

## Service after a Violent Event

*This service is designed for use after a violent event in the community, nation, or world.*

### Welcome

*The leader offers words of welcome in the context of the event that is being marked.*

### Prayer

*The leader invites those gathered into prayer.*

Let us pray.

Gracious God, the news of this day  
has ripped our hearts and torn our souls.

We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

In the depths of pain and anger, we gather before you,

O God, our rock and our refuge.

You are our only comfort.

You are our only hope.

Merciful God, you know the depth of our suffering.

We have only begun to mourn those we have lost.

*The names of the victims of violence may be spoken here.*

Uphold all those who love them, we pray.

*The names of surviving family members or friends may be spoken here.*

Faithful God, surround us with your everlasting arms.

Hear our cries of despair,

heed our calls for justice,

and do not let us lose hope,

in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we pray.

**Amen.**

### Scripture

How long, O Lord,

how long shall the wicked triumph?

**They bluster in their insolence;**

**all evildoers are full of boasting.**

*from Psalm 94*

They crush your people, O Lord,  
and afflict your very own.  
**They kill the widow and the stranger  
and put the orphans to death.**

Yet you will not abandon your people,  
nor will you forsake your very own.  
**If the Lord had not been my help,  
I should soon have dwelt in the land of silence.**

As often as I said, "My foot has slipped,"  
your steadfast love, O LORD, upheld me.  
**The LORD has become my stronghold,  
my God is my rock of refuge.**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,  
and the sea was no more.  
**And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,  
coming down out of heaven from God.**

*from Revelation 21*

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
"See, the home of God is among mortals.  
**God will dwell with them,  
and they will be God's people.**

God will be with them  
and will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
**Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away."**

And the one who was seated on the throne said,  
"See, I am making all things new.  
I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the beginning and the end.  
**To the thirsty I will give water  
as a gift from the spring of the water of life."**

### **Prayers of Intercession: Lamenting Gun Violence**

God, giver of life, you intend for humans to live together in peace. In this time of grief over gun violence, we pray for your presence among us. That, trusting in your mighty and gentle healing, we may live in hope, we pray:

**make us instruments of your peace.**

God of resurrection, we remember before you those who have died in Buffalo, in Laguna Woods, and in Uvalde. We commend them to your eternal love. Grant healing and wholeness to the survivors who are wounded or traumatized. Restore all whose spirits are maimed by such violence. That we may serve as your arms of care to those in distress, we pray:

**make us instruments of your peace.**

God of righteousness, you have laid on our elected leaders the responsibility to protect our land. Strengthen their devotion to our common life, and guide legislators to enact policies that address our plague of gun violence. That our government may support our search for domestic harmony, we pray:

**make us instruments of your peace.**

God of compassion, we give you thanks for first responders, for police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and all who offer compassionate aid in situations of tragedy. Keep them safe from harm. Give them courage and sound judgment as they act. That we may join in support of those who risk their lives for others, we pray:

**make us instruments of your peace.**

God of forgiveness, we ask your mercy on the ones who fired the weapons. With your grace, transform those who from malice or illness inflict violence on others. Console their families. Believing in your power to make all things new, we pray:

**make us instruments of your peace.**

God of the promise in word and sacrament, we pray for the church. Give us a voice, your voice, to plead for a society marked by justice and sustained by cooperation among diverse peoples. Train us to resist the lure of brute force. That by your Spirit we may become words and signs of your mercy, we pray:

**make us instruments of your peace.**

*The leader concludes the prayers with these or similar words.*

Our help comes from you, O Lord,  
you who made heaven and earth.  
In the midst of grief, you are our comfort.  
In the face of uncertainty, you are our rock.  
In the wake of tragedy, you are our hope.  
So even as we weep, we praise you,  
and place our trust in you.

We pray in the name of the one  
who suffered and died and was raised for us,  
our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## **Psalm 91**

- <sup>1</sup>You who dwell in the shelter of <sup>1</sup> the Most High,  
**who abide in the shadow of <sup>1</sup> the Almighty—**
- <sup>2</sup>you will say to the LORD, “My refuge <sup>1</sup> and my stronghold,  
**my God in whom I <sup>1</sup> put my trust.”**
- <sup>3</sup>For God will rescue you from the snare <sup>1</sup> of the hunter  
**and from the <sup>1</sup> deadly plague.**
- <sup>4</sup>God’s wings will cover you, and you will find ref- <sup>1</sup> uge beneath them;  
**God’s faithfulness will be your shield <sup>1</sup> and defense.**
- <sup>5</sup>You shall not fear any terror <sup>1</sup> in the night,  
**nor the arrow that <sup>1</sup> flies by day;**
- <sup>6</sup>nor the plague that stalks <sup>1</sup> in the darkness,  
**nor the sickness that lays <sup>1</sup> waste at noon.**
- <sup>7</sup>A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at <sup>1</sup> your right hand,  
**but it will <sup>1</sup> not come near you.**
- <sup>8</sup>You will only have to look <sup>1</sup> with your eyes,  
**and you will see the reward <sup>1</sup> of the wicked.**
- <sup>9</sup>Because you have made the <sup>1</sup> LORD your refuge,  
**and the Most High your <sup>1</sup> habitation,**
- <sup>10</sup>no evil <sup>1</sup> will befall you,  
**nor shall affliction come <sup>1</sup> near your dwelling.**
- <sup>11</sup>For God will give the angels charge <sup>1</sup> over you,  
**to guard you in <sup>1</sup> all your ways.**
- <sup>12</sup>Upon their hands they will <sup>1</sup> bear you up,  
**lest you strike your foot a- <sup>1</sup> gainst a stone.**
- <sup>13</sup>You will tread upon the lion <sup>1</sup> cub and viper;  
**you will trample down the lion <sup>1</sup> and the serpent.**
- <sup>14</sup>I will deliver those who <sup>1</sup> cling to me;  
**I will uphold them, because they <sup>1</sup> know my name.**
- <sup>15</sup>They will call me, and I will <sup>1</sup> answer them;  
**I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and <sup>1</sup> honor them.**
- <sup>16</sup>With long life will I <sup>1</sup> satisfy them,  
**and show them <sup>1</sup> my salvation.**

### **Charge and Blessing**

Go out into the world in peace;  
have courage;  
hold on to what is good;  
return no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted;  
support the weak, and help the suffering;  
honor all people;  
love and serve the Lord,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.  
**Amen.**

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