

Notes from the Rev. Dr. Randy Bush
3/14/2018

(9:45 am)

Introduction: Thank you for coming out today. (Introduce myself, Heather, Patrice) We are here as an act of solidarity and support, honoring those who died one month ago in the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

1. That day, February 14th, in the Christian liturgical year was when we celebrated Ash Wednesday – a day of prayer, confession, & repentance
 2. On this day, March 14th, students all over the country are stopping what they're doing, offering their own prayers, even stepping outside their school buildings to remember this anniversary, to honor the students and staff who died, and to commit themselves & this nation to work for real change so that no other school, no more families need to have their lives changed forever by acts of mass murder and gun violence.
 3. We gather as representatives of faith communities – because this issue affects more than just students. This issue affects us all. So we choose this day to stand with the students – to join our voices to theirs – and to recommit ourselves to the ways of lasting peace.
- A. Grateful for the many religious leaders, congregations, and groups represented here today. Take a moment to do a roll call of who is present...
- B. It is important for faith communities to speak up now. The issue of gun violence is not just a matter for politicians to sort out, for lobbyists to do battle over. Neither is it right that children and students should be forced to stand alone, challenge our national conscience to do what is right and do it right now!
1. As people of faith, we aspire to live into a world where all God's creatures, all God's children are protected. There is so much that is going well in the world right now – advances in medicine curing cancers and disease, global improvements in having access to clean water, thousands each day moving out of abject poverty, able to educate their children and dream of a better future for them. As people of faith we can see what a beloved community looks like – and so as prisoners of hope we aspire to make that vision a reality.
 2. As people of faith, we affirm that the students are right – that no one should have to be afraid when they go to school that they may be shot down or killed. We affirm that the teachers are right – that no one enters that profession wanting to carry a weapon, wanting to push aside their lesson plans in order to prepare survival plans for their classrooms. We affirm that parents are right and the vast majority of this nation is right – that sensible gun control legislation is wanted, is needed, and is doable. No gun should be sold without a background check. Every gun should be safely secured when not in use

and immediately reported if lost or stolen. Weapons of war should be treated differently than weapons of sport. And common-sense restrictions need to be in place to reduce the public health crisis in America – mass shooting, suicides, domestic violence murders – all linked to our current gun policies.

3. As people of faith, we aspire to a better community; we affirm that the students are right in calling for change; and we are committed now to act to make it so. Those who oppose any change in the status quo employ three tactics – deny, deflect, and delay. They will deny the severity of the issue – claiming mass shootings are rare and outlier incidents. I'm sorry; the loss of any child is one too many. They will deflect the argument – claiming we don't understand the nuances around automatic weaponry; we should only focus on mental health issues or better armed security issues or police preparedness issues. Do not let yourself be cowed into silence or deflected from the main issue – the issue is guns; the issue is American laws that no longer serve our national ideals because they willing sacrifice our children for political posturing over the Second Amendment. As communities of faith, we will talk and listen; we will learn and pray. But we will not be silent. We will not acquiesce. We will not accept a blanket refusal that rejects any change. We aspire, we affirm, and we will act.

C. Comments from the Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy

D. ROLL CALL OF VICTIMS

E. Prayer led by the Rev. Heather Schoenewolf

F. Upcoming actions/events/ how to stay engaged.

G. Thank everyone for coming. Keep on working for change. Speak up in your work place and your place of worship. Together let us vote, write letters, march when necessary, pray without ceasing, and act for justice, for safety, and for our children.