

VOLUME 93 SPECIAL ISSUE - FROM CHARLESTON TO SELMA
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The
South
Carolina

Lutheran

From Charleston to Selma

South Carolinians Engaged in New Conversations



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

A New Conversation on Race

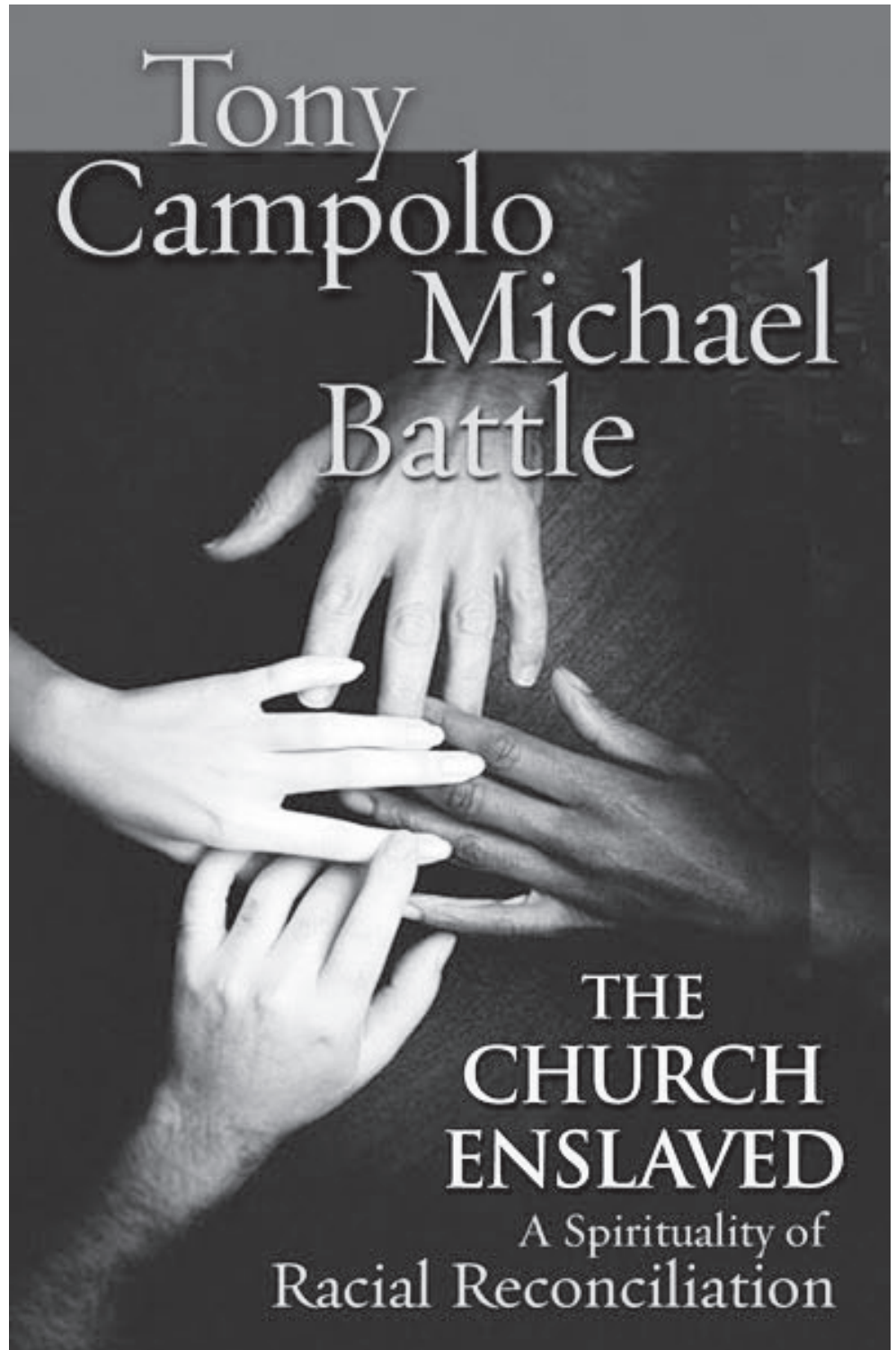
An Invitation

When was the last time you had an honest conversation with an African American about the racial climate in South Carolina?

Recently I was invited to attend Governor Riley's The Diversity Leadership Initiative, which consists of five day-long conversations with business leaders, teachers, leaders of social services organizations, persons in law enforcement and religious leaders. At the February meeting we began a conversation related to the shooting of African Americans by white officers. I was surprised to hear from the half dozen African American men in the room, that while growing up they had all experienced incidences of racial profiling – of being stopped for no other reason than the color of their skin and the section of town that they were driving in. Each of them also said they have had to carefully instruct their sons about how to behave and how to keep their hands on the steering wheel whenever they are stopped by police for any reason. Suddenly, I realized from their experiences that there was a great need in our society for a new conversation on race.

Several weeks later, the urgency for this conversation was made ever clearer through the shooting of Walter Scott, a North Charleston African American male who was stopped for a broken tail light and shot 8 times in the back by a white officer. Some might think, "There is nothing I can do about this, after all there are bad apples in every organization." While there is truth to this thought, it greatly misses the larger point. All of us, either actively or passively, by words, actions and relationships contribute to the atmosphere of hostility and mistrust among whites and blacks in our communities.

About 10 years ago, a group of Midlands Conference pastors read together



ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton invites the 3.8 million-member church to a conversation, call to action on racial justice. See this video online at: <https://youtu.be/9YuMSc6XlZA>

the book The Church Enslaved by Tony Campolo, a white evangelical pastor and Michael Battle, a black Episcopal Theologian Over and over again they exposed the realities of racism from the past to the present that contributes to why the 11:00 hour on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in our country today. They identified five behaviors of white Americans that contribute to this climate: “patronization of whites towards blacks, blaming the victim, avoiding social contact, denying cultural differences, denying the political significance of these differences.”

As we talked about these realities, it occurred to us that we didn’t have any significant relationships with African American pastors to begin such a conversation. We initiated a lunch with about a dozen white and black pastors to see if we could have a conversation on race. Several of the black pastors said, “If you just want a book study group that makes you feel better and some superficial relationships to prove how open minded you are, then we are not interested. It isn’t worth our time. But if you want to build real friendships that deal honestly with these issues, and where we can meet and break bread together in each other’s homes, then we would welcome this opportunity.”

What emerged from this initial conversation was a group we called “the Race and Reconciliation Group”. We began to meet monthly in each other’s homes and churches. There we shared our stories of how we grew up very differently because of our racially divided society and what impact that has had on our lives. Slowly, we began to see each other as friends and allies on this journey of reconciliation together. Although this group now only



Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

meets several times a year, these friendships have continued to be a blessing in my life and have helped me to grow and understand my own racial perceptions and blind spots.

In Ephesians 2, Paul writes: “Christ Jesus is our peace; in his flesh he has broken down the dividing walls of hostility.” In 2 Corinthians 5: we read, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.” Both of these passages clearly speak about the urgency of building relationships across every racial, cultural, social and political division in order to reflect the love and grace of God in Jesus Christ for all people.

So what are some ways that we might make a difference in bridging some of these divisions? First, I encourage us to pray often for the Holy Spirit to bring comfort and strength to the family of Walter Scott and to everyone who has experienced hurtful abuses of power and authority. We also need to pray for all our law enforcement officers for better training and building of the respectful relationships in our communities. Second, I invite you to consider starting your own conversation around race and reconciliation and to seek out persons who are racially and culturally different that would be open to having these kinds of conversations. Third, I encourage you to visit a link to our South Carolina Synod’s Talking Together resource for congregational workshops. The link

is <http://scsynod.com/community-engagement#inclusiveness>. Our synod Task Force on Inclusiveness would be glad to bring one of these events to your congregation.

In closing, I would like to go back to my first session of the Diversity Leadership Initiative. There, Juan Johnson, our Diversity Leadership Trainer shared an insight that is worth repeating. He said, “Most of us think of issues related to diversity as being primarily about obvious differences that we can observe, like the color of one’s skin or the accent of one’s voice. Instead, he said the most significant sources of diversity come from what we can’t see, one’s inner values, belief systems, and perceptions. The only way to get to know these inner attributes and their meaning is to sit down and have a conversation together.” What do you think would happen if, we were willing to engage in more of these kind of open conversations with persons of different racial and ethnic backgrounds? How might God be at work in and through these kinds of conversations helping us learn and grow as instruments of Christ’s reconciling love in our world? Why not try and find out for yourself? □

Peace,

Herman R. Yoos
Bishop

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Engaging the Evil of Racism

For the last several years, the South Carolina Synod has been at work to establish and deepen relationships with people from backgrounds that aren't traditionally Lutheran. We celebrated the ordination of Rev. Jackie Utley, welcomed Pleasant Springs Church at Christ Mission into forming a new relationship with us, have a new mission focused on beginning a primarily African American congregation, and have begun several new Spanish language congregations around the Synod.

Last Wednesday, nine children of God were martyred due to a cancerous racist world view that infects the heart of a man who is a member of a congregation of the South Carolina Synod hoping to start a race war.

We in this synod are inextricably connected to this event at Mother Emanuel AME Church in ways that we never could have imagined - connected through the shooter; connected because two of those slain are well-respected LTSS graduates, and friends of our pastors and members; connected because this is in our back yard, in a state with a longstanding history of racial injustice so deeply entrenched in our system and history that it's hard to imagine South Carolina without it - but it's time to start.

As the South Carolina Synod's Inclusiveness Network met on Tuesday the

23rd of June, we recognized that because of these connections, we as the body of Christ are called to respond in a way that goes beyond window dressing. We are called to stand together as God's children and redouble our efforts to bridge the gap that exists in our state.

If you're looking for a way to get your head around this issue, there are five good resources to start with. First, Bishop Herman Yoos wrote an article about the need to start a new conversation on race (p. 9) in response to the shooting of Walter Scott in April. Second, read Bishop Yoos's letter regarding the shootings at Mother Emanuel AME Church. Third, Presiding Bishop Eaton wrote a letter about race relations in response last Wednesday's shootings calling them "a stark, raw manifestation of the sin that is racism." Fourth, watch ELCA leader continues call for racial equity, a video recorded in March, where Bishop Eaton invites the church to a conversation on racial justice. Finally, SCLCY passed the Resolution Against Racial Inequality at their annual convention.

It's our hope that you feel called to have conversations about this in your own congregation, but we know that it's hard and you may not know where to start!

One suggestion we have is to begin with the article from Bishop Yoos. It's a

piece that's easy to digest, and would be good for a group in Sunday School, Lutheran Men or Women, or a group discussion. It's timely enough to be relevant, but heavy enough to make an impact.

Another thing you can do is include Charleston's AME community in your prayers during worship, or if you're feeling truly bold invite an AME congregation to join with your congregation for a meal or an event to process together the impact of this immense tragedy.

Most of all, as people who follow Jesus, we know that Jesus calls us to engage evil face to face and slay it with the love of God - engage each other in conversation, pray constantly, get together in groups that are intentionally diverse to talk and pray and bless one another. This isn't something that the Synod Office can do, this is something only the congregations and members of the South Carolina Synod of the ELCA can do. It's necessary, it's needed, and it's vitally important. What it means to follow Jesus is to face the brokenness of our hearts and our society in the same way we confess every week, and declare that God's new life begins here and now, together.

Join us in praying, talking, and doing the work of ending the scourge of racism that for too long has infected our state. Know this as well, we are with you. □

Additional Resources for Discussion

By Rev. Mark Buchan, Chair of the Inclusiveness Network

Two additional helps for congregations who are looking for starting points for discussion about the recent tragic events in Charleston: ELCA's Social Statement *Freed In Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture* as well as a guide for group study.

Other ELCA racial justice resources are available at:

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Racial-Justice>



Author Bio:

Wolf is Assistant to the Bishop for Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Article originally published in the Wednesday, June 24, 2015 edition of The South Carolina Lutheran eNews

Reflection, Grief, and Prayer

We must not dodge reality.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is the one week anniversary of the killing of nine members of Mother Emanuel AME Church who were participating in a weekly Bible study and who showed hospitality to a stranger. That stranger shot and killed them because they were black and he wanted to start a race war.

I thought that after a week of reflection, grief and prayer that I would feel better. It's not that I don't appreciate the tremendous outpouring of love and sympathy from all over the country. It's not that I am not astonished and amazed by the families of these nine martyrs of the church modeling the power of God's forgiveness and their willingness to pray for this troubled young man. It's not that I am ungrateful of the historic significance of our Governor and a broad bi-partisan group calling for the swift removal of the Confederate flag to a museum. It's not that I don't appreciate that businesses like Walmart, Amazon and many others are deciding to eliminate their sales of such symbols that have been hijacked by

hate groups. It's not that I don't hear and see new resolve throughout this synod, this state and our nation to address and work together to eliminate this deadly disease of racism.

It is just that these significant resurrection signs of God working in and through this tragedy don't take away my sadness that it happened in the first place. When I am sitting at home with my family, I am keenly aware of nine individuals who won't be present at their family meals and celebrations. When I am worshipping on Sunday morning, I know a sister congregation that lost its pastor and key leaders in their community and who will be reminded of that loss for years to come.



Pastor Tony Metze preaching on Sunday morning at St. Paul's, Columbia following the shootings.

This past Sunday at St. Paul's, Columbia, I needed to hear the sermon given by Pastor Tony Metze. He said, "The Holy Scriptures do not dodge reality, but face it head on. God does not run from pain and suffering, but enters into it. There is a reason Martin Luther built the church's theology around what we call the 'theology of the cross.' We see God most clearly in the crucified and risen savior, Jesus Christ. God's answer to the suffering of the world, the pains we feel, and the evils we face is in the cross."

He also shared a story about a phone call from St. Paul's AME Congregation in Pomaria that he received on the Friday after the shooting. The pastor said, "We have never met but I want you to know that we are praying for you and your congregation as you care for the Roof family." It was an incredible moment of God's grace that blessed everyone who heard it that day, including the Roof family who were at the early service. Their presence in worship was also another incredible witness to our crucified and risen Lord's sustaining love that never lets go of us.

I received an email last week from Thulie Beresford, Pastor of St. Barnabas,



Gov. Nikki Haley called for the removal of the Confederate flag that flies outside South Carolina's statehouse. Both of South Carolina's U.S. senators and a number of other representatives appeared behind Haley at her press conference and are said to also support the flag's removal.



Charleston. She was one of three chaplains that night that ministered to the grieving families who came to MUSC hoping their loved ones had survived. There, she offered comfort and the compassion of our crucified Lord to the families of those nine martyrs of the faith. She is one more Lutheran witness to this suffering that joins us together as Lutheran and AME's members of the one body of Christ our Lord.

Thomas Merton once said "the church" is always a body of broken bones. Clearly it is the brokenness of sin and racism that we are lamenting and confessing together when we pray, "We have sinned

against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us."

There is no doubt that down the road, I will feel more encouraged than I do today. I will look forward to building new partnerships between African American Churches around our state and those Lutheran Congregations who wish to join in on this journey of racial reconciliation. Right now, I need to linger with this grief and not let go of it too soon. I need to honor these nine martyrs and remember their families in my prayers. Dr. Tony Everett once said, "Grief is like a hole in one's heart that never fully heals, but at the bottom of this hole is the cross with our savior's outstretched wide open arms of love." What more could any of us ask for? □

Peace,

Herman R. Yoos
Bishop

"Grief is like a hole in one's heart that never fully heals, but at the bottom of this hole is the cross with our savior's outstretched wide open arms of love."

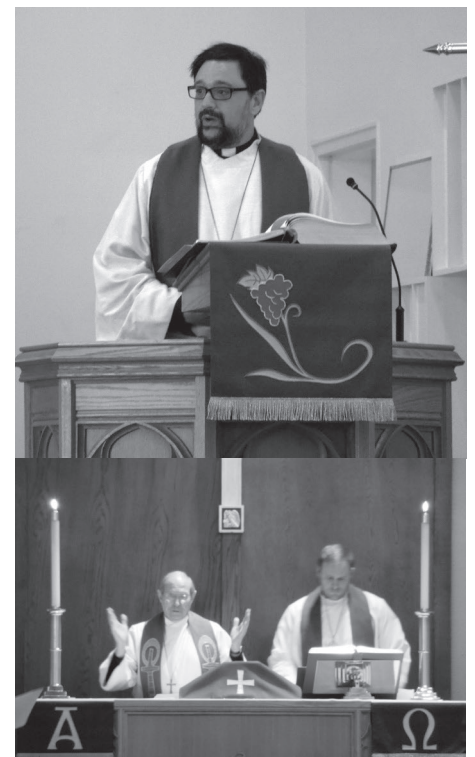
- Tony Everett

Top Left: TEEM Candidate, Martin Luther Quick and Synod Vice-President, Lexanne Graves.

Above: Pastor Leroy Cannonspeaking at Christ Mission, Columbia

Below: Rev. Eric Wolf, assistant to the bishop, gives an opening statement during a vigil at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Charleston.

Bottom: Rev. Mel Amundson, assistant to the bishop, and Pastor Ryan Lyle of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer leading prayers.



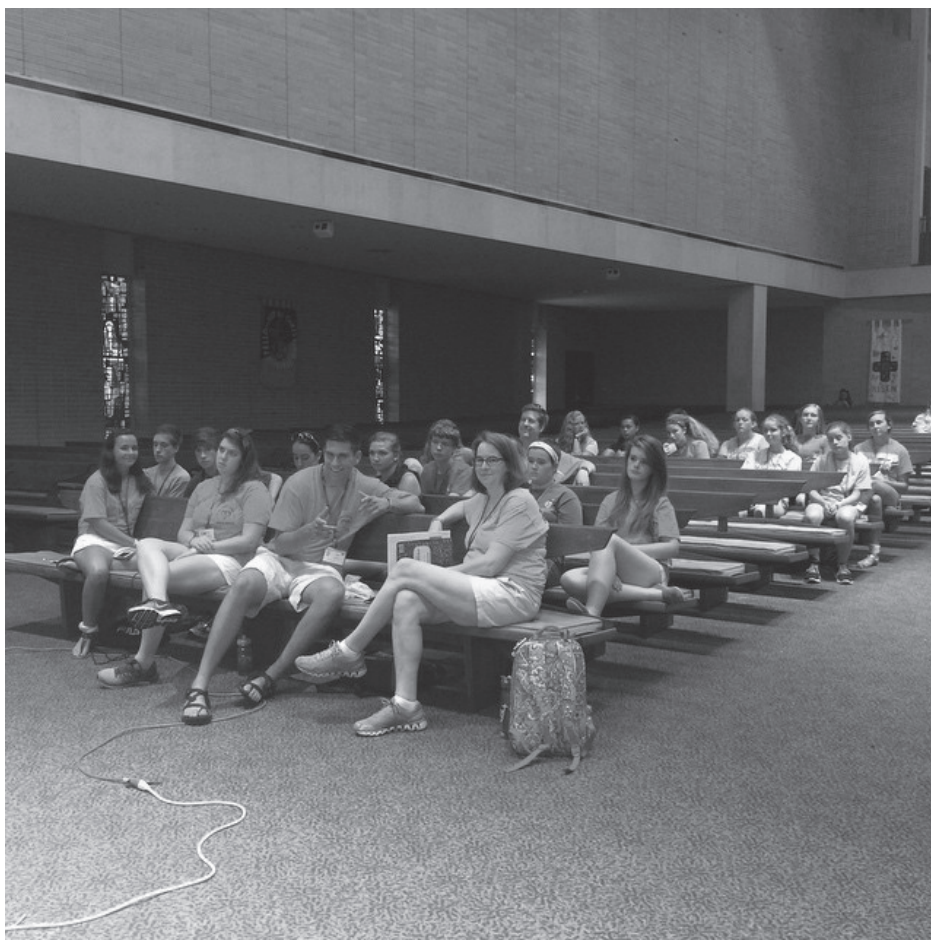
LCY “Doing” Something

Pass Resolution Against Racial Injustice

On June 18, 2015 our Youth Ministry Cabinet met at Newberry College to prepare for the arrival of 134 people for LCY Convention the next morning. This was a time of joy, but also a time of great sadness because nine African-American men and women — children of God — were martyred by confessed shooter Dylann Roof the previous day.

Our young leaders wanted to do something. We suggested they pass a resolution at LCY Convention in response to this, and their response was that they didn't want to talk about it, but they wanted to do something. With only a little guidance, the South Carolina Lutheran Church Youth drafted a resolution in response to this tragedy that captures their horror in the face of this violent act, their determination that we can do better, and their intention to do something about it.

People lament over what “kids today” are up to. I present this resolution on their behalf as a statement about what kids today are really up to — working hard to solve the problems we've been working our whole lives to solve. Every day, I thank God for the youth of South Carolina, through whom God's light is shining into even the darkest places in our hearts and this world. Thanks be to God for these amazing witnesses! □



Download the resolution at:
<http://scsynod.com/youth>



Author Bio:
Wolf is Assistant to the Bishop for Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Article originally published in the July-August 2015 edition of The South Carolina Lutheran

ELCA Racial Justice Ministries

We believe that Christ's church is for all people. God calls each of us by name, and it is not our job to sort, divide, categorize or exclude. But as “saints and sinners,” we know and experience God's work of healing and restoring as well as the persistent human pain and injustices of racism in the world. This is where God has put us, in the thick of life, where we participate in what God is doing by insisting on justice and upholding human dignity for the inclusion of all people in the life of the church and society.

We are called to be a church that embraces each person and confronts racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual orientation, physical, personal and class barriers that often manifest themselves in unjust treatment, inequalities, exclusion and violence.

Find out more at: <http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Racial-Justice-Ministries>



South Carolina Lutheran Church Youth

Resolution Against Racial Injustice

WHEREAS the population in South Carolina is approximately 65% white and 35% other races/ethnic groups;

AND WHEREAS on June 17, 2015, 9 people were martyred at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC because of the color of their skin;

AND WHEREAS we, as children of God, are called to Rise Up Together and help and befriend ALL of our neighbors in their every need...

BE IT RESOLVED that the Lutheran Church Youth organization of the South Carolina Synod, ELCA urges all of its members to continue to

- Stand in support of inclusiveness, embracing diversity, and loving all through Christ;
- Participate with leaders in our schools and communities to enact and enforce policies of equality without regard to race or ethnicity;
- Reach out to and pray for the victims AND wrongdoers to show them the love of Christ is everlasting; and
- Look for outreach opportunities in all Christian churches to grow together in the body of Christ.

Drafted by the following youth at the 2015 LCY Convention:

- + Peri Baker, 2015 LCY Convention Voting Member
- + David Cook, 2015 LCY Convention Participant
- + Cherilyn Heintz, 2015-2016 LCY Chaplain, SCLCY Executive Council
- + Ally McDonough, 2015-2016 9th & 10th Grade Representative, SCLCY Executive Council
- + Ryan Welsh, 2015 LCY Convention Voting Member

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Resolution Against Racial Injustice was passed by the Voting Members of the 2015 Annual Convention of the Lutheran Church Youth of the South Carolina Synod, ELCA this 20th day of June by unanimous decision.

It is the further will of this body that this resolution be used to promote racial justice, diversity, and equality by disseminating it to the SC Synod of the ELCA and its congregations, the ELCA, the SC state legislative bodies, and other bodies where it may have a positive impact on discussions and calls to action.

Which is Stronger

Love or Hate?

A few years ago I received an email that asked the question, “which is the strongest force in the world, love or hate? The author argued that hate is stronger because hate is capable of motivating armies to destroy one’s enemies. Hate can stir up nations to seek nuclear weapons of mass destruction. It can mobilize rational people into irrational acts of violence. Almost every day we hear about acts of retaliation, vengeance and murders caused by hate.

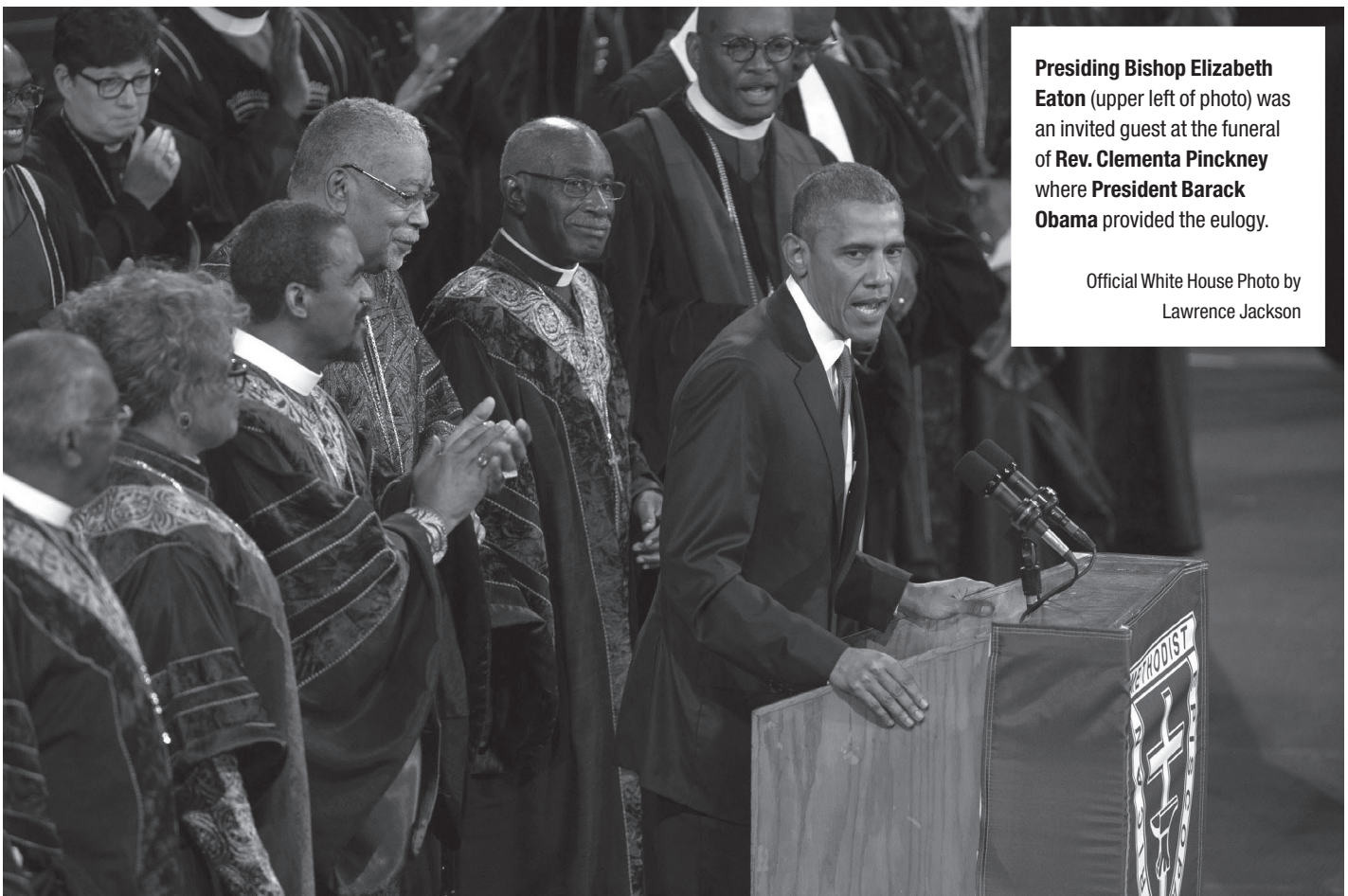
Yet this summer we learned in an unexpected way that love is stronger than hate because love possesses the power to forgive. On Wednesday night, June 17th, a young man who had grown up in a Lutheran church, attended a Bible

Study at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. For an hour he listened to words of hope about the parable of the sower and the seed, but those words fell on the hardened ground of racial hatred. After an hour he pulled out a handgun, shot and killed nine men and women who had welcomed him in the name of Jesus Christ. He hoped this act would entice others into similar acts of racial violence.

As his trial progresses there will be many journalists who will attempt to analyze his motives and explain why this 21-year-old young man turned into a white supremacist. What they fail to realize is that there is no rational explanation for the mystery of evil. The Bible

never answers where evil comes from. Instead scripture points us to a crucified Lord and Savior whose love and mercy is greater than the power of evil.

What is more important to focus upon is the reaction of the nine families to this horrific act. When they could have been bitter and full of hate for this young man, instead they spoke words of forgiveness. One family member said, “Hate won’t win. Sin won’t win. I forgive you and I pray that you will find God’s forgiveness.” Former Governor David Beasley said, “If anyone had the right to be vengeful, it was these families, but in 24 hours, they displayed the most powerful weapon in the history of the world: unconditional love.”



Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (upper left of photo) was an invited guest at the funeral of **Rev. Clementa Pinckney** where **President Barack Obama** provided the eulogy.

Official White House Photo by
Lawrence Jackson

ONE DREAM
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

SELMA

In an unforgettable act their words of forgiveness and mercy became a huge wave of God's reconciling grace that washed over not just our nation but the whole world. People in Charleston began hugging and praying together. Whites and blacks of all ages joined hands in a symbolic act of unity across the Arthur Ravenel Jr. bridge as if to say, "Enough is enough! It is time to form bridges of respect and understanding that will stretch across all the chasms of division in our society."

As part of a delegation that included Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and several staff from our churchwide organization, I attended Senator Clementa Pickney's funeral a week later, where nearly 10,000 people waited in line to pay their respects. The whole service was an incredible outpouring of God's grace and reconciling love being shared in music, hymns, preaching, and personal reflections.

In 2nd Corinthians 5:19 we read, *"In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."* This is one of the scriptures that will be read on August 30th in Greenville, Columbia and Charleston as Lutheran congregations and historic African-American congregations will be sponsoring a public invitation to see and discuss together the movie *Selma*. Hopefully others around the state will follow this example of meeting together to build bridges of respect and friendship across racial lines. Racism is overcome whenever we recognize in one another the image of God, and it takes getting to know one another for that to happen.

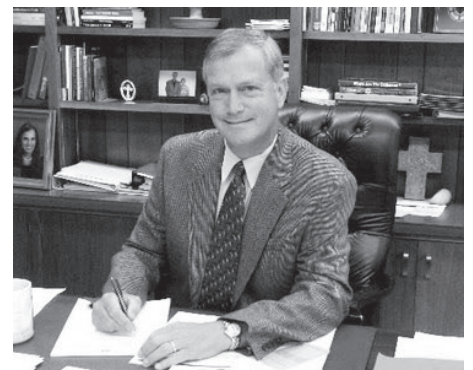
As we live in a world where so often it seems that hatred has the last word, we have a powerful public witness to proclaim about a crucified and risen Lord



who continues today to stretch out arms of unending mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation. Thank God that Jesus has the last word both now and always and that last word is forgiveness and reconciliation. □

In Jesus name,

Herman R. Yoos
Bishop



Talking Together

Engaging in Conversation

Friday June 26th and Saturday 27th marked the beginning of a beautiful relationship for Christ Mission and Reformation Lutheran Church, as five members from each congregation and along with both pastors began the journey of “Talking Together”, a conversation on racism. This workshop was planned months before the heinous act perpetrated on Mother Emanuel in Charleston with the murder of her pastor and eight of her loving members, but how timely it was to begin and make it available for other churches to begin this journey in our South Carolina Synod.

Friday began with each participant getting to know each other as we began to establish trusting relationships. The introductions and following conversations were sincere, straightforward, and deep, as we shared our awareness and contact with racism as we grew up in our respective neighborhoods. As our conversations moved forward we experienced one epiphany after another as we shared each other’s life stories through various racial encounters. What a fantastic Friday evening!

Saturday we began the morning with a “share and tell”. Each one of us brought an object or picture that captured our understanding of our family heritage. There were photos - albums and loose - there were ancestral objects from our families’ journey’s, and stories that were shared. It was a great beginning.

Next we were invited to stand in a straight line, and as various statements of societal interactions were read, we either stepped forward or backwards. For example, “If you have ever experienced a racial slur based on the color of your skin, step backwards.” Or, “If you parents or grand parents went to college, step forward.” With each statement, gaps began to form in our straight line. By the end



of the exercise we began to visually see how systemic racism causes separation. What an epiphany! But, as we struggled with that visual reality, we formed a circle, as wide as the extreme opposites we were left with the previous exercise, and then other statements were read, “If you have spoken up against racist accusations when they were made, please step forward.” or “If you or your parents supported the civil rights movement, please step forward.” By the end of this exercise, the circle, which was stretch so far, was a tight knit group that was almost hugging one another. Racial barriers can be overcome, but not by just talking.

Next came looking at actions that Christ Mission and Reformation can do together. There was no shortage of dreams and visions. So, our vision is to move from Talking Together to Walking Together in such areas as pulpit exchange, congregational “swapping” (a

portion of Christ Mission coming to Reformation and a portion of Reformation going to Christ Mission to worship), joint worship services, and shared VBS. There was even talk about a shared worship and communion out in the streets, or “In the ‘hood’” as one of the participants said, to defuse some of the anger over the recent murders and church burnings. How wonderfully Christ-like radical is that? Emmanuel, “God is with us” especially where the hurt and anger is most prevalent. □



Author Bio:
Bupp is pastor
of Reformation,
Columbia

A Day of Holy Listening and Conversation

Traditional African-American churches and South Carolina Synod congregations have been participating in Holy Listening events taking place in Charleston, Columbia, Greenville and West Columbia. Together they watched the movie *Selma*, discussed how the events that occurred in Selma are still present today in small groups, participated in Bible study and worked to discern next steps for faithful racial reconciliation. You are invited to join in this vital discussion about race relations and the world at large. Below is a model you may use as a starting point to host your own *Selma* event. □



A *Selma* Event Model

Blessing the Meal

Welcome

- Hymn: Amazing Grace
- Pause to Remember the Emanuel Nine

Opening Prayer

Greetings and Introductions

Scripture:

Galatians 3:26-29

Ephesians 2:17-22

Film: *Selma*

Small Groups Discussion

1. What scene or line in this film affected you the most?
2. Where did you see God at work in this film?
3. Where is God calling us as a Church?
4. How does the scripture relate to the film?

Large Group Sharing of Discussion

Commitment Cards

1. The biggest insight for me today was...
2. One action God may be calling me to take based on today's event is...

Grace and Race Litany (page 14)

Closing Prayer

Grace and Race Litany

*By The Rev. Renee
Williams-Thomas*

Leader: We have come burdened by the weight of injustice and racial disparity.

People: God lift us up, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come as the “walking wounded” in need of healing from hurts we have felt and given.

People: God, heal us, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come searching, confused, and not knowing all the answers.

People: God, give us clarity and calm our spirits as we search for your answers.

Leader: We have come for understanding of our differences, our sameness and our uniqueness.

People: God, open our minds and hearts to new truths.

Leader: We have come to honor the people who have labored before us, trying to move us as a beloved community.

People: God, help us to remember, and be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come to strengthen each other, having felt all alone in our desire for reconciliation.

People: God, bind us together, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come longing for the beauty of rainbow worship, where we are all viewed as your children.

People: God, grant us the desires of our heart, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come hungry for the “bread of peace.”

People: Bread of Heaven, feed us until we want no more.

Leader: We have come to pray for religious tolerance, so that all voices can be respected and heard.

People: God, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come thirsty for the water of forgiveness.

People: God forgive us, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come so that we won't forget that racism yet exists in the church.

People: God, help us to remember and learn from our mistakes, be our strength and our guide.

Leader: We have come to learn from each other, so that our work won't be in vain.

People: God, teach us thy ways as we share our gifts.

Leader: We have come to prepare ourselves to work.

People: God, renew our hope and persuade us to work while it is day.

All: God, we pray for all who have assembled here and for people throughout the world who desire racial reconciliation. Help us to know that your judgment will always start with the house of God; therefore the Church must take the lead. Give us the strength to move forward and become true ambassadors, instruments of unity and peace. Transform us and mold us as we endeavor to “heal the land.” Creator God, Sustainer God, God of Justice and Light, be our strength and our guide. Amen.

Bible Studies for Race and Reconciliation

The goal is to use the four scriptures to start a conversation. Below you will find three questions per scripture that can be used to start a dialogue with each group. (Allow 20 minutes per scripture.)

Procedure:

1. A brief overview of the scripture
2. The scripture will be read aloud by each group at their particular table.
3. Then, the question will be discussed and reflected on.
4. Then, an overall reflection by the entire group.

Scripture One: John 17:20-26

Questions:

1. What do you hear Jesus saying about his intention for his people being in “complete unity?”
2. What keeps us from living out this scripture in our daily relationships?
3. How does the following William Sloan Coffin quote speak to you about racial reconciliation?
“Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without.” - William Sloan Coffin.

Scripture Two: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Questions:

1. How do you understand the significance of reconciliation?
2. How are we called to be ambassadors of Jesus’ reconciling love?
3. What encouragement does this passage give us to work on racial reconciliation?

Scripture Three: Galatians 3:23-29

Questions:

1. How does this passage speak to the inability of legislation to change people’s views on racial reconciliation?
(This is about Dr. King saying, *“you can’t legislate morality.”*)
2. How does having faith and “being clothed in Christ” guide us in treating those who are different than us?
3. Rewrite verse 28 to reflect today’s context.

Scripture Four: Ephesians 2:13-22

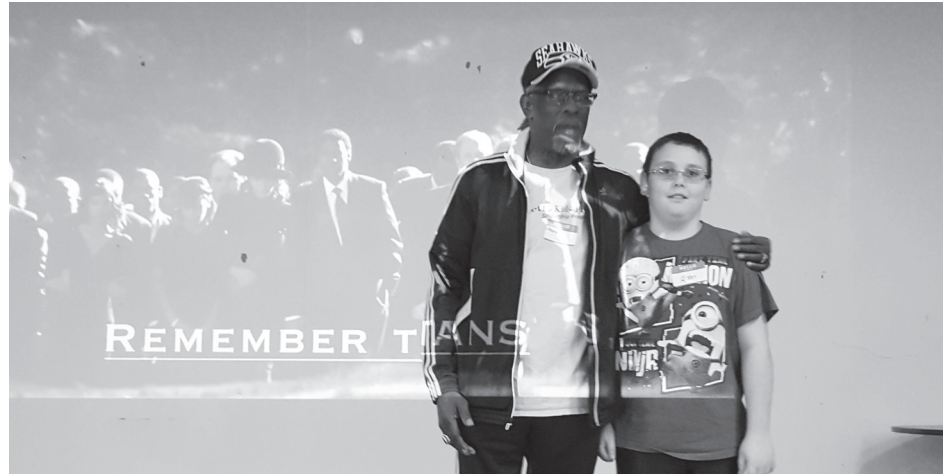
Questions:

1. What is the new humanity that Jesus is calling us to live out?
2. Why do we continue to demonstrate patterns of distrust even though Christ has been on the cross?
3. In light of verse 19, “Why is Sunday the most segregated hour of the week?”

Midlands Youth Discuss Race with *Remember the Titans* Movie

On a Sunday evening in October, youth and adults from congregations around the Midlands gathered for a “tailgate party” to view and discuss the movie *Remember the Titans*. Youth from congregations that are predominantly Euro-American and historically African-American attended this movie night hosted by Christ Mission, including St. Paul’s Lutheran, Pleasant Springs, Mt. Horeb Lutheran, St. Phillip’s Lutheran, First Nazareth Baptist, Mt. Tabor Lutheran, Temple Zion AME, Living Springs Lutheran, Pilgrim Lutheran and Impact Columbia. Inspired by the “Selma” viewings that have been hosted around the state, this event brought youth together across racial boundaries to discuss past and present realities of race relations in this country.

The group that planned the event is a new ecumenical youth council called “REMIX Columbia.” REMIX was formed by Midlands youth and adult leaders as a response to the Charleston



Remember the Titans at Christ Mission

church massacre in June. Their goal is to empower Christian youth to become leaders in the racial reconciliation still needed in South Carolina and throughout the country. The REMIX team is planning a Concert for Reconciliation featuring Urban Doxology on Saturday, March 12th. Urban Doxology is an outreach of the Richmand, VA-based Arabon reconciliation ministry, and has

been writing what has been called “the soundtrack of reconciliation.” Leading up to the concert, REMIX will be hosting a “Battle of the Bands” on January 23rd for youth bands and choirs to showcase their gifts and try for a chance to play as an opening act for the Urban Doxology concert. Please contact Pastor Ginger at pastorginger@mtthoreb.net to register your group.

The first *Remember the Titans* event was a truly Spirit-filled experience for all who participated. The team hopes that other congregations throughout the state will host similar events to inspire our youth to bring forth the unity and leadership we so greatly needed among brothers and sisters in Christ. □



Author Bio:

Litman-Koon is the Associate Pastor of Mt. Horeb, Chapin. She convenes the REMIX Columbia team, serves on the GraceWorks youth service planning team, and directs the Discover Discipleship young adults retreat ministry.

A Remember the Titans Event Model

Groups set up their “tailgate” areas to view movie.

Serve Pizza & Popcorn

Welcome & Introduction

Prayer

Film *Remember the Titans*

“Let’s Be Real” Talk

Small Group Discussion

What scene or line from the movie affected you most?

Where did you see God at work in the movie?

Where is God calling us to action?

Read Galatians 3:26-28. What do you hear in this passage?

Large Group Discussion

Fill out “Challenge Cards” (one to take and one to leave)

One thing I will take away from this experience

One thing I will challenge myself to do differently starting today:

Closing Litany

Depart in Peace

ELCA Videographer Brett Nelson created a video of the work we are doing with racial justice and our Selma movie events.

Watch it at <http://scsynod.us/selma-video>



From the Presiding Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

June 18, 2015

It has been a long season of disquiet in our country. From Ferguson to Baltimore, simmering racial tensions have boiled over into violence. But this ... the fatal shooting of nine African Americans in a church is a stark, raw manifestation of the sin that is racism. The church was desecrated. The people of that congregation were desecrated. The aspiration voiced in the Pledge of Allegiance that we are “one nation under God” was desecrated.

Mother Emanuel AME’s pastor, the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, was a graduate of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, as was the Rev. Daniel Simmons, associate pastor at Mother Emanuel. The suspected shooter is a member of an ELCA congregation. All of a sudden and for all of us, this is an intensely personal tragedy. One of our own is alleged to have shot and killed two who adopted us as their own.

We might say that this was an isolated act by a deeply disturbed man. But we know that is not the whole truth. It is not an isolated event. And even if the shooter was unstable, the framework upon which he built his vision of race is not. Racism is a fact in American culture. Denial and avoidance of this fact are deadly. The Rev. Mr. Pinckney leaves a wife and children. The other eight victims leave grieving families. The family of the suspected killer and two congregations are broken. When will this end?

The nine dead in Charleston are not the first innocent victims killed by violence. Our only hope rests in the innocent One, who was violently executed on Good Friday. Emmanuel, God with us, carried our grief and sorrow – the grief and sorrow of Mother Emanuel AME church – and he was wounded for our transgressions – the deadly sin of racism.

I urge all of us to spend a day in repentance and mourning. And then we need to get to work. Each of us and all of us need to examine ourselves, our church and our communities. We need to be honest about the reality of racism within us and around us. We need to talk and we need to listen, but we also need to act. No stereotype or racial slur is justified. Speak out against inequity. Look with newly opened eyes at the many subtle and overt ways that we and our communities see people of color as being of less worth. Above all pray – for insight, for forgiveness, for courage.

Kyrie Eleison.

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

Synod Council Actions

Synod Council Responds

Conducted a Special Order with African-American Partnerships and welcomed the Rev. Leroy Cannon, Pastor, Christ's Mission, Columbia; the Rev. Martin Quick, Pastor, Impact, Columbia; Mrs. Vanessa Singleton, member, Christ's Mission, Columbia; and Mr. Brian Foulks, member, Christ's Mission, Columbia. The following action steps were proposed:

(1) Ms. Judith B. Roberts, Racial Justice Ministries, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, suggested that members of Lutheran congregations invite and gather with African-American Congregations to build relationships with one another. One way to have these conversations is for the synod to sponsor gatherings in three locations across the territory of the synod during August to view together the movie, *Selma*. After the Selma events we will share what we have learned.

(2) The Rev. Leroy Cannon is in conversation with the presiding elder at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on setting up a scholarship fund for the children of the victims of the Charleston tragedy. Congregations in the South Carolina Synod will be invited to respond to this scholarship fund.

(3) Bishop Yoos requested that each member of the Synod Council read the article titled *A New Conversation on Race* which was printed in *The South Carolina Lutheran*, Volume 93, Issue 3- May and June 2015 www.scsynod.com. Go to publications and click *South Carolina Lutheran*. View the video included in the article by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. After reading the article and viewing the video each council member was asked to do something in your congregations before the next meeting of the Synod Council on September

21, 2015. There are several options. Find a group in your congregation that will use these resources, have a conversation and share these stories about what we are doing in the South Carolina Synod for racial harmony in congregations and in this synod. Other options include leading a bible study on one of the scriptures cited in the article or conducting a worship/dialogue in your congregation. The following link is also provided: <http://scsynod.com/uploads/pdf/May-June-2015-SCLutheran-Race-Article.pdf>

(4) Set aside 15 minutes in the agenda of each Synod Council meeting, provide time for the sharing of resources, how we are using the resources and what are we learning from our conversations together.

Voted to send a check in the amount of \$2,500 to the scholarship fund at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church designated to the children, those who need it the most, of the families of those who were shot and killed in the Charleston tragedy.

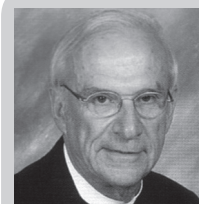
Appointed the Rev. Brad Bellah, Mr. Jim Riddle, and the Rev. Roy Butler from the Synod Council to work with the Inclusiveness Network to assist in developing, planning and implementing a model for conversation with African-Americans using the movie, *Selma*, during the month of August, 2015. □

Excerpted from the September-October 2015 edition of *The South Carolina Lutheran*



Confronting Racism Webcast

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and William B. Horne II, an ELCA member from Clearwater, Fla., in a live webcast conversation on the complexity and implications of racism. Recorded at 8 p.m. on August 6, 2015. Watch it at: <https://youtu.be/Qa35QEo7lvY>



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Joining neighbors,
serving boldly,
loving all,
through Christ.

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God's work. Our hands.