Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,

That greeting only means anything to a believer in Jesus and thus a Christian. It means I love you all very much. And it means I try to love my neighbor as myself. That requires action.

Over the last couple weeks I have invited you to attend a dialogue about racism at Poland United Methodist Church.  Sadly, I didn’t see anyone from Christ Church. The gathering was organized by members of a 100 yr old organization, the Mahoning Valley Association of Churches. I have recently joined the Governing Board of MVAC. The Vestry felt I should be more active in area organizations and I agree. They are committed to promote Christian based dialogue and solutions to problems in our valley to make our community better.

Anyway, we heard stories of racism in our area and committed to spread the word, so that all of us can become better educated of this serious systemic problem. In fact, one of the speakers was our good friend, Pastor Todd Johnson, from Second Baptist Church in Warren. He preached at our Gospel Mass which so many of us truly enjoyed this past winter.

Here’s the Good News. You can still see the entire Dialogue on Poland United Methodist Church’s Facebook page. I invite, encourage, and insist that you check it out. Watch it. With open hearts and minds, watch it and try not to get defensive. It’s a difficult subject in which to engage. But it is necessary to begin this dialogue (once again), if we are ever going to affect real change in our community. Change that is lasting and real. There are no easy answers, but education is the first step. Please watch this video.

We are Christian. We know racism is wrong. We empathize with the oppressed. Now it is time to act. Educate yourself. Join the conversation. Treat all of God’s children with the respect they deserve.

Blessings,

Fr Jeff