



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

July 9, 2015

To Bishop John R. Bryant, Senior Bishop,
Bishop Julius McAllister, President of the Bishops' Council
Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Social Action Commission Chair
Ms. Jacqueline Dupont Walker, Social Action Commission Consultant

I want to thank you for your gracious hospitality at the funeral of The Rev. Clementa Pinckney. I was humbled by the way in which you received me, and included me in the procession. It was an honor and a privilege to participate in this home-going – this celebration of eternal life, made possible through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have experienced the powerful Christian witness that is the living legacy of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Together we have been watching history unfold as legal actions have been taken to remove the Confederate flag from our public spaces. Yet this is only the first of many actions that must follow. We who believe in freedom for all who are made in the image of God cannot rest until it comes. As churches, we must confront the sin of racism in our society and in our shared life together. As we look with you toward the Bicentennial of the AME Church, we renew our calling to speak and act against racism and injustice. This is our commitment, in partnership with you, with the ecumenical family, and with all others who seek to build the beloved community.

We received the AME Bishops statement and call to action last week, and your invitation to declare Sunday, September 6 a “Day of Confession, Repentance, Prayer, and Commitment to end Racism.” I pledge to you that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will participate, and I will invite our bishops, pastors, and leaders to reach out to ecumenical and inter-religious partners to encourage them to do so as well, and to consider possible ways of joining together. We look forward to more information as it becomes available.

Our common actions against racism and injustice give witness to the One who died for our sins “so that the world might believe.” (John 17:21) We not only stand with you as sisters and brothers in Christ, but we stand ready to act with you, too, relying on God’s steadfast mercy and strength.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Cc: Jim Winkler, General Secretary and President, National Council of Churches USA