

Praying for an End to Gun Violence

A SERVICE OF LAMENT, HOPE AND RESOLVE WITH BISHOPS UNITED

Join us to lament the gun violence epidemic and pledge to follow the path of nonviolence. The Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, will preach.

Tuesday, October 27, 5 p.m. Eastern

BISHOPS UNITED AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Join the webinar on the Episcopalians United Against Gun Violence Facebook page or [register to join the webinar on Zoom](#). Join by phone by dialing 646.558.8656 and using ID 865 4994 7647.

Lament

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant

God of hope, we hold before you all who have lost their lives and all whose lives have been forever changed as a result of gun violence. We remember those who have ended their own lives with a gun, those who have died as a result of accidental shootings, and those whose lives have been cut short by a gun in the hands of a person with intent to kill. Remembering that we are all made in your image, we acknowledge the role the sin of racism and other forms of systemic hatred play in our American gun violence epidemic. During this time of sickness, isolation and uncertainty, we ask that you receive all who have died into the arms of your mercy, bless those who mourn with the hope of eternal life, and strengthen our hearts to work to bring an end to gun violence. All this we ask in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People Amen.

Hymn *When Pain or Sorrow Are Too Much to Bear*

When your heart feels numb, unable to care,
when faith seems so pointless that you cannot pray,
when no-one knows quite what to say, then

hold on, hold on,
to find a way to get through.
And when your hope is gone
and you can't hold on,
we will hold on to you.

If God is silent when you need to hear
that you're not alone, that comfort is near;
if you are abandoned when you need a friend,
when all good things come to an end, then

hold on, hold on,
to find a way to get through.
And when your hope is gone
and you can't hold on,
we will hold on to you.

And when it looks like there's no end in sight,
know all that is wrong can still be made right.
You're never alone; God has promised to be
with us even when we can't see, so

hold on, hold on,
to find a way to get through.
And when your hope is gone
and you can't hold on,
we will hold on to you.

Words by Adam Tice © 2018; Music by Sally Ann Morris © 2019 GIA Publications | Cantors:
Sarah and Jeff Wain, All Saints Episcopal Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago

A call to lament and prayer from Robert Schentrup

Prayers of Lament

O God of wisdom, we long for our elected officials to exercise their duties, always
feeling the weight of the responsibility bestowed upon them by the people.
Knowing that you are our one true leader and guide, we lament the dearth of
sound earthly leadership in halls of power that endangers the lives of the most

vulnerable among us. We pray for renewed responsible earthly leadership in this time, and for gun safety legislation that makes this country safer for all people.

O God of love, we remember all victims of anti-Black gun violence, police human rights abuses, and state-sanctioned gun violence. We lament the immense pain and suffering inflicted on members of the Black community. We mourn the lives lost at the hands of unjust, oppressive systems. We repent of the church's role in supporting injustice.¹

O God of healing, starting in March of this year, the United States has seen a shocking rise in gun sales. Last month, Americans purchased 1.92 million guns – up 67% from last September. We lament that this nation has responded to the fear of a deadly virus with the purchase of deadly weapons. Help us to learn that violence will never assuage our fears nor bring healing.

O God of peace, your people have always struggled in times of great uncertainty. In the midst of a pivotal national election and looking toward the civil unrest and gun violence it might bring, help us to commit ourselves to your justice at the same time as we commit ourselves to your peace, not resorting to the very violence we protest. Help us to follow the non-violent way of Jesus.

O God, we remember all who have died by suicide or domestic violence. Heal their families who struggle with stigma and loss. May their stories be woven into a visible witness for safety and become a catalyst to reverse the trend to stockpile more guns. We pray that your healing spirit breathe on those who threaten to take their own life, especially those who live in households with guns, because experience demonstrates that they are at greater risk. We pray that same spirit fill their loved ones with courage and fortitude to remove firearms for those who ponder or plan self-harm. We pray that your invisible hand of love extend to those who are threatened with domestic violence, especially in those households where guns are present, because experience demonstrates that they are at greater fatal risk. And may that same invisible hand of love draw back the perpetrator's hand from striking or pulling a trigger. We offer this prayer to one who is both the source of healing and the champion of peace.

Veni Sancte Spiritus, Taizé Community (1978) | Cantors: Michelle Mayes, All Saints Episcopal Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago

Hope

Lesson: Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Sermon

The Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde

Moment of Contemplation: Steal Away to Jesus

Steal away, steal away,
steal away to Jesus!
Steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.

My Lord, he calls me,
He calls me by the thunder;
The trumpet sounds within my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here. [Refrain]

Green trees are bending,
Poor sinners stand a trembling;
The trumpet sounds within my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here. [Refrain]

My Lord, he calls me,
He calls me by the lightning;
The trumpet sounds within my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here. [Refrain]

Steal Away to Jesus, Spiritual | Cantors: the choir of All Saints Episcopal Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago

The Lord's Prayer

Officiant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Officiant and People:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Resolve

Commissioning by the Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith

Election Day Pledge:

God of Hope and Compassion,

Mindful of the devastating toll gun violence has taken on our country, resolved to spare our siblings in the human family the loss of loved ones, and devoted to walking the path of non-violence, we pledge to refrain from using firearms of any kind at or near polling places, at or near boards of election or drop boxes, on Election Day at gatherings that may occur—in our homes, in places of business, or in our streets—while votes are being counted, or after results are announced.

In the name of your son Jesus Christ, we resolve to intensify our work against the hatreds, injustices and hopelessness that heighten the violence in our society, and to treat one another as your beloved children.

<https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/bishops-united-election-day-pledge-2/>

Blessing and Dismissal

Postlude: Servant Song

Richard Gillard, 1977 | Cantors: Sarah and Jeff Wain, All Saints Episcopal Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago

Participants:

Officiant: The Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas, *Episcopal Church in Connecticut*

Preacher: The Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde, *Episcopal Diocese of Washington*

Litanists:

The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, *Episcopal Diocese of Missouri*

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, *Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis*

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher, *Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts*

The Rt. Rev. Bonnie Perry, *Episcopal Diocese of Michigan*

The Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith, *Episcopal Diocese of Newark, retired*

Reader: The Rev. Anne Derse, *St. John's Norwood, Chevy Chase*

Music Director: Colin Collette, *All Saints, Chicago*

The Voice of the People: Robert Schentrup, Carolyn Burns

About Robert Schentrup

Robert Schentrup is brother to Carmen Schentrup, one of the 17 victims of the Parkland School Shooting. Ever since then, he has been working tirelessly on the issue of gun violence prevention, sitting on the Team Enough Executive Committee and helping lead a gun violence prevention chapter at his university. He is also the Founder and CEO of Zero USA, an organization he founded after the death of his sister that partners with survivors of gun violence and advocates across the country to work toward zero preventable gun deaths across the country. Robert is currently a junior at the University of Central Florida where he attends school.

About Carolyn Burns

Carolyn Burns is a speech and language pathologist in an elementary school in Western MA. Her daughter HM3 Meaghan Elizabeth Burns, US Navy Corpsman, was shot in a double murder suicide by another Navy Corpsman on May 4, 2019 while helping a friend. Meaghan worked at a military hospital in Portsmouth, VA. Her family was so grateful that she was stationed stateside rather than being deployed to Afghanistan as was the plan until she got hurt. Ironically, if she had been deployed, she would probably still be alive today. Carolyn is a runner. Since Meaghan passed, she has dedicated her weekly pre-church Sunday runs to her. She has participated in "Run for the Fallen," "Wear Blue to Remember," and ran her first marathon virtually, 10/25/2020 the Marine Corps Marathon, in her honor. She hopes to not only raise awareness and stop gun violence but also erase the stigma of mental health needs in the military.

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ⁱ Adapted from and inspired by [Anti-Racism Vigil: A Day for Prayer, Personal Growth, Planning for Future Action](#), St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Columbus, Ohio