



Light in the Broken Places*
Prayers of Lament, Healing, and Courage
following the tragic events at Pulse Orlando on June 12, 2016
June 14, 2016

Time of Musical Preparation

David Debick

A Time of Welcome

Words of Welcome/Call to Worship

The Rev. James Moos

Opening Hymn "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" #472 *The New Century Hymnal*

Opening Prayer (one)

by David Long-Higgins

The Rev. James Moos

Oh God, there is too much violence, too much hurt, too much anguish and loss.

There is too much misuse of religion to justify the hurting of others.

Take the anguish of our hearts and the hearts of so many, and hold us.

Hold especially those whose family members and friends have died
as a result of the violence in Orlando.

In our grief let us not be paralyzed,

but rather emboldened to foster a different way.

Let our tears water the seeds of compassion

and foster a renewed commitment to understanding and love.

Let this begin where we live

and may it spread into the world. Amen.

A Time of Remembrance

Reading the Names

Dámaris Vélez and Andy Lang

A Time of Reflection

Jeremiah 31:15

Thus says the Lord:
A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

Reflection by Lee Ann Bryce, pastor, First Congregation UCC, Fort Worth, TX

"I do want to thank Rev. West and Celebration Church
for hosting this vigil
and providing a place for the community to come together.
This is a beautiful church
and we're grateful to be here,
but I want to talk for a moment about gay bars.
I came out as a lesbian many years ago
and I've noticed that at times,
particularly early in our movement for equality
gay bars have been referred to as a sort of necessary evil;
at one time, they were one of the few public places
where LGBTQ people could meet and be in community.
The truth is
long before we were widely welcomed in churches,
we were welcomed in gay bars.
And so to me, gay bars and nightclubs,
many of them at least,
are like churches.
Or at least like churches should be –
places where you are welcomed just as you are.
Places where you can gather with loving, supportive community
and sort of get bolstered up
to go back outside to our homophobic world.
I know that I have always felt a kind of safety
at the gay bars I've been to;
like I could let my hair down.

Some very important things have happened
on the holy ground of gay bars
through the years.
It was when drag queens at a bar called the Stonewall Inn,
put their foot down,
put their magnificent 6-inch heels down
and said, we will not be targets any longer,
that's when our movement was born.
They were victimized by violence and brutality,
just as patrons of gay bars have been ever since.
The Rainbow Lounge comes to mind.
I can imagine the men and women at Pulse Orlando feeling safe,
having fun, dancing, laughing.
They did not sign up to become martyrs,
but that is exactly what they have become;
innocent victims of the unforgivable crime
of simply being themselves.
The changes and chances of life are indeed unpredictable
and outside of our control.
And so [today],
we remember those who lost their lives
in this crystallized act of hatred.
We grieve their loss.
We pray for their families and friends who grieve.
And we pray for those who lie in hospitals,
clinging to life at this moment;
people who will forever bear the wounds of this terrible attack.
We open our hearts,
and we gather all of them in.
And we strengthen our resolve
to end the violence and abuse
perpetrated against LGBTQ people
whether it happen in gay bars
or hastily deleted tweets
or school board meetings.
May the tragic deaths of the patrons at Pulse
not be in vain
but may they lead to lasting change against all acts of violence."

Jeremiah 31:13

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

In the spirit of lament, which includes grief and hope, let us ferry our prayers to our tender God:

A Time of Prayer

Song "Ferry Our Prayers" #105 *Sing! Prayer and Praise*

Pastoral Prayer (all)

Merciful God,
we pray this afternoon for those who are afraid:
give them courage.
For those who dwell in anger,
finding outlets for their rage in scapegoating, blame, and violence,
change their hearts.
For those who have long lived without safe spaces,
and who seek sanctuary in the context of community,
give them love.
For those who have been excluded and marginalized,
kicked out and told they are less-than,
hold them in love.
For the fifty who died,
the more than fifty who cling to life,
their friends, family, and all who gather in grief today,
grant comfort and peace.
Bless our time together, our words, our songs, our prayers. Amen.

Closing Song: "In All Our Living" (all verses) #499 *TNCH*

"Blessing in a Time of Violence" by Jan Richardson
www.paintedprayerbook.com/2015/11/16/blessing-in-a-time-of-violence

Which is to say
this blessing
is always.

Which is to say
there is no place
this blessing

does not long
to cry out
in lament,
to weep its words
in sorrow,
to scream its lines
in sacred rage.

Which is to say
there is no day
this blessing ceases
to whisper
into the ear
of the dying,
the despairing,
the terrified.

Which is to say
there is no moment
this blessing refuses
to sing itself
into the heart
of the hated
and the hateful,
the victim
and the victimizer,
with every last
ounce of hope
it has.

Which is to say
there is none
that can stop it,
none that can
halt its course,
none that will
still its cadence,
none that will
delay its rising,
none that can keep it
from springing forth
from the mouths of us

who hope,
from the hands of us
who act,
from the hearts of us
who love,
from the feet of us
who will not cease
our stubborn, aching
marching, marching

until this blessing
has spoken
its final word,
until this blessing
has breathed
its benediction
in every place,
in every tongue:

Peace.

Peace.

Peace.

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**Thanks to composer Leonard Cohen for the image*

Opening Prayer by the Rev. David Long-Higgins, pastor of David's United Church of Christ in Canal Winchester, Ohio. Used with permission. **Reflection** by Lee Ann Bryce, pastor, First Congregational UCC, Fort Worth, TX. Used with permission. **Blessing:** "Blessing in a Time of Violence" at www.paintedprayerbook.com/2015/11/16/blessing-in-a-time-of-violence © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com. Used with permission. **Pastoral Prayer** by the Rev. Nicolette Siragusa, First Congregational UCC, Grand Ledge, Michigan, delivered at a vigil on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol Building.