fifty years, society should have advanced further. Instead, open wounds remain in Washtenaw County because of different interpretations of the 2014 police killing of Aura Rosser in Ann Arbor; Black students protesting their treatment at both Saline High School and Ann Arbor's Pioneer High School; and a well-circulated tape of a law enforcement officer using his fists on Sha'Teina Grady El, an unarmed Ypsilanti woman. More pain and outrage have challenged us recently because of the months-long delay in justice for Ahmad Arbury and the nationally published law enforcement officer deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd.

The Interfaith Round Table believes that we each deserve love and justice. It is the duty of spiritually grounded people of faith to take an anti-racist stand and help lead the country to positive change. IRT is calling those who want to help us heal the nation to come forward. We are asking each person and community to look within ourselves and our systems. Moreover, after silent reflection, we are asking each person and community to join us in open dialogues with people of different races and faiths. When so many of the ties that should bind us are in disarray, we are called to either reform or dismantle that which keeps us from being a just society. Continuing on the same brambled path seems certain to make this wilderness a maze.

When we bring our best selves to listen to each other we deepen our respect for cultures that may be unlike our own. By making sincere efforts to communicate peacefully we remember the lessons taught by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. These were two men of different faiths and cultures who gave their lives to move the world closer to recognized and lived kinship.

Yours in the Light,

Dwight L. Wilson and Renee Roederer,
Co-Directors