

Statement from Region 15 of
The United Church of Canada
-Prayer Vigil for Nova Scotia-

Good afternoon and welcome to all who have joined us. Today we are assembling through electronic means as a way of being together in this difficult time of grief and of physical isolation. Saturday evening and during the day on Sunday, we became aware of horrific events happening within our Region, our Province. Our hearts are broken and they ache for the family members, the friends and the co-workers who are left to grieve the lives lost. Our hearts ache for those who did not know any of the deceased but are a little bit more afraid of life this week than they were last week. We also remember the first responders and witnesses who have experienced unthinkable horrors.

As Christians, we believe God is with us as we journey through the valleys of life experiences. We also take comfort in the belief that God was with each of the people killed in this terrible tragedy. We are an Easter people and believe that from our Good Friday experiences, new promise awaits. While it is hard to see any good in this situation right now, we are called to find ways that we can take the lessons learned from this tragedy and use them to make the world a better place. We are called to reach out to each other and support each other in our grief and in the days and weeks ahead. Whatever is stirring within you as a result of these tragic events, act upon it. It may be sending a card to someone who has been affected or to someone you know who is suffering in another way. Maybe you can pick up the phone and call someone to support them or just to tell them how much they mean to you. Perhaps you will feel moved to volunteer with organizations that help with mental health issues or those that strive to end violence. If we do our part in ensuring support and action then these people will not have died in vain.

Region 15 recognizes that many congregations and members of the United Church of Canada will need support in the days ahead. Please know that the Staff and Executive of Region 15 will be there to support you. If you are a member of a community within Nova Scotia or anywhere in Canada and feel you need support to help with how you are feeling, please feel free to seek out help from your local United Church. I would like to thank the Regions and the individual congregations from across Canada and around the world who have sent messages of support. They are appreciated. To all those who have lit candles in your windows, or played songs of comfort or held the families and all those affected in your prayers, thank you! God is weeping with us and is embracing us in love. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!