



South Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A pastoral message from Bishop Herman Yoos of the ELCA South Carolina Synod

June 18, 2015

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There are no words that adequately express the shock, grief, outrage and injustice of the violent act resulting in the deaths of nine people. Earlier today, I sent a letter to all the congregations and pastors of the South Carolina Synod expressing our solidarity and support for our brothers and sisters in Christ who were tragically gunned down while attending Bible Study at Emanuel AME Church in a racially motivated act of violence.

This afternoon, I learned that the shooter was a member of a Lutheran congregation in Columbia. The pastor of this congregation has been providing much needed pastoral care to the family of the accused. Together they are struggling to make sense of the incomprehensible. No doubt, we will learn more about this deeply troubled young man in the days to come. No matter what we learn, it will not diminish nor explain the tragedy of this racially motivated act of violence. Neither will it explain the sin of racism that infects our society.

I join with the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, The Rev. Elizabeth A Eaton, in calling for a day of self-reflection, mourning and prayer. Then we must recommit ourselves to intentional listening, open dialogue and renewed efforts as we all work together to eliminate racial injustice. Together, we must work to recognize and affirm the image of God in all people.

May we share in this time of mourning and grief for our brothers and sisters in Christ and share in their suffering for the sake of the whole body of Christ.

All this and more we pray in the name of Jesus.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Herman R. Yoos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Herman" on top and "R. Yoos" below it.

The Rev. Herman R. Yoos
Bishop of the ELCA South Carolina Synod