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April 20, 2014

The Honorable Toni Preckwinkle  
Cook County Board President  
118 N. Clark Street – Rm. 537  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

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Dear President Preckwinkle:

I hope above all things that this correspondence finds you and yours well and remaining safe during the global pandemic we now face.

On behalf of LaSalle Street Church, I am certainly appreciative of all the effort taken to support, protect and empower the citizens of Cook County in the midst of the COVID19 crisis. Your work has been admirable, to say the least.

I must however, express my grave concern and disdain for the manner in which detainees at Cook County Jail, to a large degree, have not been supported, protected or empowered to live. With four inmate deaths, one correctional officer death and countless numbers of both testing positive for the virus, the time is now to depopulate. There is literally no other way to save lives at this point other than to immediately decarcerate low-level and non-violent offenders.

Please do not allow history to record that when the Cook County Board had the opportunity, moral, and political will to change the paradigm for how non-violent offenders are viewed and treated, the Board chose to fold its hands, look the other way and watch the dignity of human life be relegated to meaningless white sheets and gurneys. This would be egregious at best.

It is my solemn plea for this Board to glean wisdom from the great Howard Thurman and approach this matter of human decency with *Head and Heart*. In so doing, allow Gods Peace to be the umpire of your hearts and act accordingly.

Respectfully yours,

Randall K. Blakey  
Executive Pastor

