

Opportunities to Support Police Oversight and Reform in Pasadena

Over the past few weeks we have seen a rise in racial tensions in our country following the shootings of Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, several police officers in both Dallas and Baton Rouge, as well as other unarmed black men by police earlier over the past couple of years. Members of our congregation gathered to discuss our feelings about the events of the past few weeks two Sundays ago, July 10.

Near the end of last year, the FCC Council endorsed the efforts of a new coalition of community organizations in Pasadena called, the Coalition for Increased Community Oversight of Pasadena Police (CICOPP). Members of the Coalition include All Saints, Neighborhood UU, NAACP, ACLU, ACT and a few others. The two main goals of the group at that time were to ask the city of Pasadena to release the "McDade Report" and to create a new, independent police auditor position.

The McDade report was the product of an investigation by a consultant hired by the city to detail police behavior in the shooting of an unarmed black youth by the name of Kendrick McDade in 2012. The police commissioned the report but then withheld the results from the public until a lawsuit by CICOPP members forced the city to release it.

CICOPP efforts to create an independent police auditor that would investigate police practices (in particular following fatal shootings) were unsuccessful. There was a vote in city council about this proposal that was defeated handily. CICOPP is revisiting strategy, meeting with City officials to reapproach the issue of public oversight.

Once CICOPP has made a decision about the next steps, there will likely be ways our congregation can be involved in advocating for increased transparency in policing in the city of Pasadena. Stay tuned. And let Rev. Andy Schwiebert know if you would be willing to be involved in these efforts now and/or once things ramp up again. We certainly don't want the killing of yet another unarmed black man in Pasadena to have to be the impetus for making change in racial profiling, the use of deadly force and other troubling police practices in our community.

-Rev. Andy Schwiebert