

Statement: Southern California Ecumenical Council  
ON THE CHARLESTON CHURCH SHOOTINGS  
Friday, June 19, 2015 / Los Angeles, California  
Press contact: Gabriel Meyer (310) 640-0710  
[scec1@scec1.org](mailto:scec1@scec1.org), OR [grmncr@aol.com](mailto:grmncr@aol.com)

The Southern California Ecumenical Council (SCEC) expresses its shock and dismay at the mass killings which took place Wednesday evening, June 17, at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. With others across our nation, we mourn the loss of Rev. Clementa Pinckney, pastor of Emmanuel, America's oldest African-American congregation, his sister and the seven others who died as a result of yet another senseless act of gun violence.

We extend our sympathy and prayerful support to the families of the victims and in a special way to the African Methodist Episcopal Church community in Southern California with whom the SCEC has enjoyed many years of fruitful collaboration and common witness in the work of racial justice and peace.

We urge our members and the churches and ministries allied to the SCEC to join with other Christians and interfaith leaders over these next days in a witness of shared grief and prayer for the victims, their families, the Emmanuel Church community, and for the gunman who is charged with the crime.

We can only hope that this tragedy serves to awaken a deep examination of conscience in our country about the evil of racism and racially motivated violence in all its forms and to a renewed determination to overcome the historic legacy of bigotry that still darkens minds and that still defaces our national life. May this terrible act strengthen the resolve of local, state, and federal leaders to address decisively the scourge of gun violence that, as the Emmanuel Church massacre shows, follows us not only on our streets, and in our schools, but even where we pray.