



The Office of the General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

August 28, 2015

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Few of us will ever forget the horror of the murder of nine church members in Bible study - in church. Nine African American faithful, including pastors and laypersons, had welcomed the white stranger into their midst at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. But he was intent on death. Leaders in the African Methodist Episcopal Church are determined to re-write the significance of this heinous act, and make it the moment that the church leads the United States into a genuine commitment to end racism – not just the direct, individual racism that causes one person to pick up a gun, but the broad systemic racism that nurtures such a motivation in the first place.

Our brothers and sisters in the African Methodist Episcopal Church have called all Christians to participate in a “Confession, Repentance and Commitment to End Racism” Sunday, to be observed on Sept. 6. We write to encourage all Disciples to accompany our ecumenical partners in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the National Council of Churches and Churches Uniting in Christ, among others, in recognizing this moment to come together as God’s children. We urge Disciples in the U.S. and Canada to participate – if not on Sept. 6, then within the next four weeks. This emphasis is at the heart of our striving to be a pro-reconciling, anti-racist Church. The matter is of particular urgency in the United States in the wake of the June shootings in Charleston and the many other examples of racially-motivated violence from the Midwestern heartland to the coasts.

Worship materials have been compiled by both the [AME](#) and [ELCA](#) which may be used for your preparation. In particular please see the litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr., “After the Vigils, Vigilance!” These materials are available on the [Reconciliation Ministry](#) website. In addition, you will find conversation-guides and other resources there which will be useful for ongoing engagement in the struggle against the insidious nature of racism.

One Sunday is a place to begin. Our ecumenical family is calling us to join them on a difficult journey. We are not alone. Jesus accompanies us as we reach out to bridge the divides between us. This, too, is part of being a movement for wholeness. Let us go forward together.

In Christ,

Timothy M. James, Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary, National Convocation
April Johnson, Reconciliation Minister
Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President
Robert W. Welsh, President, Council on Christian Unity