



June 2, 2020

On behalf of Messiah College, we write to you today reflecting on our calling individually and corporately to denounce racism as we seek to promote reconciliation – one of the three desired outcomes of a Messiah education. As a Christian educational community we profess that it is our responsibility to identify what yields hatred and division and seek to bring restoration and healing. As Christ-followers we must continually seek to call out injustice and work diligently toward justice as commanded in scripture.

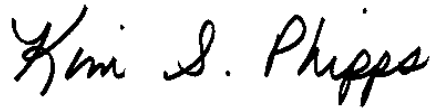
Over the past few weeks this nation has yet again been confronted with the issue of racism and its strain on the social fabric. From the rising tide of anti-Asian rhetoric connected to the COVID-19 pandemic to the tragic and brutal deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and most recently George Floyd, our hearts break as yet again the historic and deeply embedded plague of institutional racism continues to infect our nation, our communities and our very own hearts and souls. Laws, policies and protocols must be adopted to address and create accountability for this senseless brutality. It is also essential that we engage in reflection, lament and renew our commitment to Messiah's values of the importance of the person and the need for Christians to engage in the ministry of reconciliation between God and others and between individuals themselves. This nation is brimming over with hatred, fear and discord. The Messiah community must exhibit courage and concerted action to work for change – in our individual hearts and souls, in our campus community, in our neighborhoods and in our spheres of influence.

This is a difficult time to be physically separated from each other – unable to dialogue and pray together as a community. When we return in the fall we will seek to provide community forums for conversation and prayer. We will lean in and sincerely listen to the voices and experiences of our sisters and brothers of color. We will continue to pursue the creation of a campus climate marked by a sense of belonging, connection and reconciliation. We have much to learn and much to accomplish...together.

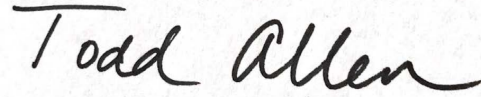
Theologian Soong-Chan Rah in his book Prophetic Lament reminds us that “lament challenges the church to acknowledge real suffering and plead with God for his intervention.” As believers we lament...we mourn...we grieve... “but not as those who have no hope (I Thessalonians 4:13).” Our hope and strength in this moment comes from the author and finisher of our faith. A faith that calls each of us to “do justice...love mercy... and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).” Our prayer is that our commitment to love God and to love our neighbor will be a model for a hurting world and not just a moment that, in time, passes from memory. May we join

efforts to chart a constructive path toward serious self-reflection, unvarnished repentance, renewed determination and sustained action to build a beloved community where the dignity and value of all people is embraced and true reconciliation is experienced.

Prayerfully,

Handwritten signature of Kim S. Phipps in black ink.

Kim Phipps, President

Handwritten signature of Todd Allen in black ink.

Todd Allen, Special Assistant to the
President and Provost for Diversity Affairs