



## Christian Faith Leaders in Colorado Mourn the Mass Shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand

“The **LORD** is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”--Psalm 34:18

On behalf of our 13 Christian denominations and 850 churches in Colorado, we express our deepest condolences to the victims and loved ones of the devastating mass shootings at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand that killed 50 people, and injured many others. Given the targeted nature of such terrorism, we especially stand in solidarity with Muslims around the world. There is no excuse for this tragedy to happen anywhere, especially in a space where a sacred community has gathered to worship.

We were shocked and saddened by the news. Though we come from different faith traditions, Christians and Muslims share values that call upon us to be the very best that we can be, including a commitment to live in peace with our neighbors. We mourn when anyone distorts Christian values to foment hate, and then build upon such hate to commit unspeakable acts of inhumanity against our brothers and sisters.

We deplore gun violence, hate crimes, Islamophobia, and terrorism in all their manifestations. We mourn the brokenness in our world that gives rise to such tragic events, and we are weary that they continue to happen. Yet, we remain steadfast in our commitment to love all of God's children, regardless of their religion, and to end such violence.

Signed,

The Colorado Council of Churches

**Rev. Sue Artt**, Conference Minister, Rocky Mountain Conference, United Church of Christ

**Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes**, Executive Regional Minister, Central Rocky Mountain Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

**Bishop Jim Gonia**, Rocky Mountain Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Presiding Elder Anthony Hill**, Kansas District, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

**Rev. Dana Hughes**, Transitional Presbytery Pastor, Presbytery of Denver

**Mark Kenning, R.E.**, Acting Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Plains and Peaks

**Rev. Michael J. Nicosia**, Vicar to the Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

**Bishop Karen Oliveto**, Mountain Sky Conference, United Methodist Church

**The Right Reverend Robert O'Neill**, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

**Rev. Vickie Samland**, Western Plains District Representative, Church of the Brethren

**Rev. Olivia Hudson Smith**, J.D., Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Denver

**Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran**, Executive Minister, American Baptist

Churches of the Rocky Mountains

**Adrian Miller**, Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches