



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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“The Lord reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice. The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.”
(Psalm 9:7-10)

“May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”
(Psalm 33:22)

November 14, 2015

Dear United Methodists of the Susquehanna Annual Conference:

Grace to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, the Prince of Peace, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world!

The world was dealt with yet another diabolical blow of terrorism. Our hearts go out to the grieving families and the loved ones of the innocent victims of the terrorist attacks in France this past Friday. They are in our prayers for comfort, strength, and healing. While still in shock and disbelief, we share their agony and pain.

The world shall never forget that terrorism is the most despicable crime against humanity. No matter what the cause may be, terrorism must be condemned. In solidarity with the human community, our resolve to end terrorism must only grow stronger.

Even in these most trying times, let's be reminded that God is with us. We put our faith in our God whose steadfast love, goodness, and mercy endures forever. We put our hope in the Lord who judges in righteousness, governs with justice, and rules for peace. We can be assured of God's power that triumphs over the force of darkness and death.

As people of faith and hope, the most essential thing we have to do and we can do now is to pray. I would ask our people to have a moment of prayer in silence or in spoken words during worship this Sunday. You may want to use the following prayer or prayers of your own:

O God, we pause in silence and reflection because once again evil has invaded sharply into your world with all its vengeance and power. We are particularly mindful of the persons who have lost their lives and their families and loved ones. We lift up for healing those persons who were injured and are fighting to live. We pray in solidarity with those who are directly affected by the horrible tragedy as they now live in fear and pain. May your presence bring a sense of calm with the assurance that you are with them even in these darkest days. O Lord, provide wisdom for those who must lead and respond in the midst of these horrendous events.

God, we also pray for ourselves that we might be a people who are not quick to condemn entire nations or a particular religious faith because of the extremist acts of terror of a few. God, your people throughout the world call upon you as their creator. They too have been harmed by the actions of these terrorists. Lord, may we learn how to live together in peace and with a respect for all persons regardless of race, color, creed, or religion.

God, you are the Creator and Author of this life and when you looked at that creation, after every act, you declared it good. Truly the world in which we inhabit is magnificent with the hues of humanity and everywhere we look we see evidence of your creative power, presence and beauty. You intended for humanity to live in harmony with you, nature, each other and our own selves. To that end, O God, we once again recommit to work for peace in the world. As the hymn writer expressed it, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

We pray these spoken and unspoken words in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior we worship, the Prince of Peace we follow, Healer of our brokenness we represent, and Hope of the world we proclaim. Amen.

Grace and Peace,

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Jeremiah J. Park