

**“Power”**

**New London UMC**

**Sunday, May 29, 2022**

**Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23** *NRSV*

**Rev. Joyce Rich**

The word “power” can mean many things. But I think we often speak of it in negative ways. We might say someone is “power hungry” – or always grasping for power. Or there could be a news story about a public figure who has misused or abused their power. Rarely do we hear someone being praised for using their power appropriately or well. I think that’s why it catches our ear when we hear scripture that refers to “power” – particularly if it has to do with the goodness or greatness of God’s power, or the power that we receive from God. In fact, today’s scripture readings might have made you uncomfortable with all the references to how God shares power with us, or as the Gospel of Luke says, we “have been clothed with power from on high”; or as Paul’s letter to the Ephesians says, as the eyes of our hearts are enlightened, we know “the immeasurable greatness” of God’s power. The same power that God put to work in Christ when God “raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.” God’s power is rather impressive, don’t you think? So what is God thinking by clothing *us* with this power that can raise the dead and bring all other rulers and authorities to their knees? And how can the church be the body of Christ, who is “head over all things” and “the fullness of him who fills all in all”? God giving us access to this kind of power seems to be, I don’t know, a little irresponsible on God’s part. And yet God chooses to trust us to mature in our faith and understanding of how to use the power God clothes us in. But even God must be wondering why it is taking us so long to mature, and why we have not gained the wisdom to use the power God has clothed us in.

Can you remember what happened on November 7, 2018 in Thousand Oaks, California? A mass shooting occurred at the Borderline Bar and Grill, a country-western bar frequented by college students. Thirteen people were killed, including the perpetrator, and a police officer. Following that mass shooting, Bishops United Against Gun Violence offered a “Litany in the Wake of a Mass Shooting” to commemorate the dead, to comfort their loved ones, and to honor survivors and first responders. That litany was updated on May 24 of this year following the mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

Bishops United Against Gun Violence invite us to join in this litany – not to pray in lieu of summoning political courage, but in preparation for doing so. That we will join in this litany with our commitment to take action so that our country can be freed from the epidemic of gun violence. The litany will be up on the screen.

## **Litany in the Wake of a Mass Shooting**

God of peace, we remember all those who have died in incidents of mass gun violence in this nation's public and private spaces.

Six dead at the Wisconsin Sikh Temple.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Twelve dead at an Aurora, Colorado movie theater.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Twenty-eight dead at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead at Santa Monica College, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Seven dead at a Hialeah, Florida apartment complex.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Thirteen dead at the Washington Navy Yard.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at Fort Hood, Texas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Seven dead in Isla Vista, near UC Santa Barbara.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at Marysville Pilchuck High School in Washington.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Nine dead at Emanuel AME in Charleston, South Carolina.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Sixteen dead at a San Bernardino, California office.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Ten dead at Umpqua Community College, Oregon.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at a Hesston, Kansas office.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at a Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania backyard party.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Fifty dead at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at Cascade Mall in Burlington, Washington.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at Fort Lauderdale Airport.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead in Fresno, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Eight dead in Lincoln County, Mississippi.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at an Eaton Township, Pennsylvania supermarket.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Nine dead at a Plano, Texas football-watching party.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Fifty-nine dead at a Las Vegas, Nevada concert.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Twenty-seven dead at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Seventeen dead at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at the Veterans Home in Yountville, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at a Nashville, Tennessee Waffle House.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Ten dead at Santa Fe High School, Texas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at the Capital Gazette Newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at the Fifth Third Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at a Rite Aid distribution center in Aberdeen, Maryland.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Eleven dead at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Thirteen dead at a bar in Thousand Oaks, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at a bank in Sebring, Florida.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead in their homes in Ascension and Livingston parishes, Louisiana.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead at an industrial park in Aurora, Illinois.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at a home in Clinton, Mississippi.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead in Solon Township, Michigan.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Thirteen dead at a municipal building in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at the Gilroy Garlic Festival in Gilroy, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Twenty-two dead at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Ten dead in the Oregon District of downtown Dayton, Ohio.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Eight dead on the road between the cities of Odessa and Midland, Texas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead in their home in Elkmont, Alabama.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at a bar in Kansas City, Kansas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at a backyard football watch party in Fresno, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead in a cemetery and kosher market in Jersey City, New Jersey.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead at the Molson Coors complex in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at a convenience store in Springfield, Missouri.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead in the northeast side of Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Eight dead at three spas in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Ten dead at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at an office complex in Orange, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at a home in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Nine dead at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Seven dead at a birthday party in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Ten dead at a rail yard in San Jose, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Four dead at Oxford High School in Oxford Township, Michigan.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead in Lakewood and Denver, Colorado.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Five dead at The Church in Sacramento, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Six dead in downtown Sacramento, California.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Ten dead at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Nineteen students and two teachers dead at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

All those who have died in any incident of gun violence.

**Give to the departed eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

For survivors of gun violence.

**Grant them comfort and healing. Hear us , Lord.**

For those who have lost loved ones to gun violence.

**Grant them peace. Hear us, Lord.**

For those first responders who care for victims of gun violence.

**Protect and strengthen them. Hear us, Lord.**

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**