

IN THE WAKE OF THE CLUB Q SHOOTING

A Statement from the Most Reverend Paul J. Burson

Presiding Bishop of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) 22 November 2022

As the Season of Advent approaches, we find ourselves immersed in darkness, longing for light and the warmth of human compassion. This year, though, the night seems especially long and bitterly cold. Chilled to the bone by the November 19th attack upon our LGBTQIA+ siblings at Club Q in Colorado Springs, we feel the heat of anger's rage—a heat that fails to comfort or sooth.

We would call such violence senseless, but for the realization that it makes perfect sense to consciences ill-formed by the rhetoric of hate and intolerance in the political arena and, scandalously, from pulpits where the Good News of God's unconditional love is supposed to be preached.

Attending an Interfaith Vigil in Denver with Bishop Kae Madden and others representing our Communion, I was struck by how even in the chilled shadows of this night of outrage and grief, we were warmed by the support of one another—people of diverse faiths and no faith, united to honor the individuals lost, beloved children of God whose lives and loves blessed friends, families and the wider community and whose memories will continue to bless us all. Indeed, the compassion, the love, the common resolve to do better and be better warmed us from within.

Enshrined in our ECC Constitution we state that as Christ's Church we respond to "the messianic call of the Spirit to preach the Gospel of justice, liberation, reconciliation and peace; to offer a refuge in Christ for those who suffer prejudice, exclusion, or neglect..." This Advent we celebrate the coming of the One we know as our Messiah, and recommit ourselves to carry forward Christ's mission.

Welcoming all to the warmth of refuge, affirmation and blessing that we have come to know, we live in the hope of this holy season, trusting that "our salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone, the day is near." (*Rm 13: 11b-12a*)

+Pablo

A Prayer by RMR Bishop Kae Madden

God of Rainbows, we are weeping with you over violence that caused death and injuries at the LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs last night. Gunshots echoed in a celebrated safe space for our siblings. We wail in grief and frustration, fear and despair and cry out to you.

May your Love encircle all who died and their families and friends. May your healing balm pour over all those injured - in body, mind, heart and soul. May your arms of comfort embrace the ever-expanding circles of all whose peace is shattered.

Let us not numb ourselves, but feel once more this pain of our beloved community. We sing together: "Christ in me arise and dispel all the darkness. Christ in me arise with your power and your strength. Christ in me pour out your blessings and healing. Christ in me arise and I shall rise with you." (*Trevor Thomson @2008*)

May your Spirit arise in us to love more, welcome all, conquer fear, wage peace, strive for justice, forgive, spread kindness. Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Be here now, we pray. Amen.