

STATEMENT by The Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan
Senior Pastor, Fifth Christian Church, Cleveland, OH
Co-Convener of Disciples Justice Action Network (DJAN)

On Our Brother, Colleague, and Friend, The Reverend James L. Demus, III:

Like so many of you, I felt deep, unspeakable sadness when I learned of the death of our brother **The Reverend James L. Demus, III**. “Demus,” as many of us simply called him, was a man of vision, depth, and action, all sparked and nurtured by his commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, love for the church, and dedication to the liberation of African American people, and all people whose lives had been altered by injustice.

Demus was a man who did his homework and could get things done! He excelled as pastor, justice activist, community organizer, and political strategist. Demus knew everybody! He was on speaking terms with US Presidents, national justice activists, preachers, and every day people, and would lend his gifts of wisdom, creativity, problem-solving, and humor to them all. If he knew that a well-qualified yet overlooked person were aspiring to a high leadership position in the church or other arenas, he would offer all of his considerable resources to help in that person’s pursuit of office.

Our brother was a staunch and unwavering advocate of justice. Demus understood that while one could work for social justice and not be Christian, Christianity requires adherents to work for justice. He labored to make right many of the wrongs he observed in society and in the church, as fueled by his Christ-inspired vision for how the world actually should be. Demus helped to create the **Disciples Justice Action Network** (www.djan.net), and served as one of its first conveners.

Finally, the man loved to laugh! I can still hear him laughing at jokes or stories he either told or heard from others. His gift of humor helped people hear his stern and uncompromising messages on social, racial, and economic justice.

The Reverend James L. Demus, III was a gift to the church, as well as to ecumenical, interfaith, and civic movements for justice and the advancement of marginalized people. We thank God for Demus’ life and ministry to us and with us. We thank God for Demus’ love for his family and the church. We thank God for Demus’ work for justice and freedom.

Let us be faithful in our prayers for his loving wife Eleanor Demus; two sons, Joshua Von Demus and James L. Demus IV; two step-daughters, Robyn L. Cushingberry and Marie C. Babb-Fowler; step-son Lamont Sharp; two sisters, Alice Jean Sithole (Washington, D.C.), Gwendolyn Miller (Eric) (Chicago, IL); a brother, Obediah Demus (Marva) (Cincinnati, OH); and grandchildren, Anna J. Chapman-Demus, Candyce L. Black, Brittany Thompson, and Andrew Babb-Fowler. Finally, please pray for the congregation Demus served and loved so deeply, Park Manor Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Chicago.