



CHRIST CHURCH

1415 Pelhamdale Avenue
Pelham, New York 10803

Telephone (914) 738-5515
Facsimile (914) 712-0526

*The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead
Rector*

August 16, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

The events of the past week have magnified many of the divisions in our country and society. I find it difficult to shake the image of white supremacists, Neo-Nazis, and Ku Klux Klan members marching with torches and flags through the center of one of our nation's cities. I find that image appalling and repugnant. It brings to mind things I only know from history books and documentaries – Nazi rallies and KKK cross burnings. The racist and anti-Semitic slogans and rhetoric they were shouting are hateful and wrong. The fact that the next day featured a terrorist attack by a Neo-Nazi using a tactic that we have become far too familiar with is even more alarming. I am glad that our nation's leaders have condemned this hatred and violence, but I am troubled that this condemnation has not been universal or unequivocal.

Bishop Dietsche wrote a letter to the diocese ([you can read it here](#)) in which he stated that “these hate groups have no part in American discourse, that racism is an affront to Gospel and nation, and that the violent, rage-filled rhetoric of the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis and the Alt-Right are a destructive force that will, if unchecked, undermine the foundation of our common life.” I recommend his letter, and I endorse it whole heartedly. In his letter, the Bishop pointed to the Baptismal Covenant and its direct renunciation of evil, writing: “Do you renounce Satan, and all the forces of wickedness which rebel against God? Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God? Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God? There it is. The evil that besets us from without and the evil that festers within.”

Fortuitously, we have a Baptism this Sunday, and our custom has been that when there is a Baptism we renew our Baptismal vows at all of our services. Also fortuitously, the Psalm appointed for this Sunday is one of unity. “Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!” (Psalm 133, vs 1) the Psalmist cries out. I look forward to renewing my Baptismal Vows and praying together with you all this Sunday.

I think now is as good a time as any to include a note about prayer in the Episcopal Church. Christ Church and our Anglican tradition have a deep history of praying for our

elected leaders by name. At Christ Church we insert names when the prayer form indicates that names are to be inserted. Some of the prayer forms do not include that indication, and some do. When those forms are used we always pray for our leaders by name. When they are not used, we do not pray for our leaders by name. For what its worth, the same practice is applied to our bishops.

I believe that the Rite 1 prayer for our leaders sums up exactly why the Church does pray for them by name: “We beseech thee also so to rule the hearts of those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, especially Donald our President and Andrew our Governor, that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.” I believe that our leaders need our prayers, not to make them popular or famous or powerful or even successful, they need our prayers so that God leads them to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

I implore you to be in church this Sunday. If you are in town I hope you will join me at Christ Church. We will get the opportunity to renounce evil and pray for unity. If you are not in town this weekend, please find a place to pray with others. Pray for our nation. Pray for our leaders. Pray for peace.

In Christ and with fondest affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a simple oval border. The signature reads "Matthew Hoxsie Mead".

The Reverend Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector