



The United Methodist Church

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Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. (Isaiah 1:17, NIV)

On behalf of the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church, we condemn the shootings in metropolitan Atlanta on March 16 that left eight people dead and one injured. We recognize that these shootings were not a random attack. Six of the eight people killed were Asian American women.

These shootings are the product of a culture of violence, misogyny, and hatred against Asian American people—particularly Asian women and senior citizens—that has intensified over the last year. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled a significant increase in anti-Asian rhetoric, hate crimes and acts of violence against our Asian American siblings. According to [a recent report](#), Asian Americans have experienced a 150% increase in hate crimes in major cities over the last year, and “Asian American women reported harassment incidents 2.3 times more often than their male counterparts.”

We acknowledge that this most recent event is another chapter in a long history of violence and hate directed at Asian American people, and we grieve the pain, fear and anger it has engendered. As we lift our hearts in prayer to God for the families, friends and neighbors of all whose lives were touched by Tuesday evening’s shootings, we are reminded that God’s response to our prayer is often a call to action for our communities.

Heeding God’s call today, we recommit to standing up and speaking out against violence, hate, gender and sexual bias, economic discrimination, and racism of all types. We commit to establishing and deepening our relationships and partnerships with our Asian American siblings in Christ. In the wake of this most recent tragedy, we commit to listening more deeply to the particular challenges facing our Asian American siblings so that together we can work to combat the forces of evil and hate that provoke unspeakable acts of violence like the one we now mourn.

- ◇ The Rev. Paula E. Clark, Bishop-Elect, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago
- ◇ The Rt. Rev. Yehiel Curry, Bishop, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- ◇ Bishop John L. Hopkins, Interim Bishop, Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church

This statement is endorsed by the Union of Black Episcopalians, the Very Rev. Kim L. Coleman, National President.