

## A LITANY IN RESPONSE TO SENSELESS KILLINGS AT VIRGINIA TECH AND ELSEWHERE

Through the ages we hear the Risen Christ: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

*"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."* Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Yet today we grieve for precious lambs, not fed, but slaughtered. For those sons and daughters, students and classmates, colleagues and friends whose lives we cherish, whose loss we mourn, we pray, *Lord, have mercy.* (A TIME OF SILENCE IS KEPT) Through the ages we hear the Risen Christ: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" *"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."* Jesus said, "Tend my sheep." Yet today your flock is scattered by fear at Virginia Tech and throughout the world where guns and bombs kill and maim. For those paralyzed by fear in Blacksburg and Baghdad, Kabul and Karachi, Gaza and the Golan Heights, we pray, *Christ, have mercy.* (A TIME OF SILENCE IS KEPT) Through the ages we hear the Risen Christ, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" *"Yes, Lord, you know every thing, you know that I love you."* Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Yet today we are hungry - hungry for peace, hungry for justice, hungry for security, hungry for hope. For children who look for bread but are given the crushing stone of violence, often with our complicity, we pray, *Lord, have mercy.* (A TIME OF SILENCE IS KEPT) Take us, O God, to places we are reluctant to go, to the wounded places, the shattered places, the terrified places. There may we feed your lambs with compassion, tend your sheep with healing, feed your flock with hope. There, with Peter, may we move from denial to discipleship, and thus find strength in the midst of this week's sorrow and rage, to sing again the Easter song, "Alleluia, Christ is risen!" *Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia! Amen.*

*This prayer was created by The Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, our partner denomination, and uses themes from the Gospel lesson for the Third Sunday of Easter: John 21.1-19.*