



Parkdale United Church
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June 19, 2015

Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church
110 Calhoun St.
Charleston, South Carolina
29401-3510

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We, the Council of Elders and the Congregation of Parkdale United Church, hasten to extend our deepest condolences to the congregation of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal, and especially to the families of Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Tywanza Sanders, Rev. Daniel Simmons Sr., Rev. DePayne Doctor, Ethel Lance, Myra Thompson, and Susie Jackson. Our hearts are broken and our grief is deep. Our grief however, cannot compare with yours as you lived and ministered and worshipped and laughed and cried and prayed and loved with these beloved saints.

Please know that our prayers are being offered to God on your behalf. We pray for comfort and for peace and grace. We are outraged that an historic place of worship, prayer, service, healing, witness and defiance in the face of enslavement and oppression in earlier generations, was violated in such a violent, hateful, racist and targeted way.

However, we are moreso inspired and encouraged by the response of love, forgiveness and the call to repent and be transformed offered to Mr. Dylann Roof. In so doing you are exemplarily bearing witness to the life, teaching and empowerment of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For love is more powerful than hate; forgiveness is more transformative than vengeance; and repentance is more life-giving than 'unrepentance'.

Our common call as followers of Jesus is to bear witness in word and deed to the transformative gospel of Jesus Christ. In the midst of hatred and racism and violence we are called not only to love and forgive and where possible seek reconciliation. We are also called to protest the conditions and the systemic attitudes and policies that foster and perpetuate racism, violence and hatred. We know that love and peace and radical welcome and hospitality will win the day, for this is God's promise. And we also know that God requires us to seek justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly and attentively with God. Hence we pray with you for discernment about how to faithfully move forward as congregation and as a community of faith that bears witness in social, political and legal spaces.

You have inspired the world with your love, your forgiveness, your faith, your resilience, your unashamed willingness to openly grieve and your witness to the redemption Jesus longs to perform in us and for us. We rejoice that many, of all backgrounds and faiths, have come together to be in solidarity with you.

May you be strengthened and blessed with peace, comfort, grace and faith. Know that we and countless others join in love, prayer and solidarity with you all.

With Love and Prayers,

Rev. Dr. Anthony D. Bailey
Senior Minister, Parkdale United Church
on behalf of our Council of Elders
and our entire Congregation