



CHURCH of the HOLY CROSS  
EPISCOPAL

## IN THESE TIMES OF TROUBLE

Like most of you, I am deeply troubled by the events that have occurred across our nation this past week in response to the death of an innocent black man. So much has been reported by those who write and speak more eloquently than I, so what can I say that has not already been said? While I cannot say anything “new,” I can draw from a few things that have been mentioned by others.

Our nation is broken! People are hurting and assuming the worst of each other. Their anger is coming out through acts of violence thinking that this will change the nation. We have convinced ourselves that solutions can be forced by our willpower. But our problems run deeper than most are willing to admit. Humanity has a sickness that lies at the core of our very being—a sickness of the heart that only our creator can remedy.

The prophet Ezekiel understood man’s sinful heart, and that it required a “spiritual” heart surgery, “I will give them one heart, and a new spirit will I put in them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and given them a heart of flesh (11:19).” This is not an operation that you can schedule at UAB, as excellent as they are in matters of the heart of flesh. Ezekiel speaks of a “spiritual surgery” that only God can do through the Holy Spirit.

In light of this, we see that our root problem is spiritual in nature and requires a spiritual approach. Therefore, during this time of unrest and turmoil, pray that we, as God’s people, will humble ourselves and turn from our wicked ways, seeking His face so that He may heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14). Only then can we cast out (from ourselves first) the spirit that divides and causes chaos in order to bring forth God’s order and peace. When we deal with our heart first, God then pours out His grace and power in answer to our prayers.

One of God’s answers to the prayer of repentance is to give us a heart of empathy. He will give you “spiritual ears” with which to hear the heart cries of those around you who are wounded and hurting and in need of hope—the real kind of hope that only God through Christ can give.

In closing, together, let us offer up this prayer from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*:

**FOR CITIES:** Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that Holy City to which the nations of the world bring their glory: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of the earth. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Enable us to eliminate poverty, prejudice, and oppression, that peace may prevail with righteousness, and justice with order, and that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find with one another the fulfillment of their humanity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

May the love of Christ bless and keep you during these trying times.

Fr. Wes