

## In Loving Memory of Pastor Kathy Hlatshwayo

June 25, 2014

*<sup>8</sup>We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.  
2 Corinthians 5:8-9*



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

We are here today to pay our tribute and respect to a servant of God, our pastor Pr Kathy Hlatshwayo. Those gathered here are members of Pr Kathy's family and friends, members of her congregations, the Grace Evangelical Lutheran church and the Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Church, ministers from around the area and members of the Oromo community of the DC metro area and those who loved and respected Pr Kathy as a minister, a friend, and advocate of social justice.

We are here today to show our love for Pr Kathy's very precious family, in particular her husband Hector Hlatshwayo. Not only have we sensed our personal feelings of loss, but our hearts have been drawn to them and we will continue to be with them.

We are here today as members of the Oromo community of DC Metro at large to express our gratitude and mourn the loss of dear friend of Oromos, Pr Kathy, who was with us at Lafayette Square in front of the White House and on the stairs of the US State Department chanting "stop killing Oromo students!" on May 9, 2014 even when she was not feeling well. Pr Kathy was drafting a resolution, together with the Rev. Paul Wee, on the arbitrary killings of peaceful Oromo student demonstrators in Oromia in the last couple of months to be submitted for consideration at the DC Metro Synod Assembly on June 21, 2014 but she was too sick to submit it on time and passed away before the assembly date.

We are here today to seek and receive comfort. We would be less than honest if we said that our hearts have not ached over this situation. We are not too proud to acknowledge that we have come here today trusting that God would minister to our hearts, and give us strength as we continue in our walk with Him. We can cry or express our emotions about our loss of our beloved pastor for crying and expression of emotions are God given and part of us for Jesus Himself said , "*Blessed are those who mourn: for they shall be comforted.*" In Matthew 5:4. Tears and emotions are the safety-valve that God built into us to help us at trying times like these.

Pr Kathy wanted us to continue proclaiming the Gospel, do whatever it takes so that His Word reaches all people, advocate for, help and support the unprivileged and the underserved, fight for justice and equality, feed the hungry as she has been doing with Loaves and Fishes program in this neighborhood.

We are going to move beyond the tears. We are going to move beyond our emotions and questions like why as the Holy Spirit is here today to comfort and strengthen each and every ones heart! May the Almighty God comfort and strengthen Mr. Hector Hlatshwayo. Pr Kathy, we all love and cherish you, our kids miss your bible stories you read to them every Sunday on the stairs below the alter in this church. Pr Kathy, our pastor, a dear friend of us, you are now in good hands where there is no pain of any kind. May the Almighty God bless your soul!

We love you!

Rest in Peace!

Tufa Abate, President of the OELC