

A Statement from Bishop Humphrey in the Wake of Mass Murders in Charlottesville and Chesapeake

(November 2022)

A voice says “Cry out !” And [we] said what shall [we] cry? (Isaiah 40:6)

Once more a shooter has killed and wounded people on the territory of our Virginia Synod, ELCA. This week the murderer targeted fellow employees at a Walmart store in Chesapeake, Virginia within miles of Grace Lutheran Church. Last week a killer assaulted fellow students at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville within miles of St. Mark Lutheran Church.

These two are but a fraction of the hundreds of mass shootings in the U.S. every year. Such brutal acts have lasting and devastating impacts on victims, families, communities and all of society. Let us commit ourselves to prayer and lament – absolutely! But also, to finding ways of preventing these crimes from happening in the first place. As disciples of the One called “Prince of Peace” we can make difference.

In this week of national Thanksgiving celebrations, let us give thanks for the victims; unite our hearts in lifting prayers of lament and offering our support for the traumatized and grieving. Let us initiate and/or continue meaningful conversations about how we can best respond to limit/stop prejudice and violence.

Lord, in your mercy... Hear our prayers. Help us to follow you in being FAITHFUL + BOLD + SERVING.

Bishop Bob Humphrey
Virginia Synod, ELCA

A Prayer of Lament

Rise up and come to our help, merciful God, for we are in need. Our spirits are weighed down with fear; our bodies feel as fragile as the dust from which we came. All that we have trusted seems hidden from sight. Although this moment has come upon our *Commonwealth*, you have not forgotten us. We do not trust in our own power or strength, but in your steadfast love in every generation. Show us your face in this time of trial, remind us of your faithfulness, and save us for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From: *All Creation Sings*, Prayers, Thanksgivings and Laments; *ELCA Worship Resources*)

