**A close-up of a candle

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**Recent Political Violence in Minnesota**

Beloved in Christ, grace and peace to you,

We mourn the politically motivated violence that resulted in the killing of Speaker Emeritus Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark, and the shooting of Senator John Hoffman and his wife Yvette. These tragedies combined with emerging evidence that this act of violence could have been even worse, have left us in a state of collective grief and shock and we grapple with what this means for Minnesota, our state’s politics, and for our society going forward.

In response to God’s love in Jesus Christ, Lutheran Advocacy – MN seeks to live into the ELCA vision to "Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God’s love for all that God has created.” **This senseless bloodshed runs against God’s loving will for the world and counter to God’s love for each of us.** These acts of political violence against our public servants brings the **divisive rhetoric and rampant “othering,”** which have led us so far from God’s desire for this world, to the front of our minds.

First-century Christians in Corinth lived through a similar time, experiencing divisions among themselves that threatened to tear the early church in two. The apostle Paul addressed this in his first letter to the Corinthians, “**Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,** by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and **that there be no divisions among you** but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose.” (1 Corinthians 1:10). This sentiment still rings true, even two millennia later. In this time of polarization and division, God’s wish for us is that we find ourselves in the same mind and same purpose through the name of Jesus Christ.

We are called to “not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2). **As Lutherans and Christians, we find our values not in political rhetoric or partisan political agendas, but in a faith formed out of a love which challenges our conventions, upturns our traditions, and calls us to meet violence and hatred with grace and compassion.** To be conformed to this age is to debate partisan politics as if it were gospel truth. Instead, we are called to live in the ways of God’s kingdom, to live knit together and formed in the values of our Christian faith.

These politically motivated shootings in Minnesota on June 14, 2025 show us just how divided we have become. So divided that **we fail to see one another as God’s beloved,** we have turned those who disagree politically with us into the enemy to be fought against. **In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”** (Romans 12:5) As we live our calling to be advocates for wise and just public policies that reflect our lived Christian values, we must do so from our **common shared identity as members of the same body in Christ.**

In times of great grief and division such as these, how do we, as Christians, respond? **As the Body of Christ, we ground ourselves in scripture, center ourselves in prayer, respond to a world that would pull us apart by building intentional community.** In this way we begin to repair the divisions, depolarize our communities, and heal our world. We knit ourselves back together so that we may live as one same mind in Christ. This is hard and challenging work, but Christ does not call us to what is easy. In the face of this challenging call, Christ provides for us the strength to persevere, the Holy Spirit to guide and encourage, and hope grounded in the resurrection that new life always wins over death.

**Lutheran Advocacy—MN invites you to take action** in your church or community towards **ending the divisive rhetoric and polarization** in our country today. **First, we invite you to pray with us:** for Speaker Melissa and Mark Hortman’s children and family, for Senator John and Yvette Hoffman’s recovery and their family, for Minnesota’s public servants and leaders, and for all of Minnesota to feel God’s healing and reconciling hand at work.

Second, we invite you into **courageous action** through **“Graceful Conversations”** ([lutheranadvocacymn.org/coming-soon-03](http://lutheranadvocacymn.org/coming-soon-03)). Graceful Conversations is a **5-part study series intended to equip individuals and groups for graceful engagement of challenging discussions**, presented by Lutheran Advocacy—MN and The Ministry Lab**.** A facilitator guide and participant resources are provided at no cost, and support as needed is available from Lutheran Advocacy—MN. **God has already placed the gifts you need for this work within you through the Holy Spirit.** Gather the resources and a group of people willing in your church, community, with friends, or with family. Begin the conversation, use the study, and open your eyes to God’s healing work in our world.

*… [H]ope in the Lord!  
    For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
    and with God is great power to redeem…  
 (From Psalm 130)*

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always!

\*\*[We extend our deep gratitude to Pastor Beth Pottratz, Secretary of the Policy Council, for generously volunteering to write this statement on behalf of Lutheran Advocacy-MN, the LA-MN Executive Committee, and the LA-MN Policy Council—especially given how deeply Director Tammy Walhof has been grieved by these senseless and tragic acts of political violence.]

**A sun shining through a tree branch

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**Devotion Prepared for Lutheran Advocacy–Minnesota**

**following Political Violence** (Led by Rev. Rebel Hurd)

**Scripture Reading**

**“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” —John 1:5 (NRSV)**

**Devotion**

Siblings in Christ,

We gather today not only to do the important work of advocacy and policy, but to root ourselves once again in the One who calls us beloved and sends us into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

But let us be honest: today we come together in a heavy moment.

The assassination of Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark, the violent attack on Senator Hoffman and his wife Yvette, and the naming of 70 public servants targeted for harm—these are not just headlines. These are human lives, families devastated, and public trust fractured. For those of us who hold ministry and public service as callings, it is a profound grief to watch safety, dignity, and even life itself become casualties of rage and division.

So before we move into the business of our gathering, let us pause. Let us breathe. Let us remember that lament is also holy work.

In the first chapter of John’s Gospel, we hear a proclamation that does not pretend the world is free of darkness—but instead declares with defiant hope:

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

These words anchor us in the incarnational truth at the heart of our faith—that God entered fully into the depth of human suffering, not to bypass it, but to redeem it from within. In Christ, the eternal Word took on flesh and lived among us—not in comfort, but in vulnerability. This light is not naïve brightness; it is God’s unyielding presence in the midst of real darkness: political violence, communal fear, and death itself. The theology of light and darkness reminds us that Christ’s light is not extinguished by the sin and chaos of the world. Instead, it exposes, confronts, and ultimately transforms it. This is the hope we carry—not that darkness doesn’t exist, but that it does not win.

Resurrection always follows crucifixion. In this truth, we are not only comforted—we are commissioned to bear that light in our public witness, to bear the light in our advocacy, and to bear the light through our faithful presence in this broken and beloved world.

We do not gather with false optimism. We gather in Gospel truth: that death does not have the last word, that love is stronger than hate, and that our calling as advocates and people of faith is to stand in the gap; the gap for justice, for peace, and for one another.

The weight we carry today is not meant to be borne alone. The Body of Christ surrounds you. The Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And Christ, crucified and risen, walks with us still.

Let us pray:

Good and gracious God of Peace,

In the midst of violence, You are our refuge.

In the shadow of fear, You are our courage.

In the clamor of division, You are still speaking.

We pray for our state, for our nation, and for those who serve in public life.

We lift up the Hortman and Hoffman families in grief and in healing.

We pray for the 70 who have been threatened, and all who live under the weight of fear.

Grant us the wisdom to act justly, the tenderness to show mercy,

and the strength to walk humbly with You.

May this group, and the work we do together,

be a sign of your kingdom breaking in.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.