

Prayer Vigil on the First Anniversary of Murders at Newtown, Connecticut

Opening Hymn

Opening Prayer

Readings (From the funeral liturgy for children)

Is. 65: 17-20, 23-25 (I am about to create new heavens and a new earth.)

Is. 66: 7-13 (As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.)

Jer 31: 15-17 (Rachel weeping for her children)

Ps 23 The Lord is my shepherd

Ps 43 As the deer longs for the water brooks

Ps 46 God is our refuge and strength.

Romans 8: 31-39 Who will separate us from the love of Christ?)

Psalm 121 I lift up my eyes to the hills

Ps 130 Out of the depths

Ps 139 1-14 Lord you search me and you know me.

Mt. 18 10-14 (This child is the greatest in the kingdom)

Mk 10: 13-16 Let the little children come to me.

Jn 10: 11-16 I am the good shepherd

Reading: (Justice)

Micah 6: 6-8 (What does the Lord require)

Isaiah 55: 10 – 56:1 (For as the rain and snow come down)

Mk 4: 21-29 (Is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel)

Lk 4: 16-19 (The spirit of the Lord is upon me.)

Prayers (ECLA)

For communities and schools affected by violence, especially Sandy Hook Elementary School. As they remember and as they grieve, hear their cries and wipe away their tears. Assure them of your promised peace in the midst of suffering.

Hear us O God, Your Mercy is Great.

God our hope, you are in the midst of all who suffer. Be with the people of Newtown, Connecticut, who, with your servant Rachel, weep and wail for the loss of innocent children. Hear their cries; embrace their pain, and bring peace to all victims of tragic violence.

Hear us, O God, Your Mercy is Great.

God our hope, in you light shines in the darkness and mourning turns to joy. Be with the community of Newtown, Connecticut in this time of overwhelming sorrow. May your light surround them and all victims of violence.

Hear us, O God; Your Mercy is Great.

Prayers of the People by Rev. Dr. Casey G. Baggott

Community Church of Vero Beach

12-16-12

Ancient and Eternal God, author of life, sustainer of hope, comforter in every need, we have come today for reassurance of your presence, as we continue to sort through the details of destruction, sad remnants from the tragedy of the shootings at the Sandy Hook School.

We still must sift through enormous grief, God in the knowledge that fragile, innocent lives were senselessly lost, and countless others have been tragically altered. May we find, as we have gathered together, and as your people across this country have gathered in faith and hope, that hand reaches out to grab hand one to the next to the next in comfort and support. Let us claim in our efforts to be present to and for one another in this time of need, that you are present among us. And that in your presence we may come to trust that the incomprehensible will somehow, someday be shaped by your great wisdom.

God, today we are still sifting through the shards of our broken certainties. Gone is the predictable future we thought we knew for ourselves and our children. The world seems more dangerous and unstable than before. May we find amidst this uncertainty those deep convictions and lasting values that are unshakeable, despite the turmoil of the day. And may these constants in our lives remind us of your constancy and your unchanging strength.

God, we still sift through the rubble of our own anger and fear. We ask that you help us to transform the energy of these dangerous emotions into passionate and productive caring a caring that grinds hatred to a halt with measured, thoughtful justice, a caring that disarms the arsenals of cruelty with forces of goodness and grace. Teach us and all your human family, we pray, how to live wisely and well with the powerful emotions you have granted us, so that they may protect and serve, and never be employed to harm or injure.

And finally God, we sort through our own losses lost innocence, lost security, lost life, and we ask that we may find among these losses, a gain – a gain that comes by restoring a simple trust in you. Show us that when all is lost, you create anew. Show us that when life is gone, your resurrection restores. Show us that your love cannot, for any reason, at any time be overcome. Let us know again, that when all else is gone, love always remains. For the greatest gift you have given your world is love, simple, ferocious love. And it is enough.

So let us rejoice today, as an act of defiance against the evil in the world. Let us point upward to you with assurance, and claim with conviction that it's going to be okay. Let us turn to the Hope of the World, just waiting to be born among us, and let us give thanks even now, especially now let us give thanks.

We pray today in the name and the memory of your Son who knew the cruelty of the world and overcame it. Let us walk in his way, share his unshakeable trust in you, and speak his very words. Hear us now as with one confident voice, O God, we say together the words of prayer your beloved Son taught us *The Lord's Prayer*.

Blessing

Candlelight Walk to City Hall

We are marching in the light of God.

Hymns:

God of Mercy you have shown us

I want to walk as a child of the light

Jerusalem, my happy home

The king of love my shepherd is

There is a balm in Gilead

Precious Lord, take my hand

Eagle's wings

Shall we gather at the river

Just a closer walk with thee

Jesus loves, me, this I know.

O God, You Call for Justice

AURELIA 7.6.7.6 D ("The Church's One Foundation")

O God, you call for justice—for goodness, never greed!

You seek a world of fairness where all have what they need—

Where all have food and water and homes in which to thrive,

Where all have hope and laughter and joy to be alive!

O God, you call for kindness instead of keeping score;

You seek a world that welcomes the hungry and the poor.

Lord, where there is injustice may we work to protect

The struggling ones, the voiceless that others would reject.

You call us to walk humbly, for we are not our own;

We all are poor and needy; we need the grace you've shown.

May we respond to others reflecting what you give—

Compassion, kindness, justice— so all may gladly live.

O God, may our great nation seek justice, as we should,

and work with dedication to seek the common good.

We're blessed to be a blessing; may we within our law

Seek justice and compassion that reaches out to all.

Biblical References: Micah 6:8

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Prayers:

God of comfort and consolation, our hearts are heavy tonight as are the hearts of our nation and the world. As Rachel weeps for her children in Ramah, we bitterly weep and wail for the twenty children of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and also for the six teachers and school administrators there tragically and senselessly gunned down. As we raise our lamentations to you, we also pray that you will comfort and console the Newtown community, the parents, family and friends of those slain, the first responders who faced an unimaginable and unspeakable scene, and all those seeking to make sense of the senseless. Never let our prayers serve as an excuse for inaction, so motivate and

empower us as individuals and as a nation to address our culture of gun violence, violence in the media, and violent video games, which desensitize us and our youth to absurd and inexcusable violence.

Contact Rev. Peter DeFranco revpdefranco@optonline.net for more info.