

Greetings, siblings! The 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation of the Northern Illinois Conference would like to offer this lament surrounding recent and continuing violence and bigotry directed toward our Asian and Pacific Islander siblings. We also want to give special thanks to our fellow delegates Nadia R. Kanhai, Rev. Alka Lyall, and Rev Hwa-Young Chong for guiding us. We stand in solidarity with them as they call on allies to speak out against Asian hate.

LAMENT ON ATLANTA MASSACRE

by the

2020 General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation of the Northern Illinois Conference

All loving and faithful God, we cry out in anguish over the massacre of our siblings in Metro Atlanta. We are distraught, angry, terrified and overcome with a hunger for Beloved Community, a Beloved Community we seem unable to achieve in our nation.

We are horrified, yet not completely surprised that it was a young brother in Christ who confessed to this massacre. We are haunted by the legacy of white supremacy, colonialism and patriarchy that undergirds our U.S. church — a legacy that we have been unable or unwilling to shake, a legacy that sympathizes with the murderer and blames the victims for the shooter's alleged addiction.

All colorful and full-spectrum God, we appreciate that each of us is wonderfully, intricately and uniquely created in your image. And yet we fear the surface images that differ from our own, instead of seeing you in each of your children and recognizing their individual worth.

We have allowed white supremacy to breed anti-Black racism, a model minority myth, and nationalism that pits Blacks and the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community against each other and labels your children as illegal, savages and renders them inferior. U.S. military occupation and imperialism has long oppressed Asian Pacific Islanders, especially women, while nationalism paints China as the enemy. Our patriarchal system breeds toxic masculinity, resulting in misogyny and bigotry. These failures manifest irreparable harm, even and especially within your Church.

Merciful One, we lift up the family and loved ones of our seven sisters and one brother senselessly gunned down in Georgia, as well as one who survived. We lift up their lives. We lift up their exploited service and struggles. We lift up their work and professions. We lift up our broken system that renders AAPI bodies and voices invisible, inaudible and perpetual foreigners in this land, a system that obfuscates white supremacy through the false labels of model minority and proximity to whiteness as a wedge to confuse and separate us from our siblings.

Cleanse us of patriarchy that hypersexualizes and objectifies our sisters & femmes of color and fetishizes and exotifies our Asian and AAPI sisters in a toxic mix of racism and misogyny —

racial and sexual violence, a patriarchy that claims its assassins are lone wolves rather than creations of unfettered systemic overreach. Convict us through a Christ who openly befriended sex workers and broke bread with them.

Comfort us in our collective grief and heal our brokenness and trauma, that we may nurture and partake in your Beloved Community.