



A MORAL CALL

PEOPLE OF FAITH
CONFRONTING
THE TRAGEDY
OF GUN VIOLENCE

Sunday, December 13, 2015 • 3:00 PM

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

152 Pearl Street • Burlington, Vermont

Co-Sponsors: All Saints Episcopal Church; Ascension Lutheran Church; Baha'i Faith, Burlington; Cathedral Church of St. Paul; Charlotte Congregational Church; Christ Church Presbyterian; College Street Congregational Church; First Baptist Church; First Unitarian Universalist Society; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church; Islamic Society of Vermont; Pax Christi, Burlington; Ohavi Zedek Synagogue Social Action Committee; Shambhala Meditation Center; Sisters of Mercy, Northeast Community; St. Andrew's Episcopal Church; The Episcopal Church in Vermont; and Williston Federated Church

INTERFAITH PRAYER AND REMEMBRANCE VIGIL: A MORAL CALL PEOPLE OF FAITH CONFRONTING THE TRAGEDY OF GUN VIOLENCE

Every year an average of 31,537 Americans are killed by guns, which includes murders (11,583), suicides (18,783), accidents (584), police action (334), and those whose cause is indeterminate (252).

Our service begins with the prelude. Please quiet body and spirit so all may enjoy the music.

PRELUDE

Barbara Thomke and Jessica Betz, flutists, Annamary Anderson, cellist

WELCOME AND LIGHTING OF CHALICE

*The Rev. Roddy O'Neil Cleary, Minister Emerita,
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington*

GATHERING SONG "Gather the Spirit" No. 347 in Hymnal
Song leader Bill Mares, Pianist Lisa Wolff



Gather the spirit, harvest the power
Our separate fires will kindle one flame
Witness the mystery of this hour
Our trials in this light appear all the same.

Refrain: Gather in peace, gather in thanks.

Gather in sympathy now and then.
Gather in hope, compassion and strength.
Gather to celebrate once again.

Gather the spirit of heart and mind.
Seeds for the sowing are laid in store.
Nurtured in love, and conscience refined,
With body and spirit united once more.

Refrain



Gather the spirit growing in all.
Drawn by the moon and fed by the sun.
Winter to spring, and summer to fall,
The chorus of life resounding as one.

Refrain

CALL TO PRAYER

Iman Islam Hassan, Islamic Society of Vermont; Elizabeth Kanard, Director of Practice and Education, Shambhala Meditation Center; Judy Danzig, Ohavi Zedek Synagogue.

WHY WE GATHER

The Right Rev. Thomas C. Ely, Bishop of The Episcopal Church in Vermont

REMEMBERING ALL WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY GUN VIOLENCE

After each offering, the people all respond with words in bold.

READER 1 *Rev. David Hamilton, Rector, All Saints Episcopal Church, South Burlington*

We light this candle in remembrance of the victims of gun violence, both those who have been injured and those who have been killed, in our nation and especially here in Vermont. We hold their memories dear. We treasure those lives permanently altered through injury or those taken in senseless acts of violence, and we pray that they might find rest and peace. May their lives continue to make a difference in our world.

Together we pray.

All: God of Light, heal our broken hearts.

READER 2

Rev. Karen Mendes, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Burlington

We light this candle in remembrance of the families and friends of the victims of gun violence in our nation and in Vermont. Comfort those who mourn. Dry the tears of those who weep. Sustain those who feel diminished. Impart courage to the hearts of those who feel helpless.

Together we pray.

All: God of Peace, sustain our broken hearts.



READER 3

Hal Colston, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Jericho

We light this candle in remembrance of all communities torn apart by gun violence. We are too familiar with places like Columbine and Aurora, Colorado; Newtown, Connecticut; Roseburg, Oregon; Charleston, South Carolina; and Barre, Vermont. Each of these incidents of violence affects all of us in our daily lives and work. Grant us strength to pursue a voice of love. Renew our resolve to respect the dignity of all human beings.

Together we pray.

All: God of Comfort, encourage our broken hearts.

READER 4

Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, Charlotte Congregational Church

We light this candle in remembrance of first responders, including police, fire and rescue personnel who witness the horror of gun violence while in service to our communities, and all those with responsibility for law enforcement. We give thanks for their call to protect and serve and to seek justice, which is inspirational to others, and we pray that their emotional wounds will be healed.

Together we pray.

All: God of Courage, inspire our broken hearts.

READER 5

Rev. Charlie Magill, Associate Pastor, Williston Federated Church

We light this candle for those lives taken by gun violence through suicide, and also for those lives taken through accidental shootings, especially when those shootings involve children. Console and strengthen those whose despair is great.

Together we pray.

All: God of Mercy, comfort our broken hearts.

READER 6

Suellen Howley, Baha'i Faith, Burlington

We light this candle in remembrance of all people impacted by gun violence, as gun violence knows no boundaries but can affect all nationalities, races, cultures, genders, and socioeconomic classes; it can affect us where we live, where we worship, where we work, where we study, and where we play.

Together we pray.

All: God of Love, transform our broken hearts.

READER 7

Rev. Roy V. Hill, President, Vermont Ecumenical Council

We light this candle for those who have committed acts of gun violence and for their families, in our nation and especially here in Vermont. We remember those suffering from mental illness who have gone untreated, and those suffering from loneliness and isolation. We pray for those who would use guns, power and violence rather than respect and dignity to reconcile differences. Grant us the strength to pursue a voice of love.

Together we pray.

All: God of Forgiveness, enlighten our broken hearts.

READER 8

Sister Janice Ryan, RSM, Sisters of Mercy, NE Community

We light this candle to pray for ourselves and others in our lives who have been touched by gun violence.

During the silent pause, we invite you to offer the names either silently or aloud of those for whom you pray.

Together we pray.

All: God of Astonishing Mercy, Compassion and Immeasurable Love, restore our broken hearts and enliven our confidence to find new ways to revive our world to become one of peace.



MUSICAL MEDITATION “Widow’s Alley” by Inkuyo

A traditional Peruvian song written to commemorate all of the men, young and old, who were murdered in Peru by the Shining Path rebels, leaving many widows in one area of the country. It is a call to remembrance that their lives were not lost in vain and a call to change so that the killing stops.

PRAYER FOR COMPASSION AND ACTION

Bridget Kerr, Charlotte Congregational Church, UCC

Gracious Holy One, we gather here because we are facing an unknown future with persistent and deep suffering from gun violence. It is hard to know where to turn so that voices of peace, understanding and compassion might be heard. We find it difficult to listen to each other. When gun shots ring out in our schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, churches, streets, and homes, hearts are broken. Lives are shattered. Souls that are taken from us cannot be returned, and we are left diminished as a human family. Violence done to one person is violence done to all.

But we know that your spirit of compassion, mercy and dignity travels through all of time. You watch over us even when we feel more than slightly lost. Within our reach is the goodness, promise and dreams that are your dreams. Remind us when we falter that love ultimately wins. Comfort us when we mourn with the assurance that life is bigger than that which we call death. Provoke in us the determination to keep trusting in the future so that together we find a way to listen, to address those things that need to be addressed and to respect the dignity of all human beings. This we hold up before you knowing the good you intend for us.

A CALL TO COMMITMENT, ACTION AND SENDING FORTH

Rabbi Joshua Chasan, Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, Burlington

CONCLUDING SONG “We Shall Overcome” No. 169 in Hymnal

Song leader Bill Mares, Pianist Lisa Wolff

We shall overcome. We shall overcome.

We shall overcome some day.

Chorus: Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe

We shall overcome some day.



We'll walk hand in hand. We'll walk hand in hand.
We'll walk hand in hand some day.

Chorus

We shall live in peace. We shall live in peace.
We shall live in peace some day.

Chorus

We shall all be free. We shall all be free.
We shall all be free some day.

Chorus

We are not afraid. We are not afraid.
We are not afraid today.

Chorus

We are not alone. We are not alone.
We are not alone today.

Chorus

FINAL BLESSING

Jean Markey-Duncan, Sisters of Mercy, NE Community

All: Today we stand together to express our unity and our commitment. We stand as one people against the violence that has touched every corner of every part of our country. And we commit ourselves to journey on the path toward a more perfect peace—peace in our hearts, in all of our homes, our towns and our cities—to a place where the sound of gunfire is stilled and the laughter of children fills the air.

POSTLUDE

Barbara Thomke and Jessica Betz, flutists, Annamary Anderson, cellist





PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS

Jeneva Burroughs, *First Baptist Church, Burlington*
Stu Burroughs, *First Baptist Church, Burlington*
Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, *Charlotte Congregational Church, Charlotte*
Sue-Rae Glinka, *Mercy Associate, Sisters of Mercy, NE Community*
Marcia Gustafson, *Ascension Lutheran Church, South Burlington*
Rev. David Hamilton, *All Saints Episcopal Church, South Burlington*
Susan Hartman, *All Saints Episcopal Church, South Burlington*
Suellen Howley, *Baha'i Faith, Burlington*
Jud Lawrie, *First Unitarian Universalist Society, Burlington*
Ruth Magill, *Williston Federated Church, Williston*
Bill Mares, *St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Colchester*
Rev. Peggy Mathauer, *All Saints Episcopal Church, South Burlington*
Sister Janice Ryan, *RSM, Sisters of Mercy, NE Community*
Sherry Star, *Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, Burlington*
Roger Steinhauer, *Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington*
Rev. Carole Wageman, *All Saints Episcopal Church, South Burlington*
Margy Zabriskie, *Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington*

CHAIR: Jean Markey-Duncan, *Vermont Rep., NE Justice Council, Sisters of Mercy*

USHERS

Doug Dreibelbis, Sue-Rae Glinka, Marcia Gustafson, Susan Hartman, Ed Malina,
Rick Taylor, Ann Wadsworth

Thank you to Rev. Mara Dowdall, Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Society, for her full embrace of this important prayer and remembrance vigil, and to Bob Furrer, facilities manager, for his generous spirit and professionalism in helping the planning team meet its goals.

Thank you to Charlotte Congregational Church Senior Youth Group for helping to create the awareness raising t-shirt display depicting the eighty-nine people, including eight children, who die each day from gun violence in the United States.