



Prayers, Litanies, and Laments for the Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine **June 17**

Introduction to the service

A resolution to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance for the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine was adopted in 2019 by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. We pause this day to repent of the sins of racism and white supremacy which continue to plague this church, to venerate the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine and so many others who have been victims of this pervasive sin, and to seek to more faithfully live as God's beloved communities where all are seen as created in God's image.

A Confessional Litany and Lament Commemorating Nine Who Were Slain at Mother Emanuel AME Church

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 Kibwe Diop Sanders, the Rev. Daniel Lee Simmons, the Rev. Myra Singleton Quarles 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.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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. Children were forcibly taken from their homes to make them “white”; many of them died due to abuse, neglect and disease. And so we cry out,

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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 those among the police that actively hurt people of color. And so we cry out,

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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. And so we cry out,
Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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.

(silence for personal reflection and self examination)

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.

And so, with the help of your mercy and grace, loving and gracious God, 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 in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And the people said, “Amen.”
Amen.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 58:1-14

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,

and oppress all your workers.
⁴ Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?
⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator[Ⓜ] shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.
¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

¹³ If you refrain from trampling the sabbath,
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;
if you call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;^(b)
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the LORD,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Word of God, word of life **Thanks be to God!**

Holy Gospel: Luke 4:16-30

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 4th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord**

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" ²³ He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" ²⁴ And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were also many lepers^(d) in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that

they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

The Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, O Christ**

Reading for reflection

Special Music

SANKOFA

The West African spiritual proverb and teaching reminds us to “Go back and fetch it”. Taking hold of our past, our history in such a way that it becomes nourishment and guidance for journeying into our future.

“Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. Now I’ve been free, I know what a dreadful condition slavery is. I have seen hundreds of escaped slaves, but I never saw one who was willing to go back and be a slave.” ~ Harriet Tubman

“Liberty is meaningless where the right to utter one’s thoughts and opinions has ceased to exist. That, of all rights, is the dread of tyrants. It is the right which they first of all strike down. They know its power. Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, founded in injustice and wrong, are sure to tremble, if men are allowed to reason... Equally clear is the right to hear. To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker.” ~ Frederick Douglass

A Litany of Remembrance for the Emanuel Nine

A bell may be rung ten times, once for each of the nine victims and once for the survivors.

We join with Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in remembering the slain nine—the Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, the Rev. Daniel Lee Simmons, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, the Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, the Rev. Myra Singleton Quarles Thompson, Tywanza Kibwe Diop Sanders, the Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Susie Jackson, and Ethel Lee Lance—and those who survived.

We remember.

We remember that they lovingly welcomed the stranger into a Wednesday-night bible study—they sang, they prayed, they gathered to study the word of God.

We remember.

We pray for the continual presence of God’s peace; may it comfort and surround the families of the nine who were slain.

We remember.

We pray for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, its senior bishop and episcopal leaders, the community of Charleston, and all who continue to grieve—trusting that God will continue

to unite us in the work to end racism and white supremacy, so that we may be witnesses of Christian unity.

We remember.

We remember the legacy of the Rev. Pinckney and his fight for racial justice for his parishioners and his community. Let us not only be moved by emotion but also be moved toward action.

We remember.

We call the United States to remember and confront its history of racial injustice. We must not forget the crimes committed against humanity in the name of Christ: the land theft from and genocide of indigenous peoples and the enslavement of black bodies that built this nation.

We remember.

We call this country to remember the policies and practices that excluded Chinese immigrants and that forced the internment of Japanese Americans.

We remember.

We call this country to remember the exploitation of migrant farm workers from Latin and Central America and the separation of families at the U.S. southern border.

We remember.

We remember the faith leaders whose lives are a living witness to black liberation and womanist theology in the struggle for black freedom: Bishop Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, Sojourner Truth, Denmark Vesey, Jehu Jones, Daniel Payne, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, James Cone, and Katie Cannon.

We remember.

We remember the unarmed innocent black lives lost at the hands of law enforcement: Eric Garner, Laquan McDonald, Sandra Bland, Sean Bell, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Atatiana Jefferson, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Daunte Wright, [*additional names may be added*], and many others, known and unknown.

We remember.

We remember the innocent, unarmed black bodies that were racially profiled, shot, and killed because whiteness stood its ground: Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Ahmaud Arbery, Renisha McBride, [*additional names may be added*], and many others, known and unknown.

We remember.

As we remember, Living God, may we be re-membered as your body, connected to one another and empowered for the work you call us to do in the name of Jesus and by the power of his renewing Spirit.

Amen.

Intercessions to Mark the Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine

We humbly pause in these moments to lift up our prayers for all of God's people, entrusting them to the will of God, in whose image all have been created

Brief silence for reflection

For the church

God, our truth, through the ages you have spoken through prophets. Stir up in your church a passion for your word revealed in Jesus, that following the witness of the Emanuel Nine, your church studies the scriptures, shows hospitality, prays without ceasing, and embodies prophetic justice in community. Embolden church leaders and all the baptized to remember the lives of the Nine, repent of racism and white supremacy, and renew our commitment to your word revealed most fully in Jesus, our way, truth, and life. In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

For the nations

Mighty and loving God, we pray for our nation and the plague of racism that threatens, destroys, and kills. Root out white supremacy wherever it takes hold. Release its grip on those lured by its false promises. Bring to repentance all who continue to benefit from prejudice and hatred, both hidden and revealed. Plant in our hearts and nation a willing spirit open to truth-telling and healing. In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

For those who are oppressed and victimized

Immanuel, God with us, you embrace in love those who cry out to you. Lift up all whom hatred has cast down (*especially ...*); embolden those who need courage to speak and act against oppression (*especially ...*); sustain those who are weary from efforts that bring no end to injustice (*especially ...*). Comfort parents weeping for children, children who have been separated from parents, and families in crises of any kind. Restore hope where it has been lost, so that all may trust your love that reaches to the depths of pain and suffering. In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

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.

Thanksgiving for the saints

We give you thanks, Holy God, for the faithful life and witness of Clementa, Cynthia, Daniel, DePayne, Ethel, Myra, Sharonda, Susie, and Tywanza, the Emanuel Nine. May their faith and

witness to your forgiving love in Jesus Christ inspire all people to pursue paths of justice, courage, and self-giving love. In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

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.

Special Music

The Witness of the Emanuel Nine: A Litany of Remembrance for Their Vocations

The “Emanuel Nine,” of blessed and eternal memory, were nine gifted, loving, and faithful people who spent their lives striving for excellence, connection, and the presence of God, and spent their last moments in study of the word. They leave a legacy of grace, resistance, family, and faith. We pray that their faith-filled legacy may empower us to embody their witness as we live out our baptismal vocation.

Gracious God, in remembering their lives and witness, we are called to a wider understanding of the Spirit’s work in the world.

They were preachers: Open us to receive the good news of Jesus Christ.

They were students: Kindle in us a desire to learn and grow in your ways.

They were teachers: Instill in us a passion to share the wisdom of Christ.

They were coaches: Accompany us as we strive to run the race set before us.

They were mentors: Inspire us through the wise counsel offered by others.

They were leaders: Embolden us to seek out the best in others.

They were musicians: Attune us to the sounds of your creation.

They were poets: Reveal your truth in language we have yet to discover.

They were barbers: Shape us as attentive caregivers to those around us.

They were custodians: Protect those whose work ensures our safety.

They were bus drivers: Carry us as companions in life’s unexpected journeys.

They were veterans: Remember those who risk harm for the sake of others.

They were librarians: Write on our hearts and minds the wisdom of the generations.

They were advocates: Call us to speak and act on behalf of those who are silenced.

They were public servants: Show us how to love our neighbors as ourselves.

They were legislators: Inscribe your laws of love and justice on our hearts.

In lives of faithful dedication, your servants Clementa, Cynthia, Daniel, DePayne, Ethel, Myra, Sharonda, Susie, and Tywanza lived by your promises, sharing their gifts with those in their families and communities. May we not forget their lives, taken too soon. In the years to come, let us share their names and their witness, so that the world comes to know of your spirit at work in and through them.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ who fulfilled all scripture for the sake of all people.

Amen.

A SENDING/CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

(5) “Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold onto what is good; return no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honor all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

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