

Pastoral Prayer

Offered by Abbey Tennis

April 21st, 2013

All Souls Church Unitarian, Washington DC

Dearest Spirit of Life, Holiness closer than Breath, Beloved God,

This week, our world once again felt the stinging gash of violence on her people. This week, our world once again was shaken by explosive accidents, by earthquakes, by bombings. Many of us watched as footage of explosions in Boston and in Texas played endlessly on the news. Many of us have spent hours glued to Facebook, or to our phones, or to the internet, looking for information. Looking for reassurance that our loved ones are all right. Looking for hope in the rubble.

Some of us call Boston, or Texas, or China home. Some of us saw explosions and were brought back to the fear of September 11th. Others of us heard gunfire and were recalled to other times of violence in our lives.

After a week of horrors, we find ourselves scattered, grieving, numb, full of questions. We are scattered, grieving, numb and full of questions and the answers do not satisfy us. All the intelligence gathered in the world still cannot tell us why hatred exists. Or how any person can willfully destroy so many lives. Or how to understand earthquakes, or deadly accidents. We can't answer these questions for ourselves, even as we try to provide answers for our children.

Amidst a news cycle that brought calamity after gruesome calamity to our eyes, we continued to live our lives. We cared for sick loved ones. Snuggled our children. Coped with depression. Made food. Cleaned the house. We had disagreements, made decisions, laughed, worked, played. Babies were born this week. Spring has been dropping her blossoms all around us, and blooming anew. Some of us found love this week, and comfort, and friendship, and kindness.

The catastrophic is interwoven with the mundane, and somehow, this week, life feels less certain and more precious.

And yet, amidst all the fear, horror, and suffering we were reminded of the best that is in us. First responders that did not hesitate to rush in to help the injured after the blasts in Boston and Texas. We watched outpourings of generosity, cooperation, and love from around the world. We were reminded that people help in times of crisis. We were reminded that we need one another, and we found one another.

Today we hold the families that have been shattered this week in our loving embrace, as we hold our own families. We pray for the healing of all those injured and ill. We pray for compassion and justice, wholeness and peace.

Spirit of life, may we remain rooted in our best selves.

May we remember to hold our family and friends.

May the depth of our grief only be matched by the height of our love.

In the face of disaster, may we ever turn to compassion.

In the face of deep division, may we ever remember our interdependence.

May deep peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace. Amen.