

EVENING PRAYER COMMEMORATING THE EMANUEL NINE

JUNE 17, 2020 + 7 p.m.

*Text in regular print is read by a leader; text in **bold print** is read by the assembly in unison.*

OPENING

CONFESSION AND LAMENT

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.

Tribalism 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.

OPENING DIALOGUE

Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
the light no darkness can overcome.

Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,
and the day is almost over.

Let your light scatter the darkness
and illumine your church.

HYMN OF LIGHT

Read in unison.

**O gracious light,
pure brightness of the ever-living Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!**

**Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

PSALMODY

Psalm 141

¹O Lord, I call to you; come to me quickly;
hear my voice when I cry to you.

**²Let my prayer rise before you as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

³Set a watch before my mouth, O Lord,
and guard the door of my lips.

**⁴Let not my heart incline to any evil thing.
let me not be occupied in wickedness with evildoers, nor eat of their sweet foods.**

⁵Let the righteous strike me; their rebukes, as oil upon the head, are not to be refused.
Yet my prayers are continually against the deeds of the wicked.

**⁶Let their rulers be thrown down upon the stones,
that they may hear my words, for they are sweet.**

⁷Just as one who tills the earth breaks the rock,
so let their bones be scattered at the mouth of the grave.

**⁸But my eyes are turned to you, Lord God;
in you I take refuge; strip me not of my life.**

⁹Guard me from the trap that they have laid for me
and from the snares of evildoers.

**¹⁰Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I alone pass through.**

WORD

A reading from Isaiah 58:6-12

- ⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator^[a] shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
¹¹The LORD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.
¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

A reading from 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;^[a] even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,^[b] we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,^[c] not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to

God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The Magnificat (Mary's Song)

Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

**He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.**

**He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.**

**He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.**

THE PRAYERS

For the church

God, our truth, through the ages you have spoken through prophets. Stir up in your church a passion for your word revealed in Jesus, that following the witness of the Emanuel Nine, your church studies the scriptures, shows hospitality, prays without ceasing, and embodies prophetic justice in community. Embolden church leaders and all the baptized to remember the lives of the Nine, repent of racism and white supremacy, and renew our commitment to your word revealed most fully in Jesus, our way, truth, and life.

In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

For the nations

Mighty and loving God, we pray for our nation and the plague of racism that threatens, destroys, and kills. Root out white supremacy wherever it takes hold. Release its grip on those lured by its false promises. Bring to repentance all who continue to benefit from prejudice and hatred, both hidden and revealed. Plant in our hearts and nation a willing spirit open to truth-telling and healing.

In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

For those who are oppressed and victimized

Immanuel, God with us, you embrace in love those who cry out to you. Lift up all whom hatred has cast down; 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.

In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

Thanksgiving for the saints

We give you thanks, Holy God, for the faithful life and witness of Clementa, Cynthia, Daniel, DePayne, Ethel, Myra, Sharonda, Susie, and Tywanza, the Emanuel Nine. May their faith and witness to your forgiving love in Jesus Christ inspire all people to pursue paths of justice, courage, and self-giving love.

In your great mercy,
receive our prayer.

We conclude our prayers with the words Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

BLESSING

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Appropriately distant greetings of peace may be shared by all.