The Department of Justice and Jubilee of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky: Statement on the Shooting of Breonna Taylor

As Christian people who choose to live by our core faith values of love, justice and peace, we cry out with deep sadness at the tragic death of Breonna Taylor in the city of Louisville. We mourn the loss of an innocent woman who was gunned down in the middle of the night by police violence. As we face this horrible tragedy, we are keenly aware that this death is one of many deaths of African Americans in the face of excessive police action. We acknowledge the deep-seated racism that has plagued our society even from the beginning of our nation as it condoned the practice of enslaving Africans. We condemn the complicity in our society that tolerated lynchings. We abhor the racist patterns that continue today in the disproportionate number of African Americans in our prisons and the murders of innocent blacks at the hands of police.

We cannot be silent in the face of this injustice. We call on our city, state, and country to work to create a more equitable justice system. We need to reform the policing practices that disproportionately target people of color. We join with many in Louisville who call for a citizen board which has subpoena power to monitor police actions. We pray that these tragedies can lead to a reexamination of the systemic racism that plagues our nation in so many areas of life. For healing to occur, justice must take place.

The voices of the people of color and those without power must be heard. Their anger must be acknowledged and addressed. The recent demonstrations in the city of Louisville have expressed an understandable anger at the tragic deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery. We pray that anger can be channeled into actions that lead to greater justice. We do not and cannot condone violence nor do we believe that the destruction of property will achieve the peace and justice our faith demands. However, peaceful protests are a constitutional right which can give voice to legitimate concerns in the face of injustice.

As Episcopalians, we pray for God’s justice which leads to peace, and re-affirm the commitment we promise in our baptismal covenant:
“Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” And we, the people, respond: “I will, with God’s help.”

May we all strive to be agents of God’s reign of justice and peace in our society.