

**“Terror and Prophetic Witness”**  
*(A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr., 115)*

Leader: "Tragedies are common place," so sings the psalmist. The proof could not be more stunning. Terror walked into Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston. June 17, 2015 is still fresh in our collective memory. Quarterly Conference, Bible Study, Prayer Meeting, kindness and a warm welcome were not enough to stave off a young, mean-spirited, white supremacist with a gun.

**People: Our God is Love! Love lingered on the lips of Jesus. Love lifts. Love helps. Love heals. Love hopes. Love believes, Love conquers!**

Leader: "Tragedies are common place." Five hundred terror attacks thus far this year, claiming the lives of 3,500 people. Every day, it seems, death is a tragedy to someone – someone near and dear; regularly far and unknown to us by name. Their names and lives still matter. More than a political matter; it is also theological. The terrorists often think they are doing God a favor.

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Leader: "Tragedies are common place." A year ago, we looked in horror and sorrow at the terror unleashed in Orlando; 49 people died. We discovered something evolutionary in our own mind and spirit; we instinctively knew their deaths were not of God.

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Leader: "Tragedies are common place." Gang violence is rife; the terror often occurs where we live, work and worship – hopeless youths who have “fainted and grown weary,” “young men have fallen,” turn on one another, terror unleashed in the neighborhood resulting in the deaths of innocent bystanders, and funeral biers in steady procession to the grave, trailed by the those who loved them, who refuse to be consoled because they know this is not of God.

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Leader: "Tragedies are common place." We honor the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers; but far too often, terror is released upon the incredibly young and young at heart, unarmed, have been gunned down by persons sworn to serve and protect, or died while in custody. The necrology is too long and growing; we know this is not of God.

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Leader: "Tragedies are common place." The impending terror of the passage of a legislative bill slinking through the halls of the US Capitol, a bill that will thrust tens of millions of people into a healthcare crisis, where one catastrophic illness can cast a family into the terror of economic peril or premature death. Everyone has at least one preexisting condition. Did your legislator not learn this simple concept, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"?

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Leader: "Tragedies are common place;" tis true. But, for these reasons and more, we are called to preach the Gospel of love and hope; to speak in the prophetic tradition – truth to power; to lead and support social justice matters – to save lives, to transform communities, where Christ is exalted, God is glorified and the people might live in peace in the beloved community, where terror does not thrive! Never has our calling and ministry been more relevant and necessary.

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