



Council of Bishops
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Bishop John Franklin White
President, Council of Bishops

Bishop McKinley Young
Senior Bishop

For More Information, Contact: 213-494-9493
Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Director - SAC

MOTHER EMANUEL REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

It's the LAW!! At the Bicentennial session of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the 1,506 delegates voted to create a means by which the tragic event of June 17, 2015, at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church, Charleston, S.C., will become part of the knowledge of future generations of A.M.E. Church members.

The Council of Bishops, in compliance with that 50th session of the General Conference declares Sunday June 18, 2017, as **Mother Emanuel Remembrance Sunday**.

What makes this tragedy one to memorialize for future generations?

- Gun violence took the lives of nine members of Mother Emanuel who were brutally murdered and affected the lives of four persons who survived a gunman's rampage during weekly Bible study at their local church in Charleston, S.C. on June 17, 2015. The gunman was a "card carrying" Christian who was welcomed into God's house, and unbeknownst to his hosts, listened to a demonic voice to kill them, yet he was forgiven by the families, church members, and the community of faith.
- This ultimate sacrifice could be seen as a Christian's exit of choice – ushered into the presence of God from bible study. Going home in the midst of honoring one's Christian commitment to study and worship. The evidence of the faith of the Emanuel Church family and the Charleston community must be lifted up as a model for all people of goodwill and faith.
- Commemorating June 17 2015, in perpetuity is important for the following reasons: 1) The lessons taught and learned must be preserved with authentic storytelling; 2) Honoring the lives and Christian walks of everyone who gathered for bible study is important; and 3), Honoring the life's work of each person who lost his/her life gives those of us who tarry, a renewed ministry focus. It connects us to our founding roots and the future vision for African Methodism.
- Reminds future generations of the need for eternal vigilance against violence and hatred at all times.



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What can we do? How can we be in compliance with the law? The legislation clearly outlines steps:

1. **Every congregation of the A.M.E. Church will conduct yearly, a brief ceremony** to remember the nine members of Emanuel A.M.E. Church, Charleston, S.C., brutally murdered during Bible Study on June 17, 2015. [Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Clementa C. Pinckney (41), Tywanza Sanders (26), Daniel Simmons (74), Sharonda Coleman-Singleton (45), Myra Thompson (59)] as well as the survivors; Felicia Sanders, Polly Sheppard, Jennifer Pinckney and 2 minors.

SUGGESTIONS: Take the time to call the name of EACH person who was in that bible study. Create a Litany or post the names with photos. Convene an Intercessory Prayer Vigil (in-person, conference call, or via internet). Make the Roll Call a part of the Church School lesson, Allen Christian Endeavour League session, etc. Invite other churches (especially Lutheran congregations¹), anti-gun violence coalitions, and families of gun violence victims to join in worship with you. Use robo call to outreach.

2. **This ceremony will be conducted during Sunday worship service, until perpetuity.** Each congregation will conduct the ceremony under independent guidelines. The ceremony will be conducted on the immediate Sunday following June 17, except those years when June 17 is on Sunday, in which case the ceremony will be held on June 17.

SUGGESTION: Place the date on the calendar at the beginning of the Conference Year. The Connectional Church will list the date on its master calendar and send a reminder no later than the first Sunday in April of each calendar year.

¹ The gunman at Mother Emanuel was a member of the Lutheran Church. The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has called the members into special deliberations to find ways to address any indicators of hate based on race or other non-Christian acts of hatred and discrimination. Two of the Emanuel 9 were graduates of Lutheran schools – Clementa Pinckney and Daniel Simmons.



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3. **Send your testimony and report** about the way your church honored the spirit and letter of this law.

SUGGESTION: Send your report to www.ame-sac.org and the AME Christian Recorder. Not only do we want to remember, but we want the world to remember and do something. Send news alerts to local TV stations, cable outlets, radio stations, Facebook, Twitter, and all social media outlets. Tune into Call-in shows and call in reminding listeners of the hazards of gun violence. Report both your plans for the Day and the outcome of your efforts in the local newspapers and social media outlets.

Thank you for your support and follow through on this matter.

Your Bishops,

McKinley Young, Senior Bishop
Adam J. Richardson, Jr.
Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President, General Board
Gregory Gerald McKinley Ingram
Wilfred Jacobus Messiah
Paul Jones Mulenga Kawimbe
James Levert Davis
David Rwhynica Daniels, Jr.

Samuel Lawrence Green, Sr.
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Julius Harrison McAllister, Sr.
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Ronnie Elijah Brailsford
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