

A INTERFAITH VIGIL OF PRAYER AND LAMENT FOR A HURTING WORLD

Grieving Gun Violence, Racism & Hate

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2022
7 P M



This is a collaborative effort including:
Members of the Santa Clarita Human Relations Roundtable
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Congregation Beth Shalom,
The Islamic Center of Santa Clarita, Higher Vision Church and
The NAACP Santa Clarita

Gathering Music

Brianna Marra
Pianist

Welcome

The Rev. Christopher Montella
Rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

A Reading from the Jewish Tradition

O Lord, whom our ancestors called
"Maker of peace in the heavens,
be with us and bless us in our quest for peace.
Help us, O Source of Peace, to find true peace
in our own lives and with our neighbors;
but keep us from a "peace" of complacency,
or a quiet of false security.
Help us, O Source of Peace, to labor for peace-
in our community and in our nation;
but keep us loyal to our convictions
as we seek to reach out to others.
Help us, O Source of Peace, to strengthen the hands
of those who work for peace in our troubled world:
but strengthen too our devotion to freedom
and our dedication to justice for all.
Help us to welcome truth from whatever source.
and to sustain hopeful spirits at all times.
Keep us from being prisoners of precedent
or hostages of habit-in thought or deed.
As You have taught us,
to "love peace and pursue it,"
grant us, we pray, the blessing of lasting peace.

Reflection

Rabbi Jay Siegel
Congregation Beth Shalom

Silence

Prayer

Roger Reiner
President, Congregation Beth Shalom

Prayer cannot mend a broken bridge, rebuild a ruined city, or bring water to a parched field.
Prayer can mend a broken heart, lift up a discouraged soul, and strengthen a weakened will.

A Reading from the Christian Tradition Romans. (12:9–21)

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads."

Reflection

Pastor Anthony Dorris
Higher Vision Church

Silence

Prayer

Peggy Stabile
St. Stephen's Anti-Racism Coalition

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but in Jesus you bear that pain with all who suffer at others' hands. With your love, bring healing and strength to all who suffer in the aftermath of tragedy. Your love never fails — even though in these moments we struggle to believe — and only you can turn the shadow of trauma into daybreak. Help us to receive your Spirit so that we may defiantly, courageously, and audaciously stand vigil against violence and hate. May we turn our trust in weapons into faith in Love and You alone. **Amen.**
(Edited from ELW "Additional Prayers")

Readings from the Muslim Tradition

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." *Quran 2:155-157*

"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend." *Quran 41:34*

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah , witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do." *Quran 5:8*

Reflection

Imam J.D. Hall
Islamic Center of Santa Clarita

Silence

Prayer

Supplication of the Prophet (SAAWAWS) after each prayer:

وَالْإِكْرَامِ الْجَلِيلِ ذَا رَبَّنَا تَبَارَكْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ أَنْتَ اللَّهُمَّ

“O Allah, You are peace and from You is peace. Blessed are You, our Lord, the Majestic and Noble.” Amen.

MEMORIAL CANDLE LIGHTING

Valerie Bradford
President-NAACP Santa Clarita

As each candle is lit, the names of those who died in Buffalo, NY and Laguna Woods, CA are said aloud. The gathered community repeats each name after it is spoken and then a bell is rung. There will be a brief period of silence between each candle.

REFLECTION

Dr. Cherise G. Moore
Governing Board Member, William S. Hart School District
& *Santa Clarita Human Relations Roundtable*

A LITANY FOR PEACE AND CHANGE IN THE AFTERMATH OF GUN VIOLENCE

The Rev. Christopher Montella &
Cassidy Butow
Santa Clarita Human Relations Roundtable

Reader: We were created as one family and called to live together in peace. May we lead lead with love as we face again the tragedy of gun violence.

For those who were killed, those who were wounded and hospitalized, the traumatized, grieving survivors, and those whose names we do not know.
People May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: We pray that our leaders would use their power and responsibility to protect us, to uphold our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Strengthen their devotion to our common life and give them clarity of purpose.

For all who bear such responsibility, for all who struggle to discern what is right in the face of powerful political forces
People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: We give thanks for first responders: police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and all those whose duties bring them to the streets, the schools, the malls and the homes where the carnage of gun violence takes place every day. Give them courage and sound judgment in the heat of the moment and grant them compassion for the victims.

For our siblings who risk their lives and serenity as they rush to our aid.

People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: We pray for healing for all who suffer from the impact of gun violence, those maimed and disfigured, those left alone and grieving, and those who struggle to get through one more day. That they would be able to find hope in the midst of tragedy.

For all whose lives are forever changed and broken by the scourge of gun violence.

People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: We pray for those trapped by the hate they carry in their hearts that they would turn toward love. That there would be an end to racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia and all those things through which hate keeps us separate.

For those who from malice or illness are the instruments of violence and death.

People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: May we not forget the thousands who have died in the gun violence that we have allowed to become routine.

For all who have died, those who die today, and those who will die tomorrow,

People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: We pray that those who are overwhelmed, enraged, frustrated and demoralized by the plague of gun violence may find the strength not to give up the hope of a better day.

For those whose hope for life in this world is shattered and broken.

People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: We pray that as a community we would find our voice and become seekers of justice. May we turn away from the worship of power and find courage to confront our false gods as we protest the needless deaths caused by gun violence. Let us rise above our dread that nothing can be done and grant us the conviction to advocate for change.

For the dream of a world where children are safe and all of us live together without fear.

People: May we be instruments of peace and change.

Reader: May the words we pray this night become the seeds of change that take root and form a new world defined by peace, justice and love. **Amen.**

REFLECTION

Jeffrey Thomson
Commissioner, LA County Workforce Development Board
& Santa Clarita Human Relations Roundtable

CLOSING PRAYERS

For Peace:

*"O Allah, you are the original source of peace; from you is all peace, and to you returns all peace, So, make us live with Peace; and let us enter paradise; the House of Peace." **Amen.***

For Love:

May God give you grace never to sell yourself short; Grace to risk something big for something good; Grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth, and too small for anything but Love. **Amen.**

For Tolerance:

Master of the Universe, give us the courage to stand up to and reject all forms of hateful speech and violence. Give us the strength of spirit to refuse to tolerate the rejection of any human being, each of whom is created, in Your Divine image. Help us to internalize in our hearts and to manifest in our actions the mandate of the verse that it is our responsibility to care for, to love, and to protect all members of our society, and in particular those who are most vulnerable and most likely to feel estranged and rejected. Help us to value every member of our society for whom he or she is, to care for them, to support them, and to recognize that they are an equal part of our community. **Amen.**

CLOSING MUSIC & CANDLE LIGHTING

As the music begins members of the gathered community are invited to come forward to one of the stations at the front of the church and light a candle of remembrance after which they are free to return to their seats for quiet reflection or depart.

Music

Brianna Marra
Pianist

Elements of this liturgy were drafted from resources available on the Bishops United Against Gun Violence website: bishopsunitedagainstgunviolence.org

Congregation Beth Shalom

<https://cbs-scv.org/>

Higher Vision Church

<https://highervision.church/>

Islamic Center of Santa Clarita

<https://icscv.org/>

NAACP Santa Clarita

<http://naacpsc.org/>

Santa Clarita Human Relations Roundtable

<https://scvhumanrelations.com/>

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

<https://www.st-stephens.org/>