



Southeastern Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

June 24, 2020

Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215

Dear Lieutenant Governor Hosemann,

I serve as the Bishop of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I cover the states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee. I write to you today in the role of a Bishop in the church, as a concerned citizen, and as a Christian. Holy Scriptures remind us: *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him* (Colossians 3:17).

In whatever we do, in word or deed, we do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. This one who stood on the side of the oppressed, cast out demons, gave a clarion call to those in positions of power that the first will be last and the last will be first, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. As a church we have been called to do the very same. And as such, I see the Confederate emblem being part of the Mississippi State flag a visual symbol of racism, bigotry, and a present reminder of historic oppression. Therefore, it stands in the way of all feeling welcomed, safe, valued, and equal. As well a visual reminder of the sting of racism and its sin that continues to permeate our culture.

As church we are called to confess the sin of racism, condemn the ideology of white supremacy, and strive for racial justice and peace. Beyond statements and prayers, we are called to also act and respond to injustices.

I implore you to stand on the right side of history and remove this racist emblem from the state flag. By doing so, you help us as a nation move one more stride into a direction for a more just and fair society where all can dwell in unity, equity, and with equality.

Sincerely,

+The Reverend Kevin L. Strickland, Bishop