



“...Rachel is weeping for her children;  
she refuses to be comforted for her children,  
because they are no more.” Jeremiah 31: 15 (NSRVue)

Dear Friends,

“Today you and I are Rachel weeping for our children. Today you and I are Rachel weeping for the two teachers who were killed. Today you and I are Rachel weeping for Robb Elementary School and UCISD.\* Today you and I are Rachel weeping for Uvalde and all who live here. Today you and I are Rachel weeping for one another and ourselves.” This is what the Rev. Dr. Michael Marsh, pastor of St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Uvalde, Texas wrote in his blog *Interrupting the Silence* after the tragic mass shooting at Robb Elementary where 19 children and two teachers were murdered.

We, too, are Rachael weeping for her children. We, too, are asking what we can do. More than 311,000 school children have experienced gun violence in their school since Columbine High School in 1999, according to a Washington Post data base.

In the 1950’s at the genesis of the National Council of Churches, school children went through Air Raid Drills. I remember the “duck and cover” drills under the classroom desk or in the hallway. We tucked our knees under us, put our heads against the wall on the floor covering them with our arms. The drills were supposed to prepare us to take cover and be safe in case of a nuclear weapons attack on the United States. The attack never happened. And for that we can thank God!

Tragically, for our children and grandchildren it seems as if the attacks keep coming. We weep like Rachel.

In the movie, “Kindergarten Cop,” school children were taught to repeatedly shout “Stranger” when they saw a stranger, an unauthorized person in the building. It worked. One day a stranger entered the building to kidnap a classmate. But what do you do when the unauthorized person is a classmate or former student?

Last December, a gunman entered Oxford High school killing four students and wounding seven. According to Valerie Strauss in her Washington Post article “A Third Grader (and others) on Active Shooter Drills at School,” in that instance some school safety experts said that the active shooter drills appeared to save lives and students are better off feeling prepared.

Today, schools across America have active shooter drills or lockdown drills regularly. Some of the drills actually mimic an incident with a perpetrator, first responders and students. According to Everytown for Gun Safety, a non-profit gun control advocate, the school safety industry has grown to a \$2.7 billion business “...all in pursuit of a practice that, to date is not evidence-based.” Their report on The Impact of Active Shooter Drills in School indicates that it is time to rethink the drill strategy. The drills may risk inducing trauma and have other counterproductive effects on school children. Their report can be found here: <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-active-shooter-drills-in-schools/>.

But what *should* be done?

Rev. Marsh writes when people like you and I ask, “What can we do?” He responds with, “But I think there may be a better question, albeit a more too difficult one, for us to be asking: “What ‘more’ can we do?”

Perhaps the *more* we can do is to rethink school safety strategies. Perhaps the *more* we can do is to push for gun reform. The conversations that are just beginning in the House of Representatives are just talk unless meaningful legislation passes both houses and is signed by the President. Our *more* can be to advocate Congress to pass common sense gun reform legislation.

Perhaps the *more* we can do is what the state of Maryland is doing. They are taking a stand against Ghost Guns, the privately made weapon without serial numbers obtained without a background check. Ghost Guns are now banned in the state as of June 1st and those who already own one must register their weapon.

Perhaps the *more* we can do is to support the survivors of mass shootings like Oscar Orona. He is the 10-year-old fourth grader who won an award at Robb Elementary assembly and an hour later watched his teacher and classmates being murdered as he lay wounded. Or, support survivors like 8-year-old London Thomas who hid with her father in a cooler at the Tops Friendly Market while a teenager murdered 11 people and injured two more.

Marsh writes that “the more” is at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. “He was always living into, demonstrating and calling us into the “more”. Perhaps the more we can do is fight back the evil by demonstrating in real and tangible ways the love of Jesus Christ.

Yes, we too are Rachael weeping. I will ask us the same question: What more will you and I do in this moment when *more* is desperately needed?

Share with me your thoughts, words and deeds at [vashti.mckenzie@nationalcouncilofchurches.us](mailto:vashti.mckenzie@nationalcouncilofchurches.us).

By the Grace of God,

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**WAYS TO HELP UVALDE**  
FROM REV. DR. MARSH, ST PHILIP'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

While large amounts of money are being collected through various organizations and foundations it is not yet being released and some families need financial assistance now. St. Philip's is collecting monetary donations to assist with those immediate financial needs. Here's how churches can help:

Online Giving

<https://stphilipsuvalde.breezechms.com/give/online>

Use the dropdown arrow on the right to designate that you would like your donation to go to "Robb/Uvalde Outreach Fund"

Text Giving

Text the amount and "Uvalde" to 830-240-2070

For example: text "\$50 Uvalde" - please be sure to include the notation of "Uvalde" after the amount.

Giving by Mail

Make checks payable to "St. Philip's Episcopal Church" with a notation of "Robb/Uvalde Outreach," and mail to:

St. Philip's Episcopal Church  
343 North Getty  
Uvalde, TX 78801

Purchase Gift Cards

Purchase a \$100 or \$50 Visa or Amex gift card and mail it to St. Philip's at the address above.