

In response to the killing of nine people at AME Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston in June, the Council of Bishops of the AME church designated September 6, 2015 as a “Day of Confession, Repentance, Prayer, and Commitment to end Racism.” They asked every place of worship to focus on race and asked all clergy to preach on race and be reminded and that out of one blood, God created all of us to dwell together in unity. The following is adapted.

Prayers of Intercession for the Nation ~ Day of Prayer to End Racism

Gracious God, we thank you for the human family filled with all the peoples of the earth. We are thankful that you have created such an amazing and wonderful diversity of people and cultures. We pray that you will enrich our lives with ever-widening circles of fellowship, so that we may discover your presence in those who differ from us.

Deliver us from the bondage of racism that denies the humanity of some people, and deprives all people of the blessings of the diversity you have created; deliver us from assumptions that we make without thinking, and presumptions that we take without asking. Lord in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Bless and strengthen each effort we make as individuals when we seek to understand ourselves and others as well as the ways we benefit from personal privilege and power, so that we may be allies who challenge bias and prejudice within ourselves and others. Lord in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Bless and strengthen each effort we make to change the systems and structures of our schools and educational institutions; our politics and civic policies; and our economic institutions’ methods and models; so that the roots of racism may be recognized and purged from among us. Lord in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

O God of unconditional love, look with compassion on our nation. Break down the walls that separate us from one another. Cast out the spirit of violence that afflicts so many. Cleanse us of malicious ideas and ideologies. Unite us in bonds of love like unto your own. And through all our struggle for justice, work within us to accomplish your purpose and establish your kingdom vision. Lord in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

O Lord, open our hearts to respect and uplift the dignity of every person. Open our eyes to see the injustices within church and society. Open our ears to listen and learn from the experiences of people of color. Open our mouths to speak out against prejudice and injustice. We commit ourselves to work for justice and peace, and to pursue a deeper relationship to you, Lord, so that we truly may be the body of Christ on earth, your church for the sake of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord who has taught us to say when we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The above prayer is a meditation and elaboration based on “Worship Resources for Sunday, Sept. 6, 2015 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”