



1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107
office 215.561.1700 | bookstore 800.966.4556
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Bishop John R. Bryant
Senior Bishop
The Richard Allen House
4448 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653

Dr. Jeffery Cooper
General Secretary
500 8th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37203

Mother Emanuel AME Church
110 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29401

Greetings to you in Faith, Hope and Love:

We write to you in sorrow and hope.

We recall with sorrow that it was here in Philadelphia that Richard Allen and other original leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church were excluded from their place of worship. We rejoice in hope at the way the AME Church community has turned exclusion into a faith-life of creative self-determination.

We recall with sorrow the long centuries in which African-American churches have been targeted for damage and death. We long in hope for the day when the Peaceable Kingdom that Isaiah foresaw and Jesus proclaimed will be fully present.

We sorrow now for the loss at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston of faithful leaders and servants of God's love. We are filled by hope as we witness the Divinely inspired love your community has shared not only to the bereaved but even to the man who has confessed to this terrible crime.

We sorrow that racism and hate still exist and are expressed in such terrible acts. We sorrow that our society continues to make weapons too readily available. We recall with hope the many bonds the Religious Society of Friends, Friends General Conference and the African Methodist Episcopal Church have formed in the World Council of Churches and in more local ecumenical and interfaith bodies. Together we will continue to work for a better society, for the realization of the beloved community.

In 1647, one of our founders, George Fox, wrote in his spiritual Journal: "I saw...that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of Light and Love...flowed over the ocean of darkness." Our hearts are with you, hoping that by your deep and true knowledge of that infinite ocean of Light and Love you are comforted and strengthened in this sad time.

Frank Barch
Presiding Clerk
Friends General Conference

Barry Crossno
General Secretary
Friends General Conference