

*The following Litany for Gun Violence Prevention is written by the Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane, Episcopal bishop of Maine,*

Giver of Life and Love, you created all people as one family and called us to live together in harmony and peace. Surround us with your love as we face the challenges and tragedies of gun violence.

For our dear ones, for our neighbors, for strangers and aliens, and those known to you alone, Loving God, Make us instruments of your peace.

God of Righteousness, you have given our leaders, especially Barack, our President, the members of Congress, the judges of our courts and members of our legislatures, power and responsibility to protect us and to uphold our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

For all who bear such responsibility, for all who struggle to discern what is right in the face of powerful political forces, Loving God, Make us instruments of your peace.

God of Compassion, we give you thanks for first responders, for police officers, firefighters and EMTs, and all those whose duties bring them to the streets, the lobbies, the malls and the homes where the carnage of gun violence takes place day after day. Give them courage and sound judgment in the heat of the moment and grant them compassion for the victims. For our brothers and sisters who risk their lives and their serenity as they rush to our aid, Loving God, Make us instruments of your peace.

Merciful God, bind up the wounds of all who suffer from gun violence, those maimed and disfigured, those left alone and grieving, and those who struggle to get through one more day. Bless them with your presence and help them find hope.

For all whose lives are forever marked by the scourge of gun violence, Loving God, Make us instruments of your peace.

God Who Remembers, may we not forget those who have died in the gun violence that we have allowed to become routine. Receive them into your heart and comfort us with your promise of eternal love and care.

For all who have died, those who die today, and those who will die tomorrow, Loving God, Make us instruments of your peace.

God of Justice, help us, your church, find our voice. Empower us to change this broken world and to protest the needless deaths caused by gun violence. Give us power to rise above our fear that nothing can be done and grant us the conviction to advocate for change.

For your dream of love and harmony, Loving God, Make us instruments of your peace. All this we pray in the name of the One who offered his life so that we might live, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*Prayer by the Rev. Dr. Laurie A. Kraus, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, adapted by Rev. Scott Marrese-Wheeler*

God of our weary years and our silent tears, We are shattered by the death of a 11 year-old Anisa Scott, and the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha. We are horrified, angry, despairing.

We struggle with a yearning for justice and judgment-- a knowledge that our prayers alone are not enough a hurt that is beyond speech a fear that we do not know a way forward that will help an emptiness: we have been here before, too many times, and we know we will walk this bloodied path again.

What can we do, with such fear and anger and longing, that can bind us together, rather than further tear apart the fabric of our common life? We are failing one another, and we are failing You: our Maker, our Mercy, our Justice, our Peace. We pray for our neighbors in Madison, Milwaukee, Kenosha and so many other places around our nation where gun violence and other acts of violence have claimed far too many lives lost and victims wounded for life.

We pray, Healing One, for our whole broken and heartbroken nation in this hard season of violence, death and distrust each one lost is a child made in Your image. each survivor is beloved to You each afflicted community is part of your commonwealth.

We lift our prayers for each life lost, each family bereaved, each neighborhood whose fabric has been violently torn asunder by bullets and hatred and fear.

We pray for ourselves, that this hurt, this outrage, this yearning for justice will not fade from our minds before our hearts are broken open by Your passion for mercy, justice, and love.

Restore our hope, our heart, our sense of the possibility of holiness and wholeness in your creation. Tend the fires of our rage so that they burn for justice and warm hearts that have grown cold. Make the waters of our tears nourish the river that flows through the city of God, and the tree of life that is for the healing of the nations. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.