Remarks by Gov. Nixon to community meeting of civic and faith leaders in North St. Louis County

ST. LOUIS COUNTY, Mo. – **Gov. Jay Nixon** tonight spoke to a community meeting of civic and faith leaders at Christ the King United Church of Christ in North St. Louis County. Below are his prepared remarks:

Good evening. I appreciate having the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

In particular, I’d like to recognize Reverend Blackmon and the many faith and civic leaders with us, all of whom have been doing a lot of hard work, without much sleep, leading this community during a very difficult time.

I just had an opportunity to meet with Amy, Mikal and Rev. Carlton Lee, who you will hear from later tonight.

Like them and like all of you, I’ve done a lot of praying over the past few days.

As a father of two sons, I’ve prayed for the parents and loved ones of Michael Brown. I’ve prayed for the residents and businesses and children of this community. I’ve prayed for justice. For wisdom. And for peace.

We stand together tonight, reeling from what feels like an old wound that has been torn open afresh. A wound that hadn’t quite healed right in the first place, and now the pain is just as searing as when the injury first occurred.

In its aftermath, the shooting death of Michael Brown left a family in mourning... a community in crisis... and an entire nation looking for answers.

Now, as we grieve for what Michael’s family and this community has lost... the charge is ours to make sense of the senseless.

This tragedy is a challenge to all of us, not only to the citizens of Ferguson – but to all Missourians – to join hands and begin a journey of reconciliation.

To have patience for the investigation that is now underway, but be unwavering in our insistence that it be open, thorough and fair.

To keep the peace, while remaining uncompromising in our expectation that justice must not simply be pursued, but achieved.

To express the anger and frustration that we rightfully feel in a way that respects the living, and honors the memory of the young man we mourn.

In the face of crisis, we must show calm.

Instead of burning bridges in anger, we must build them with love.

And when these traumatic events threaten to open a chasm of distrust, we must fill it with understanding and compassion.

Remember what the Lord tells Zechariah in the Old Testament: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another....In your hearts do not think evil of each other.”

This community has lost a precious life... but we will not lose hope.

We will find the answers.

We will heal our wounds.

We will not succumb to darkness and fear, but rather take courage, and walk the long, hard road toward the light.

We’ll do it for Michael Brown and his family, for the citizens of this community, and for all Missourians.

And we must do it together.

Thank you again and God Bless.