

Allen Temple Baptist Church

Founded in 1919

Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Jr., Senior Pastor

Rev. Jacqueline A. Thompson, Assistant Pastor

Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Sr., Pastor Emeritus



Dea. Ted Carter
Chair, Deacons Ministry

Dea. Verta L Cotton
Chair, Deaconess Ministry

Ms. Wanda M. Oliver
Chair, Trustee Ministry

Ms. Verta Walker
Financial Secretary

Ms. Nyassa Love
Treasurer

Ms. Teri Ingram
Church Clerk

September 26, 2017

It is with a deep sense of pain and concern that I submit this letter of appeal to our very diverse East Bay community. My parents brought me and my siblings as young children to this community nearly 60 years ago to escape the segregation, discrimination and “Jim Crow” living conditions that subjugated us in the state of Missouri. We landed in Berkeley and found it to be city where we were welcomed and treated with great dignity and respect, and we were afforded an opportunity to pursue our dreams. While Berkeley was not perfect, it held the promise for achieving what Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned as the “Beloved Community”, where justice could reign among people irrespective of their race, creed, class, gender, sexuality, language, immigration status or any other human characteristic.

However, I am now seeing the emergence of hateful, fascist forces who seek to infect this wonderful community with what Dr. King called the “demonic triplets of racism, militarism, and poverty.” We cannot help but be alarmed by the increasing frequency of terroristic hate crimes committed by these hateful, fascist forces upon this community.

In just this past week we have learned of hateful graffiti attacks upon two beloved synagogues in Berkeley and Oakland respectively and in front on the home of an African Family in Albany. Now today I learned about the storming of Revolution Books in Berkeley by a violent mob of fascists. This attack was upon a book store that has existed in our community for 30 years as an important educational resource, providing access to literature, history, science, art, and philosophy.

We cannot stand idly by. It is time for us to come together to stop these attacks and to assure that this East Bay community continues to lead the way as we seek to fulfill the vision of the Beloved Community. Therefore, I stand with the diverse voices of goodwill in our community to affirm that **“Berkeley, Oakland, and the East Bay will Be a Fascist Free Zone!”**

Toward Beloved Community,

Pastor J. Alfred Smith, Jr.