

Ring Out Love!

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination, full of hope.” –Maya Angelou

I am still thinking about Valentine’s Day and the power of love. On Thursday, February 14th, we “Rang Out Love.” How did this come about you might ask? As the anniversary of Parkland drew near, I became aware that students in different communities around Maine were feeling the angst of this anniversary. As a parent, I was feeling it too and I knew that other parents were in a similar place. This Valentine’s Day was going to be a tough anniversary for some of our kids and for our nation for that matter. So I wondered if our Church could somehow be of help. Could we be present to these young people and our schools? Could we be a small sign of solace in the face of grief, a small sign of solidarity in the face of the status quo? So I checked in with GHS to find out what would be most helpful. Ringing our bell when Greely was observing a moment of silence at 2:25 pm seemed right because we knew that as the students were remembering, they would also be able to hear the bell ringing.

And so building on the Social Justice team’s history of concern about gun violence, in just two days we were able to create a graphic and spread the word. The Spirit was truly in the whole process guiding us! For example, other churches wanted to join us! On Valentine’s Day, Gorham First Parish Congregational just happened to hear about it on Maine Public so they called the Church office to tell us they were going to ring their bells too. From Kittery to Dedham, from Bethel to Boothbay Harbor, from Alfred to Cumberland, sixteen churches and probably more “Rang Out Love” in their communities. **After all our Maine Conference, UCC voted on a Urgent Call for the Prevention of Gun Violence in 2013!**

As we read the names from Parkland, the bell rang seventeen times for the seventeen beautiful souls who were lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. We then rang the bell for victims of domestic violence and suicide. We rang the bell for the Tree of Life synagogue, for the four who died at the Waffle House in TN, for the nine church members at Mother Emmanuel Church in SC, for Pulse Nightclub, for Las Vegas, for Sandy Hook Elementary School, and for communities of color for whom this has been such a difficult and ongoing struggle. And then the bell kept pealing. And we kept on ringing, as a sign of prayer, from our hearts to anyone who could hear and even those who couldn’t.

So let us keep “Ringing out Love”—remembering Parkland and working for change.

And may this Love, of which we are all a part, ring and keep jumping hurdles “to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

Blessings, Allison

Ring Out Love!

Ring Out Love! across Maine

Congregational Church in Cumberland, United Church of Christ, Cumberland
Alfred Parish Church, UCC, Alfred
Blue Point Congregational Church, UCC, Scarborough
Congregational Church of Boothbay Harbor, Boothbay
Dedham Congregational Church, UCC, Dedham
First Parish Congregational, Gorham
First Parish Congregational Church, Yarmouth
Holden Congregational Church, UCC, Holden
North Parish Congregational Church, UCC, Sanford
Second Christian Congregational, UCC, Kittery
Second Congregational Church, UCC, Newcastle
Union Congregational Church, South Bristol
UU Church of Brunswick, Brunswick
Waterville UCC, Waterville
West Parish Congregational UCC, Bethel
Winslow Congregational Church, Winslow

Advocacy Opportunity

Maine Advocacy Day 2019 ~ March 19th ~ 9 am to 3 pm at the Maine State House, Augusta
Join “Mothers and Others” such as parents, grandparents, medical providers, educators and
mental health practitioners to advocate for a strong red flag law. On March 19th we will come
together to talk with legislators and fill the state house with supporters. Mark your calendars for
this empowering and important date. Sponsored by Mom’s Demand Action