

The Arizona Faith Network joins with millions of Americans to honor the twenty-six people whose lives were senselessly lost and countless others injured and traumatized by the shooting at the First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas. We offer our prayers of support, and stand in solidarity against senseless despicable acts of evil that have been experienced far too often in our nation.

Yet again, people across the U.S. rightfully gather in vigils and extend our thoughts and prayers. But how much longer must we do these things without actually taking righteous spiritual and physical action to stop such events? The answers are complex, and even as the pastor of the First Baptist church and congregation said, “we don’t understand, but God does”.

What is a house of worship if its doors are not wide open to anyone who seeks? Will we fall victim to fear so that the doors of our houses of worship are shut tight to those who may seek spiritual, physical or moral support? As people of faith seek the Lord for answers together, we will gain strength, remain vigilant, pray, prepare and act. We must get back to the basic principles of loving our neighbor, caring for the other, noticing and acting when someone seems off-kilter, and not allowing evil to prevail. Government has given us strategies on how to act once the active shooting happens, but only God will guide and direct us as to how to prevent such atrocities.

AFN asks you today to join us as we seek God for wisdom, knowledge and understanding, as we pray for comfort for those who have suffered loss, and ask for divine strategies to remain safe and deal with this insidious threat.

PRAY AND REFLECT:

Join with representatives of the Arizona Faith Network and the Arizona Interfaith Movement in prayer and reflection as we come together Tuesday, November 7th at 5:30p.m. at [2406 South 24th Street](#), Suite 214 in Phoenix. We will lift up the families of those who are hurt and those who have been killed, and we will lift up a solemn prayer to our God to help us find righteous solutions to this wretched evil.

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.” 2 Chronicles 7:14-15

“The Torah commands that we not stand idly by. Tears and prayers may comfort us, motivate us, but tears and prayers alone will not fix what is ailing in our society. Have we still not learned? Have we still not come to understand that Gd is calling upon us to protect Creation? We must be the agents of change. We, the People, united under One Gd are being called to service. Will we hear? Will we respond to the call?” Rabbi Bonnie Sharfman

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1: 3-4

*“The grief you cry out from draws you toward union” Rumi, *The Book of Love: Poems of Ecstasy and Longing**

PREPARE TO ACT:

Review and use the information on how to prepare to respond to an active shooter incident and other emergency events. Resources and training can be provided to help you prepare your congregations.

- The Safety for Faith-Based events and Houses of Worship provides resources to help congregations prepare.
- The [Active Shooter Emergency Action Plan Video](#) describes the fundamental concepts of developing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for an active shooter scenario. This instructive video guides



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viewers through important considerations of EAP development utilizing the first-hand perspectives of active shooter survivors, first responder personnel, and other subject matter experts who share their unique insight.

We can make a difference together!