

# **A Service of Prayer, Repentance, and Lament**

## Commemorating the Emanuel 9

### **Ringing of the Bells**

*The bell is rung ten times: once for each of the nine victims, and once for the survivors.*

### **Song: Unlock, O God, the Shuttered Rooms**

Text © 2020 Jennifer Baker-Trinity

Music © 2020 Chad Fothergill

Unlock, O God, the shuttered rooms,  
the places where our spirits sigh.  
The walls entomb our fearful hearts  
and echo with our spirit's cries.

Seek us, Oh God, wherein we dwell,  
the places where our spirits hide.  
Call us to hear and trust your voice,  
to boldly welcome you inside.

Touch now, Oh God, this flesh that aches  
for healing from your outstretched hand.  
Breathe now upon these bones of earth,  
just as your Spirit mends the land.

### **Opening Reflection: Bishop Jim**

## **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.**

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.**

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.**

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.**

Segregation and allegiance to our own biases 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.**

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.**

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.**

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.**

## **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.

**God, have mercy.**

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.**

## **Scripture**

### **Prayers of the People**

*You are invited to add your prayers in the comments.*

### **A Litany of Remembrance for the Emanuel Nine**

*Please respond to each petition with: **We Remember.***

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

Go in peace. Be God's hands of radical love and justice in the world.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## **Join us in taking the next step:**

### **Learn More:**

[www.elca.org/emanuelnine](http://www.elca.org/emanuelnine)

[www.emanuelnine.org](http://www.emanuelnine.org)

African Methodist Episcopal Church: [www.ame-church.com](http://www.ame-church.com)

### **Watch:**

*Emanuel* (free on Amazon or with Hulu subscription)

### **Give:**

Emanuel Nine Memorial: [www.emanuelnine.org](http://www.emanuelnine.org)

### **Pray:**

- for Emanuel AME
- for the African Methodist Episcopal Church
- for the dismantling of white supremacy and racism in our church and in the world

### *Contributors to the prayers and litanies:*

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