

Service of Prayer and Lament for the Commemoration of The Emanuel Nine

June 17, 2020

On June 17, 2015,

*Clementa C. Pinckney,
Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd,
Susie Jackson,
Ethel Lee Lance,
DePayne Middleton-Doctor,
Tywanza Sanders,
Daniel Lee Simmons,
Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, and
Myra Thompson*

were murdered by a self-professed white supremacist while they were gathered for Bible study and prayer at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (often referred to as Mother Emanuel) in Charleston, South Carolina. Pastors Pinckney and Simmons were both graduates of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. A resolution to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance for the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine was adopted by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on August 8, 2019. Congregations of the ELCA are encouraged reaffirm their commitment to repenting of the sins of racism and white supremacy which continue to plague this church, to venerate the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine, and to mark this day of penitence with study and prayer.

www.elca.org/emanuelnine

Greeting

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Reading

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

(Luke 3:1-6)

Litany of Remembrance

Let us pray.

They were doing
what we are called to
as they engaged in bible study.

It was Wednesday night—
a stranger walked in,
and these people welcomed him and prayed together:

the Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton,
Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd,
Susie Jackson,
Ethel Lee Lance,
the Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor,
Tywanza Sanders,
the Rev. Daniel Lee Simmons,
the Rev. Myra Thompson,
and the honorable state senator and pastor of the church,
the Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney.

This stranger wanted to ignite a “race war,”
he said, after he shot and killed them,
denying them the very humanity he claimed for himself,
claiming rights and privileges associated with “whiteness.”

Now we are grieved, once again in pain,
burning and anguished, lamenting the horror of evil unleashed.
And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

Sorrow and heartache have come to us. Death and mourning have visited us.
We feel far from you, O God, and distant from one another.
And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

Evil besets us in our land. We acknowledge that our nation is socialized in ways that promote
and normalize colonialization. We cry out against the horrors and agonies of racism.
And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

The privileged of our nation have benefited from practices
that dehumanize indigenous peoples.
We have claimed as “discovery” lands that were not ours.
These lands have been stolen and the nations,
that were the original occupants of these lands, slain.
And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

Tribalism has led to the denial of your presence, O God.
Present generations, the children whose ancestors were kidnapped and sold into slavery,
those forced to labor not on their own behalf,
still suffer and struggle to live in freedom
while the children of colonizers live out of “white privilege,”
denying the fullness of your presence in all people.
And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

Assaults born of greed and murder continue propping up
white privilege that is institutionalized in our church and nation,
preventing us from recognizing the twin evils of racism and nationalism
still perpetuated among us. And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

Open our eyes, O God, open our hearts.
Open our ears, O God, open our minds.
Help us to behold one another as you behold us.
Help us to be more firmly rooted in the practices of the gospel—
so that, when we pray, the way we live will
make real the dream of your beloved community within and among us.
And so we cry out, “Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.”
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

With the help of your mercy and grace,
lead us to think, believe, and change.
May your gospel’s transforming power by the working of the Holy Spirit
be present in us, in our churches, in our nation and all the nations of the earth.
May it be so. And the people said, “Amen.”
Amen.

(A chime is sounded in succession, once for each of the Emanuel 9)

Sending

God of justice, refine us.
God of holiness, make us right.
God of all healing and wholeness,
gather all hurting people to the wounded side of + Christ.
Amen.