



Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life

Statement on Racial Justice and Commitment to Anti-Racist Action

June 1, 2020

The Elon University Chaplains and the Truitt Center team lament the systemic racism in the United States which has consistently devalued Black lives and made them expendable. We decry the unjust killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and Breonna Taylor, the long history of lynchings, police brutality, and vigilante violence in our nation, and the anemic responses and complicity of our judicial systems. We feel deep sorrow for the pain and devastation that racism brings to the human community.

We acknowledge the everyday pain experienced by Black persons in our society, made far deeper by the continuing death and injustice in our nation, the lack of response and meaningful change, and the silence of white neighbors, colleagues, and friends. These recent killings are rooted in systemic white supremacy and anti-Blackness that involve all of us. As members of a predominantly white institution, we recognize this and are committed to acknowledging and responding to the persistent inequities that Black persons in our school community as well as our larger society experience every day.

We affirm together that Black lives matter. Our religious and spiritual traditions all affirm the sacred and inestimable value and dignity of every human life. Each life is sacred, every one of us is connected, and all of us are diminished when any one of us suffers unjust violence. In the face of unjust suffering and violence, silence and inaction are not acceptable.

We commit together to renewed learning and ongoing action against racism in all its forms. We commit to seeing and naming anti-Blackness, to listening and learning from our colleagues and students of color, and to doing the work of educating ourselves about systems of racial injustice, our own biases and complicity, and ways we can become anti-racist activists and agents in our communities.

We commit ourselves to concrete actions that make a difference, recognizing that this work will be long and difficult. In the coming weeks and months, we commit to going deeper in the work of opposing racism and unlearning white supremacy and anti-Blackness. We commit to including anti-racist training in our interfaith and multifaith work and supporting Black communities in their struggle for true freedom. We commit to do this work alongside colleagues and students already active in this struggle and to amplifying the voices of Black students, faculty, and staff.

We offer support to students and community members who live in fear of racist violence, who suffer the harm of anti-Blackness, and whose spirits are exhausted by simple existence. We are available to listen and to learn, with open ears and hearts, to anyone who wishes to share experiences of discrimination, racism, or hatred. We offer support to those becoming more awake to this injustice and struggling with what to do or how to respond.

If you'd like to speak to a chaplain, you can connect with any of our staff at <https://www.elon.edu/u/truitt-center/staff/>. If you are having a mental health crisis that needs immediate attention, please call Elon's on-call crisis counselor at 336-278-5555.

We strongly encourage white and other non-Black members of our community to commit themselves to daily action toward change in our local communities, on our campus, and in our nation. We commit ourselves to doing the same. We will be posting upcoming opportunities for learning about and fighting anti-Blackness during the summer and coming academic year.

In love and light,

The Truitt Center Team

Rev. Jan Fuller, University Chaplain
Rev. Joel Harter, Associate University Chaplain and Director of the Truitt Center
Rabbi Sandra Lawson, Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life and Jewish Educator
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Allison Pelyhes, Multifaith Coordinator
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Catherine Stallsmith '22, Ripple Conference Co-Director
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Trung Huynh-Duc, Director of Catholic Life
Jan Register, Administrative Assistant
Julie Tonnesen, LEAF Campus Minister
Olivia Brazer, InterVarsity Campus Minister

There are so many good resources for further learning and action. The first two are collections of resources in different media, both introductory and advanced. [Alamance County NAACP](#) and [Alamance Racial Equity Alliance](#) are two local community organizations.

[Anti-Racism Bibliography from T'ruah](#)
[Anti-Racism Resources for White People](#)
[24 Books for White People to Read Beyond Black History Month](#)
[George Floyd Protests: How to Help, Where to Donate](#)
[Bail Funds/Legal Help by City](#)