

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Church of Christ General Minister and President to travel to Ferguson, Mo., for day of pastoral support

*The Rev. Geoffrey Black will visit the violence-stricken St. Louis suburb to address challenges
ahead with community members, local clergy*

CLEVELAND (Aug. 19, 2014) – At the invitation of local clergy, the Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, general minister and president of the United Church of Christ, will travel to Ferguson, Mo., on Wednesday, Aug. 20 to offer pastoral support to members of the community and to meet with local church leaders to discuss how to respond to the challenges that lie ahead. Black’s visit comes in the midst of race-based violence and tension between law enforcement and members of the St. Louis suburb after a white police officer fatally shot unarmed African American teenager Mike Brown on Aug. 9.

“The city of Ferguson is overwhelmed with anger, fear and a sense of injustice, and members of that community need to feel the hope that they will one day heal,” Black said. “I felt it was my pastoral duty to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering and to try to help them make sense of such a senseless situation. The current conflict in Ferguson is the latest in a long series of similar events, and the road to rebuilding what has been broken must begin now.”

During his time in Ferguson, Black will be among a group of interfaith clergy to visit the grounds of the Canfield Green Apartments where Brown lived and died, which has become a rallying place for protestors. He will then meet with fellow clergy at St. Peter’s United Church of Christ in Ferguson to explore ways local churches can respond to this crisis, before preaching at a community interfaith service at the church.

Black will then attend an informal gathering of clergy and lay leaders of the North St. Louis County United Churches of Christ to listen to the experiences of local congregations and discuss ways to bridge the community's racial divides while seeking reconciliation among the people of North St. Louis County.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

WHAT: Community Interfaith Worship Service – Preaching by the Rev. Geoffrey Black, UCC General Minister and President

WHEN: Wednesday, Aug. 20, 3-4 p.m.

WHERE: St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1425 Stein Road, Ferguson, MO 63135

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About the United Church of Christ:

The United Church of Christ is a mainline Protestant denomination with nearly 1 million members and more than 5,100 congregations nationwide. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American.

The UCC and its members are tireless advocates for social issues such as racial equality, LGBT rights, marriage equality, immigration reform, environmental protection and economic justice.