



The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd Tequesta, Florida

The Rev. Douglas F. Scharf, Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“My soul is in anguish. How long, O Lord, how long?” (Psalm 6:3). These words were uttered by an ancient psalmist in the face of what seemed like endless affliction. Nearly three thousand years later, these words still echo loudly in our own hearts and minds – “how long, O Lord.” The act of senseless violence against innocent concert-goers in Las Vegas has claimed the lives of at least 58 people and caused serious injury to hundreds more. As I reflect on the fear and trauma experienced by those affected by this tragedy, I can only say “my soul is in anguish.”

The hope we have in Christ is our ultimate source of strength and endurance, but in the midst of tragedy, the pain runs deep. We know that one day the fullness of God’s *shalom*, the peace that is truly beyond our understanding, will be established and the reign of violence and death will end, but the horrific events of this day are a stark reminder of the present reality of evil in this world. We are not promised a world without hardship and tribulation, but we are promised that God will be with us even as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

I urge you to take some time to turn off the television and put down the newspaper in order to open yourself to God’s healing and reconciling love, for it is God’s perfect love that casts out fear. In the presence of God, we offer our prayers for healing. Pray for those who have died. Pray for those who grieve. Pray for those who are recovering in hospitals or at home. Pray for emotional and spiritual healing for those who witnessed this tragedy. Pray for the first responders, doctors, nurses, and all those who are caring for the injured and dying. Pray for the shooter and his family. Pray for the whole human family and for the healing of our world.

May God strengthen you with his peace and love.

In Christ,

A Prayer for the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.