



Statement after Charlottesville, and a call to action

Like you, we are saddened and angered after white nationalists and Neo-Nazis descended on Charlottesville, VA with racist and anti-semitic threats and violence that left Heather Heyer dead and many others seriously injured and traumatized.

KFTC members are united by a vision which declares, "We are working for a day when discrimination is wiped out of our laws, habits and hearts." Together, we stand for black lives, immigrants, refugees and others who have been oppressed or abused because of race, gender identity, religion, economic background and other identities.

KFTC Chairperson Elizabeth Sanders was among at least a dozen Kentuckians who traveled to Charlottesville to resist the white nationalists last weekend. Afterwards she reflected, "There is a way for everyone to be involved in this work and the fight. It won't look the same for everyone, but it's our duty to be a part of it. If you haven't done so yet, figure that out for yourself. What is your part?"

White nationalists, Neo-Nazis and white supremacy are not new, but they are newly emboldened. Just this spring, white supremacist groups from outside the state convened in Pikeville, right here in Kentucky, bringing their message of hate and violence. Local residents planned a counter celebration to lift up important values of love, community and equality. However, the Rally for Equality was cancelled at the last minute due to "credible threats" of violence from the outside groups. In Charlottesville, white nationalists carried out those threats, using intimidation and terror to accomplish their aim of raising one race and religion over all others.



Several white supremacist groups have prioritized outreach in Kentucky, and this week they announced plans to rally in Lexington in the near future. In this moment, it is up to each and every Kentuckian to reject racism and bigotry,

denounce white supremacy, promote healing and work for justice.

As Elizabeth Sanders notes, “I don’t know what else people need to see to think they have to act. Be enraged and let this move us to action. But we have deep digging to do. We need to be just as enraged about Honesto Silva Ibarra, a farmworker in Washington who died this last month and fellow farmworkers who lost their jobs for standing up for him. We need to be just as enraged about TeeTee Dangerfield, a trans woman who was killed in Atlanta recently. All this should enrage us. The roots are the same.”

What can each of us do to stop white supremacy and neo-Nazism? All of us, especially white people, need to take visible stands. From having conversations with our family and friends to rallying in the streets, we can demonstrate that white supremacy is never acceptable and hurts our Commonwealth. We can support people and groups who are leading the struggle for racial justice and civil rights, especially those led by people of color, like the Take Back Cheapside Campaign in Lexington. In the words of DeBraun Thomas, a leader of that effort to remove confederate statues from a site in downtown Lexington, we can and must “do the work” of organizing..

Many KFTC members and chapters are already engaged by donating to individuals and groups in Charlottesville, organizing solidarity rallies and events, supporting the Take Back Cheapside Campaign, working to protect and expand voting rights, planning community workshops and discussions, and more. Members and allies are invited to join a phone call this Sunday, August 20 at 8 p.m. ET/7 p.m. CT to learn more about these efforts and get connected to ways to take action.

To find out more ways to take action, speak with your KFTC chapter leadership or local organizer. Many organizing resources are also available at www.kftc.org/no-hate. Together, we can wipe discrimination out of our laws, habits and hearts.