



**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**  
**L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA**

## **November 25, 2016**

Last Friday morning, as the General Council Executive meeting was about to get underway, we received the [news that Parkdale United Church](#) in Ottawa had once again been targeted with hateful racist graffiti. This time two Jewish institutions and a Muslim facility were also targeted. This shocking news provided an unsettling undercurrent to the workshop on "White Privilege" that had already been scheduled for the first morning of the GCE meeting.



Photo: (c) Cynthia Münster

The graffiti incidents in Ottawa followed a couple of well publicized racist incidents in Toronto, one involving signs beginning with the words "Hey White People," and the other being a confrontation on the streetcar after insults were directed at a racialized person, where the person making the racist comments is said to have finished with the words, "Go Trump."

It's a confusing — even frightening — time for those of us who believe that Jesus has called us to love and respect others. All others. What fears and hatreds are being brought to the surface, authorized somehow, by the American vote? How do we respect those who do not respect others? What can we do to be good Samaritans to those who are at risk of being thrown in the ditches of our society?

We know that we are called to live love, to convey compassion, and to render respect. We know this, and we know that we will face challenges.

For me, one of the most reassuring things in recent weeks has been seeing some of the inspiring comments by younger friends and family members who have called for self-reflection, for compassionate conversations, for radical inclusivity, and for speaking up about what we see as right and wrong. I find great cause for hope in these wise responses to the challenges in our world.

A surprising item in the newspaper last week was a note in *The Globe and Mail* about the first interracial kiss depicted on American television. It took place, as an extremely bold move, in 1968. 1968! I was mostly through elementary school by then. Donald Trump was 22 years old that year. It's hard for me to realize that this was the world that we grew up in! So much really has changed. How much really has changed.

In our confusion, in our fear, in our anger, in our hope, we remember these words from Parkdale United Minister Anthony Bailey, who said he is ready to forgive the person who sprayed graffiti on his church's door: "It has to do with an understanding (of) our Christian teaching around loving neighbour, loving enemy, reaching out in love."

Nora

[Note: See [the statement](#) from General Council Executive denouncing the hateful graffiti attacks in Ottawa.]

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