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By Sgt. Seth LaCount

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Local church leaders hold online meeting to pray for healing of racial division

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — A coalition of more than 60 church leaders, state representatives, chaplains, and other Alaska citizens gathered together this morning via a Zoom video conference to pray for the state of Alaska and for racial reconciliation in light of the recent racial tension across the nation. The Alaska National Guard's State Command Chaplain Col. Richard Koch, represented the National Guard's effort to be a part of this unified fellowship.

Koch prayed that the National Guard and those in government would be equipped with humility and grace to treat everyone they serve with dignity and respect. He prayed that they be released from the prejudice that holds them back.

"The seeds for growing relationships in the local community are planted through opportunities like this ... in the effort to promote equality and fairness," Koch said.

The meeting was led by Revive Alaska Community Services and spearheaded by Pastor Prince Nwankudu, a member of the organization and an ordained minister at God's Family Church in Anchorage. His ministry is responsible for a litany of outreach programs that focus on caring for the vulnerable and disenfranchised. According to his personal bio on the church website, Nwankudu "has a big heart for the people of Alaska."

The meeting began with an introduction by Nwankudu on the purpose behind a "Call to Prayer", and was followed by a number of prayers and Bible readings on different topics including prejudice, healing, and injustice.

Governor Mike Dunleavy was called away to Washington D.C. prior to the meeting, but he wanted to make it known to the group that he was there in spirit. He put forth a pre-recorded video sharing his gratitude to local citizens for their noble reaction to the unrest around the country.

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** to high resolution photos and story: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/374056/local-church-leaders-hold-online-meeting-pray-healing-racial-division>
3. **DVIDS link** to video: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/760003/local-church-leaders-hold-online-meeting-pray-healing-racial-division>



A body of church leaders across Alaska engage in a time of meditation and prayer via a Zoom meeting on July 16, 2020. The attendees of the video conference prayed for the state of Alaska and for racial reconciliation in light of the recent racial tension across the nation. The Alaska National Guard stood in solidarity with the group, with State Command Chaplain Richard Koch participating. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/Released)



Governor Mike Dunleavy issues a statement and prayer during a pre-recorded video detailing his gratitude to Alaskans for their response to the unrest around the country during a live Zoom video conference led by Revive Alaska Community Services on July 16, 2020. He prayed for the continued resilience and courage for Alaska citizens who actively serve their fellow man and seek justice for all. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)