

Prayers for Oak Creek from Wisconsin Conference UMC

It is with great sadness that I join our United Methodists throughout Wisconsin, as well as people throughout the world in mourning the loss of those individuals who died and were injured in the recent shootings at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. As United Methodists, we accept and respect all faiths, and do not condone any type of hate crime, which this appears to be. According to the United Methodist Church Book of Resolutions, the Church continues to renew its “stand and commitment against hate crimes in any form and in any place.” Our Social Principles also direct us as United Methodists to embrace all hues of humanity, delight in diversity and difference, and favor solidarity transforming strangers into friends.

We believe that God is love, and in God, we are One. We pray for the families, friends, congregations and communities that were directly impacted by this tragedy. And, we join with the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) in a Day of Prayer for the Sikh Community in Christian congregations throughout the state next Sunday, August 12. The WCC and our Wisconsin Conference UMC hope that next Sunday will provide an opportunity for Christians to pray for the victims, their families, and for the Sikh community, which has experienced much tragedy and hardship in this country since the September 11th attacks (Sikhs are at times mistaken for Muslims). We also hope next Sunday will be an occasion for Christians in Wisconsin to learn more about the Sikh religion (<http://www.sikhs.org/summary.htm>). There are approximately 3,000 Sikhs in the greater Milwaukee area and over 700,000 nationwide.

Again, our hearts are filled with sorrow at more senseless loss of life and our souls yearn for the day when all of humanity will recognize our unity in God. Unity does not mean uniformity, but respect, regard and receptivity to the unique gifts and blessings of every culture and race. May we be those who create the places and spaces that make this possible.

Rev 7:9-11

“After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God...”

In prayer,

Bishop Linda Lee
Wisconsin Conference UMC