



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dakotas-Minnesota Area

Resident Bishop
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Dear Friends in Christ,

My heart echoes the psalmist's cry: "O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God!" (Psalm 83:1, NRSV)

Today, I grieve the horrific violence of the Fargo, North Dakota, shootings that resulted in two deaths and critical injuries. At the time of this writing, we don't yet know the circumstances; however, we do know [one police officer was killed, and others have sustained critical injuries in a shooting that also left the suspect dead.](#)

The first place we can turn is to the One who is always faithful. So, the refrain to my lament is: "Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand has provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!" (United Methodist Hymnal #140)

God remains God amid the violent chaos. And God's saving, reconciling narrative remains unwavering amid hopelessness and despair.

I urge you to turn to God in prayer. Pray for all those who suffer from these violent and terror-inducing acts. In the words of Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted," let us pray that God will comfort the families and friends of the victims.

I call on the people of Dakotas Conference of the United Methodist Church to pray without ceasing. Friends, let us listen for God's message to you for what can be done in these tender days of mourning, grief, and outrage.

However we cannot stop with "thoughts and prayers." Educate yourself about gun violence in the United States. What are gun violence statistics? Read about ways United Methodists can take a stand against gun violence [here](#). The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church contains our official position on gun violence. Resolution 3428 in the 2016 Book of Resolutions, "Our Call to End Gun Violence," calls upon us to do several things. [Read the resolution in its entirety here.](#)

In the face of this tragedy, let us channel our holy anger into action as we stand up for life while holding all those whose lives have been forever changed by this shooting and so many others in our prayers.



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Almighty God, grant eternal rest to those who have died and healing mercies to the wounded. Surround those who mourn with your Spirit's presence so that they might know comfort. Grant us the courage to live as people of peace in our words and our actions. In Christ, we pray, Amen.

May our prayers turn into action as we continue to address gun violence, work to bring healing and hope to our communities, and make disciples for the transformation of our world.

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