Preface to the Sermon on Sunday, August 13, 2017 in light of the events of the past weekend in Charlottesville, VA.

It is with an extremely heavy heart that I stand here to preach today after witnessing the events that occurred in Charlottesville, VA this weekend. I know that you, too, are struggling with these events, too.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we condemn the hatred behind Saturday’s gathering in Charlottesville of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and other purveyors of bigotry. These views are un-Christian and un-American.

We pray with and for those who have sought to maintain peaceful witness in Charlottesville, especially the victims of violence, remembering that we as followers of Christ “have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation” and cannot remain silent in the face of those who would deny the humanity of others because of race, color, or creed. Let us rededicate ourselves to the mission of the church to which the Virginia bishops call us: “to bear visible witness to the entirety of the beloved community in which people of all races are equal.”

Let us pray:

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Reverend Richard C. Israel, Associate Rector