**Moving Forward**

In the aftermath of the shootings, Mother Emanuel received a tremendous outpouring of love and support and sympathy. People from around the world visited to offer condolences, hold prayer vigils and place letters, cards and flowers at the church.

Nadine Collier, daughter of Ethel Lance, one of the nine victims, captured the community’s response and the loving spirit of Mother Emanuel in three powerful words. “I forgive you,” she told the shooter during a court hearing. “You took something very precious from me, … but I forgive you.”

On June 26, 2015, President Barack Obama, in his eulogy of the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, said the attack on Mother Emanuel was more than a singular moment of incivility, but rather marked a new chapter in the history of American racism. Choking back tears, he called for Americans to avoid slipping into a “comfortable silence” that eases tension in favor of direct action in pursuit of justice.

In the weeks following, many people spoke out and organized protests against the white supremacist ideologies and symbols that apparently motivated the perpetrator. On July 10, 2015, at the urging of state and national leaders, and following heated debate within the General Assembly, the Confederate flag was removed from the South Carolina Statehouse grounds in Columbia, coming down to shouts and tears from the watching crowd. The events echoed across the country as activists called for the removal of other Confederate monuments and new policies to address issues such as public school segregation, affordable housing, and poverty.

One year later South Carolinians statewide still mourn but remain hopeful that change is happening as the Emanuel congregation strives to be at the forefront of efforts to bring healing and live out the challenge posed by a banner which hung outside the church: “Let us be the example of love that conquers evil.”