

## **From Fr Simon,**

Dear all

Black lives matter.

It is a disgrace that in America black lives seem to matter less than white lives. It beggars belief that a black life can be choked out, while others look on as if there is nothing wrong.

Worryingly it's not just in America: Police statistics in this country also show a racist bias.

Even the Church of England is not completely innocent with various BAME clergy being turned down for positions because of "cultural differences" (as they've later discovered in the paperwork).

Ours is a religion of cultural difference. As Jesus travelled around huge crowds would form and follow him from place to place – crowds made up of all sorts of people. In Jesus' famous story it was a Samaritan man who stopped to help the person who had been mugged - Samaritans were considered inferior and foreign. At Pentecost we remember the Holy Spirit making everybody understand whatever their language. In God all people are valued, all belong.

Black lives matter. All lives matter, but black lives have too often been over-looked, so we must keep saying that black lives matter.

One thing that the Coronavirus has done, is to help look beyond ourselves and our families. Lockdown with its frustrating curb of liberty has been about others and about other people's lives.

But I believe we need to look even further.

For example, there have been reports that some of the PPE imported into this country has been made by people abroad working in squalor. Do the lives of the people making the PPE matter as much as those protected by it?

Our clothes, food, technology all has a cost. If you look at the price of a truly ethical pair of jeans, you must wonder who is paying the price for jeans we can buy for under £10.

It is not only George Floyd who was choked to death, many people work in areas of heavy chemical use and dreadful pollution to supply our groceries and goods. Their families often living with them. Choking in the fumes. Do their lives matter?

I urge you to consider how the things in your shopping basket came to be there, and if you should be considering more than the price.

I entreat you to use insurance companies, pensions and banks with good ethical policies – these are the people who invest your money in business all over the world.

At the very least, we need to be asking the shops and investors questions. We can't just leave it to other people.

Because black lives matter.

God Bless

## **Notices**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Pentecost food collection. We sent the Welcome Centre over £600 and Jane Smith who organises Mutual Aid said, "bag after bag of food & £45!!! I have put a shout out on both the community & our groups facebook pages to everyone at St Johns & St Marks but I cannot tell you how much that boosted our "stash"...the food and toiletries you lot collected were easily a third of the total!! Please thank everyone for me ...it was a superb effort by everyone & will be going to good use very soon."

The church is a gathering of people, so we are all eagerly looking forward to when we can worship together again. I would like to give you definite news about the churches reopening, but things are changing daily, so please find information on our facebook pages and websites.

Almighty God, who calls all creation to grow into your loving kingdom;  
inspire us by your Holy Spirit so we  
    draw new people into our churches,  
    grow closer to you,  
    and increase our service to the world.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.