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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Poor People's March Highlights Remembrance of Greensboro Massacre 40 Years Later**

On Monday, September 30, hundreds of activists and supporters rallied and marched in Greensboro for the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. The campaign came to Greensboro on the third stop of its nationwide effort: "We Must Do MORE (Mobilizing, Organizing, Registering, Educating) Tour". The Tour and Campaign are building support in communities around the nation for a mass convening and march in June 2020 in Washington, DC, to focus on demands for racial justice, national healing, and economic equality. The 9/30 Greensboro tour stop was featured that evening in MSNBC's "All In With Chris Hayes," with Trymaine Lee reporting.

After a lively march, the crowd gathered at Shiloh Baptist Church, where numerous North Carolinians impacted by poverty and injustice testified, along with young organizers and activists. Campaign CoChair Rev. William Barber took the opportunity to highlight the approaching 40th anniversary of the Greensboro Massacre and the murders of five young labor and community activists by Klansmen and Nazis, aided by local police, in 1979. Campaign Co-Chair Rev. Liz Theoharis called out the victims' names, linking the murders to the long history of the freedom struggle in Greensboro:

*"At such a time as this, in this very place - Greensboro, North Carolina, the site of a freedom struggle; the site of lunch counter sit-ins; the site of the massacre of black, white, Latino freedom fighters at the hands of the KKK and the police; the site of the Greensboro Truth Commission; generations of anti-poverty organizing - here, in Greensboro, we commit to rising up for justice. We pledge to do more."*

*"The night before he was assassinated, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King ... preached resurrection - the resurrection of the poor, the resurrection of freedom fighters who have come before us, the resurrection of César Cauce, and Jim Waller, and Bill Sampson, and Sandi Smith, and Michael Nathan. Dr. King said something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up, and wherever they are assembled today, the cry is always the same: we want to be free."*

Rev. Barber introduced Rev. Nelson Johnson and Joyce Johnson, founders of the Beloved Community Center, which is sponsoring the commemoration November 1-3, and who previewed the upcoming

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commemoration activities, which include a series of educational, cultural and religious events in Greensboro. Commemorative events have already taken place in Chicago, New York City, and Greensboro. On September 23, Greensboro's Scuppernon Bookstore hosted a discussion with survivors and community members, "The Written Word and November Third: Writings Related to the Greensboro Massacre." At the event, survivors and others read from relevant writings, followed by a discussion about the significance of the anniversary in light of the current upsurge around the nation in incidents of racist violence.

Lessons from the Greensboro Massacre were also part of the focus on September 21-23 as the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee, celebrated their 87th anniversary: "87th Highlander Homecoming." Highlander is legendary in the civil rights movement as the school where Rosa Parks attended and studied just prior to sitting down that fateful day on a bus in Montgomery. The theme of the anniversary was "Don't Stop, Get It, Get It," and featured a panel bringing together young activists, movement elders and Greensboro Massacre survivors Roz Pelles, Lucy Lewis, and Willena Cannon, in a discussion entitled "Transforming Traditions Towards our Collective Future: An Intergenerational Conversation."

Highlander is also the sponsor of the Greensboro Justice Fund Fellowships, which were made possible by Greensboro Massacre survivors who donated their settlement money to create the Greensboro Justice Fund. The settlement was paid by the City of Greensboro after a federal civil rights trial in 1985 finally established the role of the local police in promoting and allowing the attack by the KKK and Nazis. The GJF for decades supported grassroots organizing in the South. In 2009, on the 30th anniversary of the murders, the GJF announced the donation of its assets to the Highlander Center and the Beloved Community Center in Greensboro to fund leadership training for young social justice activists. In March of this year, Highlander Center's main office was destroyed by arsonists who left white nationalist graffiti behind. Significant civil rights resources were destroyed. At the Homecoming event, four of the former Greensboro Justice Fund Fellows joined Co-Executive Director Ash-Lee Henderson and the three Greensboro Massacre survivors for a candlelight ceremony remembering the five who were killed and sharing lessons.

Greensboro events during the weekend of November 1-3 will include an educational conference on social justice organizing and the roots of white nationalism and violence, hosted by Bennett College. Theater, dance and musical performances will be hosted by the History Department of North Carolina A&T State University. Several religious services will be held at local churches. Other local events are planned in October and November in Durham NC, Seattle WA, Northampton MA, and elsewhere.

For a schedule of events and background information, visit [www.greensboromassacrelessonstoday.org](http://www.greensboromassacrelessonstoday.org). For other information, email [info@greensboromassacrelessonstoday.org](mailto:info@greensboromassacrelessonstoday.org).