

Greetings to the Saints of Mission Presbytery!

Beloveds.

Once again we find ourselves in this situation. Once again, we find ourselves in this situation in Mission Presbytery. Once again, our hearts are breaking.

Now is not the time for us to write letters or to arrange protests, or to lash out in any other way. This is the time for us to mourn 23 lives lost - the children, the teachers, the assailant, and his grandmother. All in a community of about 16,000 people on the western edge of our presbytery.

One thing I do know this day: God walks with us and cries with us. Some will try and placate the tragedy of this situation by claiming that God “wanted a few more angels.” None of this is God’s will for any of us - for the perpetrator, for the children, for the families, for the community. The One who was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” is the same One who grieves this tragedy and holds us as we weep.

I have been in close contact with the Rev. [Gini Norris-Lane](#), who moderates the Session at Uvalde First. She is exactly the pastoral presence that both the community and First Presbyterian need at this point in time. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has already stepped in with a grant which will help support the grieving families. I’ve heard from so very many people offering their love and support, from the Rev. Dr. [Diane Givens Moffett](#) at the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Rev. Kerry Rice, Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, to Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians coast to coast. When our Stated Clerk and I attended the prayer service on Wednesday evening in Uvalde, we delivered a box of prayer shawls for the community from University Presbyterian Church in San Antonio.

Once again, I am awed by the connectional church - by all those who serve as God’s hands and feet in a time when it is most needed. We are all held, uplifted, and accompanied by people we may never meet. Isn’t it amazing?

I also continue to be amazed at how, in a time when we want to say so many things but are actually at a loss for words, we can cling to the promise of the Apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit intercedes in our attempts at prayer “with sighs too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26) Eugene Peterson’s translation *The Message* puts it this way:

If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. [God's Spirit] does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. [Holy Spirit] knows us far better than we know ourselves... and keeps us present before God.

May our wordless sighs and aching groans be translated into cries for help, prayers for sustenance, and praise for the Creator who loves us and is with us always.

Presbyter Sightings

May 30 - Office closed for Memorial Day

May 31 - Meet with Presbytery staff; 5th Tuesday gathering with Victoria region

June 1 - Zoom with Austin Region, Synod EP Forum and Leadership Team

June 5 - Preach for Yorktown First

June 6 - Meet with Commission on Ministry

June 9 - Zoom with Corpus Christi region

June 10-11 - Meet with Mission Presbytery!