**Day of Repentance and Remembrance for the Emanuel Nine**

**Prayer Service**

**Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

**Confessing Racism: A Lament for the Church**

As church, we confess the sin of racism and condemn racist rhetoric and the ideology of white supremacy. God, have mercy.

**God, have mercy.**

As church, we confess, repent, and repudiate the times when this church has been silent in the face of racial injustice. God, have mercy.

**God, have mercy.**

Racism is deeply ingrained within the ELCA, a predominantly white church. It is deeply embedded within the individual congregations whose members continue to foster stereotypes and support policies that actively hurt people of color. God, have mercy.

**God, have mercy.**

As church, we declare that the enslavement of black bodies and the removal of indigenous peoples established racism in the United States, a truth this nation and this church have yet to fully embrace. God, have mercy.

**God, have mercy.**

Rooted in slavery, racism is manifested through the history of Jim Crow policies, racial segregation, the terror of lynching, extrajudicial killings by law enforcement, and the disproportionate incarceration of people of color. God, have mercy.

**God, have mercy.**

As church we lament the institutional racism of discriminatory treatment within the call process; inequitable compensation of clergy of color; racial segregation; divestment from black communities and congregations; systemic policies and organizational practices; and a failure to fully include the gifts of leadership and worship styles of black people, indigenous people, and people of color. God, have mercy.

**God, have mercy.**

Confessions are empty promises without meaningful actions—actions that are grounded in prayer, education, and soul-searching repentance. The sin of racism separates us from one another. Though we trust that we are reconciled to God through Christ’s death and resurrection, we seek such life-giving reconciliation with one another. As we repent, let us not turn back to ideologies that promote white supremacy. We trust that God can make all things new.

**Amen.**

**Readings**

**First Reading: Genesis 1.26-27 (NRSV)**

26 Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

27

So God created humankind in God’s image,

in the image of God God created them;

male and female God created them.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 116 & 118 (ELW translation - sung by Kirk Fenerty)**

1I love the Lord, who has | heard my voice,

and listened to my | supplication,

2for the Lord has given | ear to me

whenev- | er I called.

5In distress I called | to the Lord,

who answered by set- | ting me free.

6The Lord is with me; I | shall not fear;

what can anyone | do to me?

7The Lord is with me | as my helper;

I will look in triumph on | those who hate me.

**Second Reading: Galatians 6.1-6 (NIV)**

6 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load. 6 Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel: Luke 15.1-10 (NRSV)**

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus]. 2And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3So [Jesus] told them this parable: 4“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? 5When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. 6And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ 7Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Time for Reflection and Discussion**

**The Doors of the Church Are Still Open**

A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson (11th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church)

Leader: "The doors of the Church are open" is an announcement made at nearly every AME service. It was regularly spoken at Emanuel Church of Charleston, known to us as the “Mother" of African Methodism in the Deep South. As members of the AME Family, they feel a connection with the Connection, even on Father’s Day, and today their proud connection is more keenly felt. As members of the Christian Family, we are grieved, once again in pain, burning and anguished, lamenting the horror of evil unleashed.

**People: O God, “The doors of the Church are still open.”**

Leader: Hate and Evil - armed and dangerous - came to an intergenerational Bible Study and Prayer Meeting Wednesday night at Mother Emanuel, accompanied by unfathomable horror, leaving a trail of blood and hurt across the African Methodist Connection, Charleston, and the world.

**People: O God, “the doors of the church are still open," and still we believe that "We sorrow not as those who have no hope."** (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

Leader: The “Emanuel Nine” had names – and families, and lives, and careers, and places to go and things to do. They were colleagues, friends and kin: the Honorable Rev. Clementa Pinckney (41), the Rev. Daniel “Super” Simmons (74), the Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton (45), Brother Tywanza Sanders (26), Sister DePayne Middleton Doctor (49), Sister Cynthia Hurd (54), Sister Myra Thompson (59), Sister Ethel Lance (70), and Sister Susie Jackson (87). Then pure evil showed up at Bible Study and turned their lives to past tense, and our lives to turmoil, and made an infamous name for himself.

**People: O God, "The doors of the church are still open," and we affirm Your Word that "Perfect love casts out fear."** (1 John 4:18)

Leader: Our faith will not be stolen, even by violence as heinous as the assassination of nine innocent people, and the terror that left bodies wounded and souls injured among those who survived the attack.

**People: O God, "The doors of the church are still open," and "our faith looks up to Thee" and “will not shrink though pressed by every foe.”**

Leader: The evil one wanted a race war, instead there came an outpouring of love, sympathy, and tears *from* white people; fervent prayers offered *for* him *by* Black people. With shock and anger still wafting in the air, family members amazingly spoke words of forgiveness, and the community sang together and spoke of hope. We have learned at least this much in our walk with God in Christ: "Unmerited suffering is still redemptive."

**People: O God, "The doors of the church are still open,” and we affirm Word of Christ, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.** (John 14:27b)

Leader: While we are all called to a heightened sense of vigilance to protect the lives of those who walk through “open doors” to find an open Altar, and to worship and study in peace, together we will also encourage ourselves in the Word of God, in fellowship, sharing our mutual woes and joys.

**People: Holy God, amid so much sorrow and so many questions, we affirm Your Word, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.** (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

**O God, we declare and decree, "The doors of the church are still open!”**

**Prayer for Racial Justice**

Save us, O God, from ourselves,

from racism often cloaked in pious words,

from the machinations of white supremacy hidden in calls for civility,

from micro aggressions thinly veiled in arrogance,

from apologies when they don’t give way to action,

from forgiveness without facing the truth,

from reconciliation without reparation.

Deliver us, O God, from expecting siblings of color to continue to bear this emotional work, which is not theirs to do.

Grateful for the long arc that bends toward justice, we pray:

Grant us wisdom,

give us courage for the facing of these days,

by the power of the Spirit, all for the sake of the kin-dom that we share in Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

*Prayer Service created by:*

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*The Doors of the Church Are Still Open litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson (11th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church)*