

Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council Vigil

Honouring the Victims of Nova Scotia's April 2020 Tragedy

Please note: We will invite you to light five candles as you read and pray this vigil liturgy. If you wish to light candles, please consider collecting what you need for that before continuing to read.

Opening – (By Rev. Dr. Marjorie Lewis, Acadia chaplain)

We are breathing.

We thank God for the breath of life.

Through the beauty of nature, the love of family and friends; through inspiring music, worship and meditation; through shared humour and snatches of comfort:

We are breathing.

Through the multiple traumas of COVID-19, disruption of routines, through cancelled celebrations, missed goodbyes, through tragedy in Nova Scotia:

We are breathing.

Through feelings of numbness, of fear, of deep grief, of loneliness; through feelings of anger, of helplessness, of exhaustion; through feelings of guilt, of regret:

We are breathing.

Through too little sleep or too much sleep; through remembered distress and body aches; through the daily litanies of others' suffering; through wondering why so much suffering and why innocent lives are taken; through feeling that it's all too much to take in right now:

We are breathing.

Through choked tears and tense bodies; through phone calls, media reports, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, FaceTime and countless posts; through too few hugs:

We are breathing.

Through hopes that our friends, families, neighbours, medical teams, scientists, care workers, religious and political leaders are all right and will get it right; through our hopes that in the end we will be well, nature will be well and all manner of things will be well:

We are breathing. We are breathing. We are breathing. Through.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 139:1 – 12 (Book of Common Prayer)

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

2 You know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
3 You trace my journeys and my resting-places,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
4 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.
5 You press upon me behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

7 Where can I go then from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
8 If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand will lead me,
and your right hand hold me fast.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me,
and the light around me turn to night,"
12 Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
darkness and light to you are both alike.

Candle Lighting – (By Rev. Don Sellsted, Orchard Valley United)

If you have gathered candles for this, please light them as noted below.

We light five candles in honour of the victims and families of this tragic event in the lives of so many. One for Grief, one for Courage, one for Memory, one for Love, and one for Hope.

As we light the first candle, we remember these victims and their families: RCMP Constable Heidi Stevenson, Tom Bagley, Greg Blair, Jamie Blair, and Lisa McCully.

Light first candle.

The First Candle represents Grief. The pain of this tragic loss is intense. It may trigger feelings of grief in us even though we do not know those who died. This candle also represents the care and support of this community as we come together in this time and place.

As we light the second candle, we remember these victims and their families: Heather O'Brien, Alanna Jenkins, Sean McLeod, Kristen Beaton, and Corrie Ellison.

Light second candle.

The second candle represents the Courage to confront deep sorrow, to comfort one another, and to reflect on how this tragedy has changed the lives of so many.

As we light the third candle, we remember these victims and their families: Dawn Gulenchyn, Frank Gulenchyn, Peter Bond, Joy Bond, and Joey Webbers.

Light third candle.

The third candle we light for Memory. We hope the families and friends of the victims will remember the times of laughter, the times of shedding tears, the times of silliness, and the times of care and joy given freely.

As we light the fourth candle, we remember these victims and their families: Emily Tuck, Jolene Oliver, Aaron (Friar) Tuck, Gina Goulet, and Lillian Hyslop.

Light fourth candle.

The fourth candle we light for Love. Despite us not knowing the victims, they are a part of us. Every faith calls us to a unique love for each other.

As we light the fifth candle, we remember these victims and their families: John Zahl, Joanne Thomas. As well, we remember those victims and their families we are not yet able to name.

Light fifth candle.

The fifth candle we light for Hope; hope that in the despair of this event, something new will grow to make a lasting and positive difference in the world. We can be part of that difference.

This is our prayer. Long may it be so. Amen.

Prayer for the Deceased (By Rev. Sandra Fyfe, St. John's Anglican, Wolfville)

We remember all who have died, the victims, we remember the man who committed these crimes, all perpetrators of violent crimes and their families. We acknowledge our sorrow, our outrage and our questions. And we pray the Eternal Rest Prayer:

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord,

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

May their souls, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

Closing Words: *"Blessing When the World is Ending"* (By Jan Richardson)

Look, the world
is always ending
somewhere.

Somewhere
the sun has come
crashing down.

Somewhere
it has gone
completely dark.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the gun,
the knife,
the fist.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the slammed door,
the shattered hope.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the utter quiet
that follows the news
from the phone,
the television,
the hospital room.

Somewhere
it has ended
with a tenderness
that will break
your heart.

But, listen,
this blessing means
to be anything
but morose.
It has not come
to cause despair.

It is simply here
because there is nothing
a blessing
is better suited for
than an ending,
nothing that cries out more
for a blessing
than when a world
is falling apart.

This blessing
will not fix you,
will not mend you,
will not give you
false comfort;
it will not talk to you
about one door opening
when another one closes.

It will simply
sit itself beside you
among the shards
and gently turn your face
toward the direction
from which the light
will come,
gathering itself
about you
as the world begins
again.

Please consider putting a heart in a window to show your support for those affected by Nova Scotia's tragedy. Thanks to everyone who prepared this vigil.