

## Orlando: Anger, Rage and Profound Grief

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The United Church of Christ deplores the violence that ended the lives of 50 beautiful people this past weekend. Even more intolerable is the apparent motive to target members of the LGBTQ community, who continue to live with the fear of ever present danger.

Especially concerning to the United Church of Christ are those brands and expressions of Christianity that demonize the LGBTQ community. When religion is used as a shield for homophobia, and when religious leaders spew forth hatred, judgment and condemnation: they create a context in which such violence is cultivated.

We want to express our profound grief on behalf of those friends and family members most affected by this violence; and who in the days to come will either be burying loved ones or attending to their physical and emotional wounds.

But what we feel and wish to express goes far beyond deep grief. There is also enormous anger and profound rage that once again beautiful and innocent people have been violated in this horrible way; and that homophobia continues to threaten the safety and sanctity of another person's right to pursue happiness.

The United Church of Christ again calls for America to act swiftly to produce gun legislation that lowers the risk that someone with an agenda, a distorted view of humanity, a proclivity for violence, and access to automatic weapons can wreak such havoc and destroy so many lives.

We are fast growing numb to the experience of processing our collective grief around these mass murders. Political and civic leaders across this country must galvanize our grief and anguish and take direct action to regulate a gun industry that has grown far too powerful.

Likewise, religious leaders must stop hiding behind archaic and abusive renderings of their sacred writings as the rationale for their homophobia. We

know enough now to see that such beliefs do not reflect the will of the one we call Holy. We know enough now to understand that homophobia, racism, violence against women, sexism, xenophobia and other means of stigmatizing and discriminating against people who are different are all connected. We know enough now to declare that all God's children are beautiful and beloved. A Christianity that suggests anything less than that is no longer defensible, and must accept some culpability for any action meant to do harm to or perpetrate violence against any gay, lesbian, transgender, or bisexual person.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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