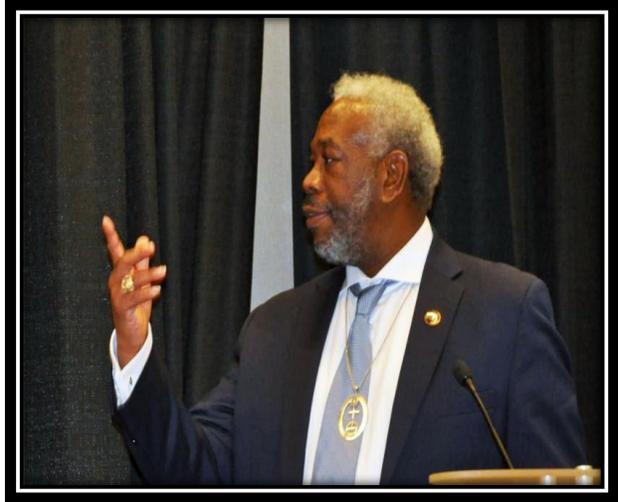


From Fear, to Faith in Love



***A pastoral epistle from the Conference Minister...
Rev. Edward Davis (D. Min.)***

In the midst of the discord and the unrest that surround our nation, people of faith must ask themselves the questions: What is God saying to us in these times? Are we comfortable with the way things are? Are we not aroused by the conditions that foster the unrest? Do we once again sit on the sidelines and do nothing? Or, do we commit to moving towards the light that drives away this darkness?

In my own personal reflection, I believe that the culture of fear is the driver of the actions we see today. This fear has set upon our communities to the point that we are blinded by actions towards humanity and justice. We are more in love with identity, factions, party affiliations, and yes beliefs, more than with humanity. When people are feeling the sting of fear and hatred, we must be resistant in becoming indifferent to the actions of those who would be antagonistic to our collective peace. It is this kind of fear that keeps us in the darkness. Every great promise of our nation, and our faith, is based on our resistance to actions that threaten our peace and well-being.

Failing to remember the fears and the actions of the past, will lead us to becoming indifferent to our love and commitment towards all of humanity. I believe that again, this is an opportunity for all of us including our leaders, to resist indifference and move towards the hope that love is greater than fear, and that love of humanity is the greatest of these loves in Charlottesville and in your communities.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love (1 John 4:18 NRSV).