

Vigil Against Violence  
*Sept. 8, 2020*

Good morning and thank you for coming to today's vigil as our community comes together to stand against violence, racism, and injustice.

Our charge today is not only to come together as a community but to start the hard work of making change at LVC. To make LVC more welcoming and inclusive as a college to all seeking an education. To make LVC more welcoming and inclusive as a college to those working here.

The first amendment allows citizens to express opinions and protest, and on college campuses, we also cherish academic freedom to protect free speech on campuses. These principles are foundational to our way of life, our democracy, and our system of higher education. Yet often, we have seen that exercising these rights has sparked violence. We condemn acts of violence and destruction of property.

If we are to move forward as a community, we need to show respect to one another when we disagree, reject intolerance and hate, to listen more, speak less, show empathy, and to stand up to injustices when we see them.

What actions can we take?

We can educate ourselves better so that we can understand the perspectives of others. LVC has curated a library of resources for self-study and programs planned throughout the year. See the [#LVC4Change](#) pages on our website. We will strive to be an anti-racist institution, and our faculty made this the focus of the start of their semester retreat. Our learning community is built on inclusion and fairness, on the assurance that every person will be treated with dignity, recognized for their abilities, supported in their efforts, and acknowledged for their accomplishments. We intentionally embrace the differences among human beings.

We need to strive for equity and social justice.

In a democracy, we have the power of the ballot box. Never feel that your vote doesn't matter. In the last presidential election, more eligible voters chose not to vote than voted for either candidate. If you have not done so, please register to vote. Take the time to learn about the candidates' positions. Be an informed voter and exercise that right. And when you have concerns, take the time to contact your elected officials. They do listen to their constituents. Change requires action. Change also requires hope. Please, always remain hopeful. Hopeful in the power of community. Hopeful in the power of kindness. Hopeful for a renewed faith in humanity.

Thank you,

Dr. James M. MacLaren  
President, Lebanon Valley College