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CHURCH DIVESTS FROM POLICING, INVESTS IN COMMUNITY SAFETY

OAKLAND, CA - *Friday, March 30, 2018* -- On Good Friday, the day that Christians remember the murder of Jesus by the Roman state, First Congregational Church of Oakland (FCCO) will honor the memory of all people killed by state forces by declaring its intention to reduce reliance on policing and incarceration and develop community-based safety and conflict resolution initiatives.

Citing the ongoing killing of unarmed people by local police—especially Black and Brown people, many of them with mental illness—the church on the corner of 27th and Harrison will formally pledge to “reimagine our policies, procedures, and relationships to our neighbors in order to reduce our reliance on policing that is too often deadly for those already marginalized.” It will further seek “to contribute to restorative/transformational approaches to addressing harm, and to increase our capacity to ensure the safety of everyone in our community.”

The multiracial church recently received a grant from the San Francisco Foundation’s FAITHS initiative to create a network of organizations and individuals committed to divesting from militarized policing and mass incarceration and investing in mental health and addiction intervention, violence prevention and de-escalation, self- and community-defense, and transformational justice processes.

First Congregational Church of Oakland’s Good Friday declaration is part of a national campaign organized through Showing Up for Racial Justice:

<http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/faith?platform=hootsuite>. The full text of FCCO’s declaration can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/FirstCongoDeclaration>

The public release of the declaration will be followed by a Good Friday worship service called “7 Last Words of Black Life,” in which preachers will address the last words of seven Black or Brown people killed by police: Korryn Gaines, Raynette Turner, Eric Garner, Kayla Moore, Alex Nieto, Alan Blueford and Aiyana Jones.

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