

PASTORAL PRAYER

Sunday, December 16, 2012

God of Advent, of promise, of hope,
help us to hear your song
echoed through the winter sky.

We need to hear it today.

We are a tangled skein of light and dark on this morning dear God.

Grateful for our lives, for our children and grandchildren whom we are
holding extra close in these days,
and heartbroken for the losses suffered by
families and friends

in a community so much like ours, so nearby.

Gracious God we cannot help but ask,
how could such a thing happen?

How could there be such dark recesses in any human heart?

We know you don't cause these things to happen,
that you don't allow these things to happen.

They happen . . . and you weep alongside the rest of us.

And still we turn to you, looking for answers,
looking for comfort.

Grant us at least the comfort of knowing that these innocent souls, children
and teachers, have returned to you and live forever, in peace and without fear

Wrap your everlasting arms around the grieving families and friends.

Inspire each of us O God, to do whatever we can to see that this kind of
tragedy does not, can not happen again.

Remind us, mysterious God, we who are living through the darkest days of
the year, that in the deepest darkness there is always light, there is always
hope.

We ask your blessing and healing grace on any who need it this morning – not
only those who are in the headlines, but those who are known only to family
and friends. We think of those whose names we have spoken out loud, and
others we lift up now in the silence. . .

And loving God, though we are carrying great sorrow, keep room in our
hearts for joy. We can do both. We must do both. Make this tragedy, among
many other things, be a reminder to us to savor the joy, the beauty of this
season, the lives of our loved ones, the happiness of our children. We give

thanks for all of our blessings this morning. . . those we have spoken aloud,
and those we lift up in the silence. . .

Be with us as we continue to move ahead through our days and nights . Keep
us ever in the knowledge that we move through darkness toward the dawning
of a great light – toward the birth of the prophet of peace – Jesus Christ. At
times like this, it seems like a far horizon, but never-the-less, we wend our
way through the dark toward that light, singing your song as we go. In the
name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.