

## Message for All Ages

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I want to talk to our kids this morning about what's happening here in our city of Minneapolis. As Unitarian Universalists, we promise to speak the truth in love. Sometimes, the truth we have to speak about is very sad, or very complicated, or scary, or unfair. But we speak the truth in love, anyway, because the truth will set us free.

We're talking today about George Floyd. [\[Show image 1.\]](#) George was a 46 year old Black man. His friends called him Big Floyd because he was six and a half feet tall. As a kid, he loved playing football and basketball. All through his life, George tried to help others by being a good and generous friend and by accepting people just as they were.

On Monday, George Floyd was killed by a white police officer in south Minneapolis. The police officer was arresting George because he thought George had used fake money in a store. George was made to lay on the ground face down, in handcuffs. Then the police officer knelt down and put his knee on George's neck. George told the police he couldn't breathe.

Some people who were nearby tried to get the police officer to stop hurting him. But the other police officers who were there didn't help. Even worse, they prevented anyone else from helping and the police officer who was pressing his knee into George's neck didn't stop, and George died.

Why would the police do this? In our country, so many Black people have been killed by police officers. We're taught that police are supposed to help and protect everyone. But Black people have always been treated unfairly by the police. They're more likely to be accused of things they didn't do and more likely to be hurt. This is scary because police officers have a lot of power and responsibility. Though we all should be able to count on them to be kind and helpful, many Black people feel worried when they're around. Black leaders in our community are calling for an end to policing. They want money to be

given to Black communities directly, so that people can choose how they want to care for each other.

In the past week, you may have seen broken glass and smoke and heard sirens and loud bangs and helicopters around your neighborhood. [Show image 2.] You may have seen some beautiful art, like this mural, and I know you've seen lots of people helping each other, too.

Our neighborhoods are hurting. We are full of so many feelings about George's death, including deep sadness, fear and rage. Ever since George Floyd died, lots of people have been protesting what happened. We carry signs and demand that the police officers - all four - who murdered George Floyd be arrested. But many people think it will take more than that to change things.

We want to live in communities where when someone needs assistance for any reason, no matter who they are, they can count on trained helpers showing up with kindness and concern. Black community leaders are demanding that the Minneapolis police become a force that cares about and protects everyone equally. They say we might have to start over with a brand new way so that Black people - and Indigenous and Brown people, too - can trust community helpers to help everyone.

An important question we have is: How can we honor George's life? First, we can remember and talk about him, like we are now. We might find a picture of him and post it somewhere in our home. I chose this beautiful drawing of George by Andres Guzman. [Show image 3.] When we want to create a sacred space, we can light a candle for George and his family and our whole community.

We can say a prayer of hope that George's loved ones find comfort and that our communities find justice:

*God of many names, we know breath is life. May all people everywhere breathe freely. We feel our connection to the whole human family as we breathe in and breathe out.*

Then, we can do something to help. We can draw pictures or write messages of love to share with George’s family and our neighbors. We can make signs that say “Justice for George” or write “Black Lives Matter” in chalk on our sidewalk. We can write letters to our mayor or our governor.

What happened to George Floyd and what keeps happening to Black communities in our city and our country is terrible and wrong. Whenever you have any questions about it, you can ask us, and we will speak the truth in love. Knowing hard things is still easier than having questions we can’t ask or feelings we can’t talk about. If you’re angry, it’s okay to yell and stomp around. If you’re sad, crying helps. If you’re scared, tell your grownups so we can help you feel calmer.

Kids, I promise you this: we adults will work as hard as we can to fix these problems by keeping you and ourselves safe, by keeping our hearts open even when they’re broken, by listening up the voices of our wise Black leaders, by listening for what love is asking us to do next.

We love you so much, and the love we feel for you is part of what makes us so determined to build a better world.



Image 1

George Floyd, who died on May 25 after being pinned to the ground by an officer who pressed a knee into his neck. May 27, 2020. Credit...Offices of Ben Crump Law (New York Times)



Image 2

Mural at the site of the murder. May 30 2020. (Scott Takushi / Pioneer Press)

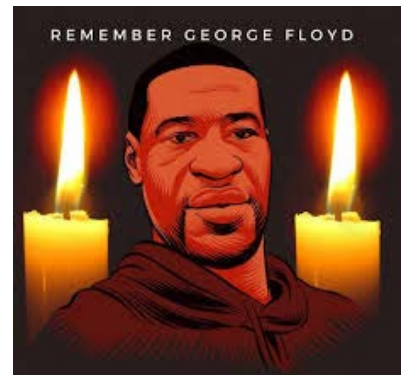


Image 3

This artwork, created by Minneapolis artist [Andres Guzman](#) and adapted by event organizer Aja St. Germaine, is featured on the Facebook event for the George Floyd Remembrance Vigil and Community Discussion.