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## **Presbytery of Carlisle**

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Dear Presbyterian Brothers and Sisters,

***God sends the Church to work for justice in the world: exercising its power for the common good; dealing honestly in personal and public spheres; seeking dignity and freedom for all people; welcoming strangers in the land; promoting justice and fairness in the law; overcoming disparities between rich and poor; bearing witness against systems of violence and oppression; and redressing wrongs against individuals, groups, and peoples. God also sends the Church to seek peace: in the Church universal, within denominations, and at the congregational level; in the world, where nations and religious or ethnic groups make war against one another; and in local communities, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and homes. These acts of peacemaking and justice are established upon God's gracious act of reconciliation with us in Jesus Christ, and are a way of participating in Christ's priestly intercession or advocacy for the world. (Directory for Worship W-5.0304).***

These beautiful words are copied from our new Directory for Worship which we recently approved. After the last General Assembly when I was studying and discussing this proposed new Directory for Worship, I remember appreciating these words. In discussing the proposed new Directory of Worship, I remember highlighting this glorious language about God sending the Church to do the work of justice. Isn't it beautiful that this proclamation is part of our understanding of worship! Amen and Amen!

In recent days, this beautiful language and this high calling to work for justice have flooded my heart and mind with a new urgency. And I wonder today, given how fragile and meek we Presbyterians have become in the public sphere, whether we can truly claim this calling. Can we work for justice? Can we exercise power for the common good? Can we bear witness against systems of violence and oppression?

Today is the day for this witness. There have been recent, active expressions of Klu Klux Klan activity within the bounds of our Presbytery. They have gathered outside Churches to insult and intimidate Church people as they leave worship services. They smeared the windshields in church parking lots with their messages of hate. Maybe we want to duck our head, and sigh with relief, that it happened at a Church down the street, not my Church.

Maybe we want to close our eyes grateful that it happened in a town on the other side of our Presbytery, not my town.

**God sends the Church to work for justice in the world.**

Every time that evil thoughts, and evil people and evil groups crawl out of their dark places where they typically stay hidden and make an appearance in the light of day, the Church must respond. Of course, we know this has happened in every era and in every generation. Now it is happening in ours.

Please organize a vigil, stand in the streets, invite every church and all your friends, light candles, read Scripture, sing hymns, say prayers and claim the calling to work for justice. At the vigil organized and gathered on the square in Chambersburg in front of our Central Presbyterian Church, our colleague Pastor Scott Bowerman said it well, “The darkness is not strong enough to put out even one candle.”

Now is the time for the Church to shine the light of Christ into the darkness of this world.  
In the name of Jesus!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark' followed by a stylized surname.

The Rev. Mark Englund-Krieger  
Executive Presbyter