

Statement from Bishop Hee-Soo Jung

Sikh Temple Shooting

August 6, 2012

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Matthew 5:9 NIV

Once again our world is shattered by the news of a mass shooting. My thoughts and prayers are with the Sikh community in Oak Creek, Wisconsin as members of the temple and wider area grieve the violence that disrupted a calm Sunday morning gathering yesterday. The Sikh religion whose roots are in India, is a deeply devout, peace loving community whose faith directs them to embrace life as sacred and to care for all people.

It is impossible to understand or explain the violence that erupted Sunday. The pain and fear that now grips all Sikhs in the United States must be countered with our prayers, our embrace and our support.

It is clear that we as the United Methodist Church must continue to build bridges of respect and community with our brothers and sisters through our interfaith efforts. When we can appreciate and understand each other's traditions and grounding we counter the fear that leads to suspicion and misunderstanding.

There are many causes of violence in our world; building interfaith relationships does not address all the root issues of mental illness, the availability of weapons and the rage that leads to destruction, yet as we embrace one another we model God's great Kingdom and demystify that which we do not comprehend.

I stand as a humble child of God, saddened for the actions of another human being; reminded that my outstretched hand to those who hurt, those who fear, and those who mourn is a witness desperately needed in our world.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung