



NETWORK of RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209

June 23rd 2015

Dear Parishioners and Families of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church,

We write to you as a group of 50+ faith communities—Muslims, Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Bahais, Quakers, Protestants, parish nurses, organizations of Clergy and others devoted to interfaith relationships. We share, with you and with the rest of the nation, a shock and grief that defy all attempts at words. However, we feel compelled to write to you, using words because they are all we have. Know that you are held in love by us.

We believe that all religions teach the dignity of human life, that we are all loved by God and that all religions call on us to embody the kind of openness you displayed in welcoming the man who was to end the lives of nine among you. We cannot imagine the test of faith you are now enduring.

We believe that there is solace to be had in prayer at all times, but especially during dark times and we believe that the power of prayer is available no matter which language or faith it is spoken in. We send you our prayers, both immediate and ongoing. We send you our love as fellow members of the body of many faiths, all worshipping a God who welcomes us into the Presence that offers comfort – even in the shadow of senseless deaths.

We greet you from afar, knowing that if we met, you would offer us hospitality, and we would embrace you, weeping with you and calling you our brothers and sisters. Know that we are with you at this time, in this place, always.

While we can do little for you in a concrete way, we return to our own task of reducing mistrust and hatred of all kinds among races, faiths, and all who would separate us. We take on this task more ardently, with more dedication and more soberly, having the example of your grief before us.

With prayers that you will be comforted and strengthened in the days ahead, and feel the sheltering arms of the Companion who never leaves us alone,

The members and the member organizations of the Network of Religious Communities

*Susan A. Jannell
on behalf of the NRC*