



March 21, 2012

Statement of Support for the Martin Family and Call for Just Prosecution

On behalf of our churches, we wish to convey our deepest condolences to the family of Trayvon Martin. The promise of his young life in no way deserved to be ended by a gunshot within sight of his father's front door on February 26, 2012. We pray for the family's peace of mind in knowing of the love of God which surpasses death and for justice to be pursued in this tragic mishap so that it does not happen to another family anywhere in Florida.

Trayvon's death was unwarranted. Florida should be a place where a person of any color can walk in a neighborhood without fear of violence or being presumed a suspicious threat. Florida should be a place where the use of deadly force is rare and uncommon. Florida should also be a place where the misuse of deadly force is not tolerated.

We call upon law enforcement in Sanford to pursue justice in this matter with deliberate effectiveness. The investigation into Trayvon Martin's death should proceed swiftly without racial bias so that the matter is not continually tried in the media. The Martin family and the community at large need protection from vigilantism and assurance that Florida's streets are open to all people without respect to the color of their skin. We call upon Sanford authorities to take actions that demonstrate both racial fairness and concern for the safety of the community.

Rev. Kent J. Siladi, Conference Minister, United Church of Christ in Florida
Bishop Leo Frade, Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida
Archdeacon J. Fritz Bazin, Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida
Bishop Chuck Leigh, Apostolic Catholic Church
Bishop Edward R. Benoway, Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Timothy Whitaker, Florida Area Resident Bishop, The United Methodist Church
Rev. Willie Israel, Moravian Church Southern Province, Florida District
Rev. Dr. Paige McRight, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Central Florida, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Dustin Lemke, Quaker Representative, Society of Friends (SEYM)
Presiding Bishop James E. McCoy, Alabama/Florida Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Robert Watkins, Florida Mission Center President, Community of Christ
Fr. Richard Doscher, Ecumenical Representative, Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida
Rev. W. Harvey Jenkins, Executive Presbyter (Retired), Presbyterian Church (USA)
Martha R. Beach, District Executive Minister, Church of the Brethren
Rev. Juan Rodriguez, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Florida (Disciples of Christ)
Bishop McKinley Young, 11th District, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Additional co-signers will be listed at <https://www.floridachurches.org/108>.

Contact Rev. Russell Meyer for more information.