



# CATAWBA CONFERENCE – NC SYNOD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

## A PRAYER VIGIL: LAMENTING RACISM AND REMEMBERING THE EMANUEL 9 AND OTHERS JUNE 17, 2020

**Congregation – Respond in bold portions**

*We are brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Believing St Paul's words that in Jesus the Christ we are one and that because of Christ "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female" (Galatians 3:28), we have come together to pray, to listen, to lament the sin of racism.*

### WELCOME

*The paschal candle is lit in confidence of the power and promise of The Resurrection.*

One The light of Christ is for the world.

**Many Thanks be to God.**

One The love of God is for the world.

**Many Thanks be to God.**

One The healing of God is for the world.

**Many Thanks be to God.**

### CALL TO PRAYER

One [St. Paul writes:] I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

One Let us pray.

**Many We come before you, Lord, to confess, to listen, to pray,  
to stand together in the presence of your Holy Spirit.**

One Open our minds, Lord.

**Many Lord, renew our minds.**

One Open our eyes, Lord.

**Many Lord, strengthen our resolve to not look away from the injustice around us.**

One Open our mouths, Lord.

**Many Lord, help us bear witness.**

One Open our hands, Lord.  
Many **Lord, equip us to reach out in love.**  
One Open our hearts, Lord.  
Many **Lord, remove our hidden biases, and create in us clean hearts.**

One Transform our lives.  
Many **Undo our systems of “qualified immunity.”**  
**Build the bond of the risen Christ Jesus in our words and deeds,**  
**for the sake of our brothers and sisters,**  
**and for the sake of the world you so love. Amen.**

**SONG:** *Your Will Be Done (Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.)*

**A LITANY** *(from “A Litany for Those Who Aren’t Ready for Healing”)*

One Let us weep at a criminal justice system, which is neither blind nor just.  
Many **Let us call for the mourning men and the wailing women,**  
**those willing to rend their garments of privilege and ease,**  
**and sit in the ashes of this nation’s original sin.**

One Let us be silent when we don't know what to say.  
Many **Let us be humble and listen to the pain, rage and grief**  
**pouring from the lips of our neighbors and friends.**

One Let us decrease, so that our brothers and sisters who live on the underside of history may increase.  
Many **Let us pray with our eyes open and our feet firmly planted on the ground.**

## **A Time of Silence**

One Let us pray: God, in your mercy  
All **Show me my own complicity in injustice.**  
**Convict me for my indifference.**  
**Forgive me when I have remained silent.**  
**Equip me with a zeal for righteousness.**  
**Never let me grow accustomed or acclimated to unrighteousness. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE** ROMANS 12:1-21

**SERMON**  
*A brief silence.*

**SONG:** *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

## LAMENTING RACISM

*This lament was commissioned for All Creation Sings, a forthcoming liturgy and hymn supplement to Evangelical Lutheran Worship.*

One The sin of racism hurts communities of color, fractures human relationships, and denies God's good creation. Lament is a way for us to recognize the harm caused by racism.

**All Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:35-39)**

One God's grace in Christ frees us for the difficult work of recognizing and lamenting racism. We are all part of one body in Christ, called to act with equity, fairness, and justice. God's saving love creates grace-filled spaces within us and within our relationships. God's saving love calls and leads us toward rooting out the racism that continues to infect the body.

One Within the whole human family, people of color have experienced both interpersonal aggression and structural oppression instead of abundant life. We recognize and lament the harm racism has caused to African Descent communities; American Indian and Alaska Native communities; Indigenous Peoples within Canada; Arab and Middle Eastern communities; Asian and Pacific Islander communities; and Latinx communities.

**All We cry out to you, hear our lament, O God.**

One We have assigned the notion of race to human beings created in God's own divine image. We have judged God's beautiful diversity by our flawed and artificial standards.

**All We cry out to you, hear our lament, O God.**

One We have used language and images in ways that equate black and dark with dirt and sin, and that fail to welcome the treasures of darkness in God's good creation.

**All We cry out to you, hear our lament, O God.**

One We have accepted practices in our churches and in our society that privilege whiteness over diversity and equity. We have been complicit in how racism continues to exclude and harm people of color.

**All We cry out to you, hear our lament, O God.**

One When one part of the body of Christ hurts, the whole body hurts.

One As we listen to people who are harmed by racism,

**All we call to you, open our hearts, O God.**

One As we reflect on our daily interactions with people and communities of color,

**All we call to you, open our hearts, O God.**

One As we reconsider what we have been taught about race and racism,

**All we call to you, open our hearts, O God.**

One As we contemplate what we have done and what we have left undone,

**All we call to you, open our hearts, O God.**

One As we labor to create a loving and safe community for our siblings of color,

**All we call to you, open our hearts, O God.**

One Holy and merciful God,  
All **as your people**  
**we recommit ourselves to loving one another as you have loved us.**  
**Prepare us for this time of listening and discovery.**  
**We pray in the name of the one who has made us one,**  
**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED AND VICTIMIZED**

*As names are named, a bell is rung, and candle lit in remembrance.*

One Immanuel, God with us, you embrace in love those who cry out to you.  
Lift up all whom hatred has cast down.  
We especially remember before you today the gift and life of

One The Emanuel 9, murdered during a Bible Study at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC five years ago:

Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton  
Mrs. Cynthia Graham Hurd  
Mrs. Susie J. Jackson  
Mrs. Ethel Lee Lance  
Rev. DePayne Vontrease Middleton  
Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney  
Mr. Tywanza Kibwe Diop Sanders  
Rev. Daniel Lee Simmons, Sr.  
Mrs. Myra Singleton Quarles Thompson

We also remember before you this day:

Mr. Ahmaud Arbery  
Ms. Breonna Taylor  
Mr. Dreasjon Reed  
Mr. Tony McDade  
Mr. George Floyd  
Ms. Manuel Ellis

*The final candle lit was inspired by the "Peace, Hope & Justice Candles" of the Kairos movement in the South African struggle against apartheid. In the 1980s Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg fashioned a candle wrapped in barbed wire and prayed the names of individuals who had suffered each week. The government banned the broadcast of the worship service because the congregation refused to stop naming the names. We light this last candle in honor of all whose names and pain go unheard.*

One As this final candle is lit, Lord,  
All **we pause in honor of all those made in your image and likeness**  
**who have been lynched, murdered, slain, silenced—**  
**those whose stories and names we do not know,**  
**but are not forgotten by you.**

*(Participants kneel as able.)*

One Immanuel, God with us, you embrace in love those who cry out to you.  
 Embolden those who need courage to speak and act against oppression.  
 Sustain those who are weary from efforts that bring no end to injustice.  
 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.

All **In your great mercy, Lord, receive our prayer.**

**SONG:** *The Right Hand of God*

**CLOSING WORD OF TRUST**

One The right hand of God is moving in our land.  
 All **May we each help in the movement toward God’s holy kingdom.**

One St. Paul wrote:  
 “From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;  
**that is, from the flesh**  
 One even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,  
**that is, from the flesh**  
 One we know him no longer in that way.  
 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:  
 everything old has passed away;  
 see, everything has become new!” *(2 Corinthians 5:16-17)*

All **We trust God is making all things new.  
 Amen.**

<p><i>“Human point of view” in the biblical Greek here is literally, “from the flesh.”</i></p>
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**PARTICIPANTS**

**LITURGY** *(in order of appearance)*

- The Rev. Russell Makant, Pastor, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Conover, NC
- The Rev. Chris Webb, Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. Paul Myers, Chaplain, Trinity Village and Trinity Ridge, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. David Drysdale, Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. Judy Drysdale, Interim Pastor, Old St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Newton, NC
- Deacon, Liz Fox, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. Adrienne Martin, Pastor, Sardis Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. Ralph Kraft, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Newton, NC
- The Rev. Jasmine Tesdahl, Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. Dr. Christy Lohr Sapp, St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC
- The Rev. Dr. Andrew Weisner, Pastor, Lenoir-Rhyne University
- Dr. Mindy G. Makant, Deacon, Associate Prof. Religious Studies, Lenoir-Rhyne Univ.

## PREACHER

The Rev. Lucille (CeCee) Mills, Associate Director of Evangelical Mission, NC Synod

## SINGERS

Mrs. Lakeisha Ross Johnson  
Ms. Allie McNeely

## KEYBOARD

Dr. Ryan Luhrs, Assistant Professor of Music, Lenoir-Rhyne University

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## CREDITS

The CALL TO PRAYER was written by Rev. Russell Makant for the occasion.

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