



SOUTH CAROLINA *Christian Action Council*

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To the Church of Christ Jesus at Mother Emanuel and all who bear her good will:

For such a time as now, God intends the Church to bear witness to the One in whom the world receives redemption. Our witness as the Church is singular concerning the One to whom all praise is reserved, and yet our witnesses are manifold according to our particular places. Thus there is a unity of the highest and most profound nature because it permeates all of our intentions “so that the world may know” God’s intention in Christ Jesus to love his disciples – the rejected of their day – and thus the whole world.

Such love has been demonstrated for all to see in the life of the Rev. Mr. Clementa Pinckney and his eight companions martyred with him. To be made a martyr is not of the disciple’s choosing. As our Lord Jesus said to his disciples, “You did not choose me but I chose you.” Neither should one think that the deaths of the Emanuel Nine were a decision of God. Rev. Pinckney and the disciples with him practiced Christian faith fully, as the scripture says: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Likewise, all have noted how the family members of the martyrs have expressed the very conviction of Jesus on the cross in reference to the assailant, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

Seldom in our history has the purity of love and the innocence of faith been so completely offered in the face of such intentional hatred in the very sanctuary of God. It is as though history itself focused its lens specifically upon the most appropriate place in the Deep South by which the generations of racial injustice could begin to reverse themselves by receiving the message of reconciliation. We stand before the universal and eternal truth of the Cross of Christ: unmerited suffering is redemptive.

Now all who are called to leadership in the church, all of the baptized, every assembly and every council appear before this moment like the one in which Jesus prayed, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.” Rev. Pinckney and the other Emanuel Nine have become ambassadors of reconciliation. From the heart of the Black Church comes forth a word of forgiveness offered to all whose minds and imaginations have been made captive to the sin of supremacist beliefs. From that sin have come forth many great and perpetuating injustices and inequities. Now is the time of repentance for those of us who have enjoyed privilege at the expense of the suffering of our fellow brothers and sisters. This holy moment sends us forth to enact sure and certain reform across all of society; for the work of hate can be undone by the labor of love.

We commend the Honorable Rev. Clementa Pinckney, the Rev. Daniel “Super” Simmons, the Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Brother Tywanza Sanders, Sister DePayne Middleton Doctor, Sister Cynthia Hurd, Sister Myra Thompson, Sister Ethel Lance, and Sister Susie Jackson to the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all, to the Holy Trinity, the Father, + the Son and the Holy Spirit, that they, martyrs each, may wear the crown of glory. We present their witness in our churches so that the faithful may be inspired by their example. We honor their lives so that their families may be affirmed in the holy and certain hope of the resurrection. May it be as now as it has been before that holy intentions grow from the seeds of the martyrs. Even as we commend the faithful Emanuel Nine to God, we commit ourselves to the work of repentance within the church and throughout society.

For indeed, we did not choose this moment, but God has chosen us all in it that we might be appointed “to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last”. May Jesus Christ be praised in the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God!

The Feast of John the Baptist, 2015



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Adopted by:

The Board of Directors of the South Carolina Christian Action Council

June 25, 2015

And co-signed by:

STATE ECUMENICAL EXECUTIVES OF THE VARIOUS STATE COUNCILS OF CHURCHES

Rev Stephen Copley
Interfaith Arkansas

The Rev. Rick Schlosser, Ph.D.
California Council of Churches
California Council of Churches IMPACT

Mr. Adrian Miller
Colorado Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Russell L. Meyer
Florida Council of Churches

The Rev. Jerry Albright
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska

The Rev. Dan Krutz
Louisiana Interchurch Conference

The Rev. Laura Everett
Massachusetts Council of Churches

The Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin
Minnesota Council of Churches

Ms. Clare J. Chapman
New Hampshire Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Donna McNeil
New Mexico Conference of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Paula J. Gravelle
New York State Council of Churches

The Rev. George Reed
North Carolina Council of Churches

Rev. Rebecca Tollefson
Ohio Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. William Tabbernee
Oklahoma Conference of Churches

Rev. Dr. Don Anderson
Rhode Island State Council of Churches

The Rev. Brenda Kneece
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The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barton
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