

Prayer for Victims of Gun Violence

City Hall, Portland, Maine

Rev. Jill Job Saxby, Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches

January 8, 2012

Our Creator, Great Spirit, O God whose Names are Love and Wisdom and Peace,

We come before you today deeply grateful for the blessings of this intricately woven creation in which we live our lives and nurture our hopes and cherish our dreams. You have so made the world and our human souls that we can see beauty in the large and the small, in the infinite and the fleeting. For this we are grateful today. And you have so made us that we are able to imagine justice, to yearn for peace and to love one another. For all this, we are grateful today.

And yet, we come together today in all humility, because we are here to remember and to recognize how often in our human communities we fall short of love and wisdom and peace, of all you intend for us to be. We are here to remember and to recognize how human violence rips the beautiful fabric of creation and tears at the roots of life and of hope. Today, we are here to remember and to recognize how gun violence has touched the lives of so many people, near us and far away, directly and indirectly.

With each act of gun violence, with each injury and death, the ripples of grief and despair push outward. The pain and outrage rolls over those closest to the immediate victims, mothers and fathers, spouses and children. The wave runs on to touch family and friends, neighbors and strangers, because all of us, finally, are connected to one another in what Martin Luther King called a “single fabric of destiny.”

The tsunami of grief and despair sometimes threatens to swamp us. It threatens all our efforts to build families and communities of compassion and peace. We sometimes feel helpless before the appalling reality of violence, the

appalling depth of our grief. Let us acknowledge and remember the pain, because it is real and it is here in our midst, even now. (SILENCE)

But we are a resilient people, O God. You have made us for one another. You have given us the ability to remember that we do not stand alone, but can lean on one another.

We pray for the strength to remain a resilient and a vigilant people, ever-watchful for signs of hope, for evidences of love and wisdom, for the path toward peace. May we never give up on the vision of a society where gun violence no longer tears at the fabric of community, where there are no more victims, where your Shalom will prevail.

We believe in this vision. We know it is within us. We know we need one another, and courage, and faith, to make it come true. We are grateful to stand here today, and to light this candle, one among millions, and to know: we are not alone.

Amen.