

CONTINUING TESTAMENT  
EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME  
CHANGING LIVES

March 4, 2015

The Honorable Mayor Frank G. Jackson  
The City of Cleveland  
601 Lakeside Ave E.  
Cleveland, OH 44114

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



Dear Mayor Jackson:

On behalf of many pastors and members of the 1-million-member United Church of Christ, gathered in 5,100 congregations across all 50 states, yet headquartered right here in downtown Cleveland, we, the national officers of the church, write to express our deepest concern over the lack of substantive changes being undertaken to address the serious concerns of our citizens following the deadly police shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, as well as the prior incidents outlined in the U.S. Department of Justice's scathing report on civil rights violations and excessive use of force by the Cleveland Police Department.

We know there are many good, dedicated Cleveland police officers, who face great potential danger every day as they serve and protect the people of this city. We honor their hard, difficult work. But, at the same time, it is obvious to too many that the City of Cleveland is not being as proactive as it should be — and must be — in critiquing the current practices and patterns that keep our police and neighborhoods at odds with one another. It doesn't have to be like this.

It is imperative that Cleveland return to the tenets of constitutional community policing, which understands the power of grassroots involvement and interaction with citizens in place of the confrontational and adversarial models we are seeing lived out today in Cleveland.

As followers of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, and also as proud Clevelanders, we join our voices with those of countless other religious and community leaders who are demanding visible leadership, both by you and the Cleveland City Council. Until substantive changes occur, Cleveland will never be the great comeback city it aspires to be.

Mayor Jackson, you have accomplished many wonderful things as mayor of Cleveland. We, therefore, humbly encourage and implore you, in this your final term of office, to make the issue of police reform one of your greatest legacies. In the midst of so much tension and mistrust brewing across this land, this nation desperately needs a light-bearing city that can model and live out a new approach to community policing, one that can be held up nationally and replicated by others. We believe Cleveland can be that great city, a people and a police department who, together, insist on a better way.

As Cleveland's renaissance continues to unfold, we urge and pray that Cleveland will become known as the nation's leader in restoring justice

COLLEGIUM OF OFFICERS  
**Rev. Geoffrey A. Black**  
GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT

**Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo**  
JUSTICE AND WITNESS MINISTRIES

**Rev. J. Bennett Guess**  
LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

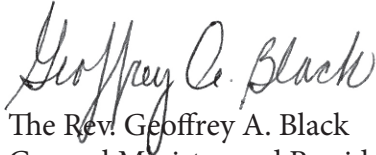
**Rev. James A. Moos**  
WIDER CHURCH MINISTRIES

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and citizen confidence to its police department and that right relationships may be established between Cleveland's citizens and those whose job it is to protect and serve them.

As leaders of the United Church of Christ and as leaders for change in this city, we stand ready and willing to partner with and encourage you, as you and all of us bring about the adaptive changes necessary to usher in a new day for Cleveland. Along the way, be assured of our constant prayers and relentless advocacy until fuller and fairer justice comes to the Cleveland we love.

Respectfully,



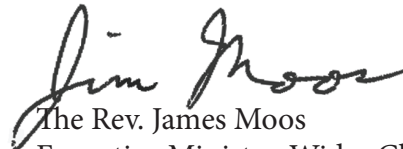
The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black  
General Minister and President  
United Church of Christ



The Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo  
Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Church of Christ



The Rev. J. Bennett Guess  
Executive Minister, Local Church Ministries  
United Church of Christ



The Rev. James Moos  
Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries  
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cc: Members of the Cleveland City Council  
Cleveland Media Outlets