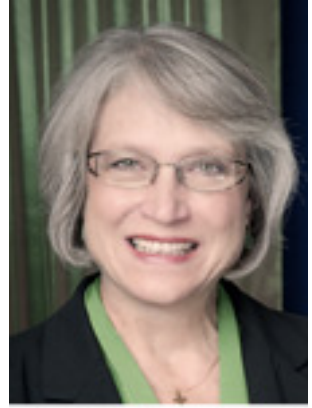


## Let's Go Deeper...

### Wednesday, June 15

When we returned from church on Sunday afternoon, my daughter's boyfriend said, "Have you heard the news about what happened last night in Orlando?" I had not. Now we all have.

On Tuesday afternoon, Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of our Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), shared a pastoral response. The text of her message is below:



Sharon E. Watkins

Our hearts are broken once again – this time by the hateful violence at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando:

- To those who lost loved ones – may you be surrounded with love in your grief and loss;
- To the injured and your families, may you know healing and hope;
- To the brave first responders and caregivers – as you face the memories of what you witnessed, may you find peace of mind;
- To LGBTQ neighbors – beloved of God – to families, allies and friends – may you find courage and hope in the knowledge of our love.
- To Muslim neighbors and friends – we know that such violence does not represent who you are any more than the actions of extremist Christians represent who we are. We stand together.

Sadly, today we also remember the first anniversary of the mass shooting at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. We continue to mourn with families and communities still grieving over that awful day.

We think about the many – too many - mass shootings of this past decade alone – Virginia Tech, Ft. Hood, Aurora, Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, Charleston and now Orlando. In this confluence of many social and international currents, the search for policies and processes to help prevent these acts will be complex. But it must begin with a rejection of hate and violence.

Through it all, this is the time to reach out to each other - as secular communities and communities of faith – as one human family knit together by God who loves us. Let us take action, in ways small and large, to show that love is stronger than hate. Love wins.

At Nancy West's funeral yesterday, Keith Dean sang Malotte's *Lord Prayer*. Keith could sing the phone book and I would be moved, but given the heinous attack in Orlando, his singing of the phrase "Deliver us from evil" struck me with peculiar force. And when he sang the triumphant acclamation, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen," I whispered, "Let it be so."

I have nothing else to add this week.

May the Peace of Christ be with you and with the loved ones of the slain.