



## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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Greetings in the name and spirit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Once again the Lord of light and love weeps over our nation and the tragic murders in Virginia Beach. We join in prayer for those killed, their families and the Virginia Beach community. May they know the comforting presence and eternal hope of Christ in their grief and pain.

We give thanks for those who quickly responded with courage as neighbors helping neighbors, as well as those who arrived with public safety and medical help. Our prayers and support are also with our Virginia Conference United Methodist congregations serving in that area.

I invite us all to work to end the violence that is on the news every day in our society. Let us reflect on why such terrible events continue to happen. What initiatives can followers of Jesus take to help create a cultural moral commitment to "Thou shall not kill"? How can we more effectively care for mental illness, enact sensible gun legislation, reject the glorification of violence in the media, and be sensitive to the signs of stress building in friends, co-workers, and neighbors? In short, how can our congregations be "part of the solution", following Christ, the Prince of Peace?

Grace and Peace,

Peter D. Weaver