

At this time of great tragedy we are left with more questions than answers. For thousands of years, our traditions have looked upon good and evil, life and death with a sense of awe.

We gather here in community and in the protective shelter of God's healing love.  
We acknowledge that we live in a broken world and that evil is real. There are no complete answers, but we turn to a God whose love offers hope.  
We are free to pour out our grief and  
release our anger over the murder students, faculty and staff at Virginia Tech whose lives we cherish, whose loss we mourn.  
We come to face our emptiness,  
And know that God cares.  
We gather as fellow members of a learning community,  
Conscious of others who have died  
and of the frailty  
of our own existence on earth.  
We come to comfort and support one another  
In our common loss.  
We gather to hear words of hope  
that can drive away our despair.

My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick.  
O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears,  
So that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people.  
Jeremiah 8:18; 9:1

I lift my eyes to the hills.  
From whence does my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121: 1-2

Let us pray:  
God of compassion,  
You watch the ways of all of us  
And weave out of terrible happenings  
Wonders of goodness and grace.  
Surround all who have been shaken by the murders at Virginia Tech  
With a sense of your present love,  
And hold us all in faith.  
Though so many are lost in grief,  
May we all find you and be comforted.

Heal our wounded hearts  
Made heavy by our sorrow.  
Through the veil of our tears and the silence  
Of our emptiness,  
Assure us again of Your presence in our sorrow.  
Teach us to cherish the lives around us

As we learn anew the brevity of human existence and  
Grant us your peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

O Lord receive the souls of the departed in your heavenly realm. Give life to your servants in a place of light, a place of refreshment, a place of peace where pain, sorrow and suffering are fled away. May their memory be eternal.

Let us draw strength from one another to move from a time of violence and sorrow to a time of healing and peace. Let us carry the memories of our friends and teachers with us always so that the memory of the righteous will be a blessing.

Prayers adapted from the United Church of Christ Book of Worship  
Sue Kurtz Speech to Virginia Tech Convocation,  
[http://www.hillel.org/about/news/2007/apr/kurtzspeech\\_17april2006.htm](http://www.hillel.org/about/news/2007/apr/kurtzspeech_17april2006.htm)