

WFWP Colorado participates in interfaith National Day of Prayer celebration

Gale Alves
May 2, 2019



The National Day of Prayer, which falls on the first Thursday of May each year, is an annual observance that brings people of all faiths together. A local chapter of WFWP in Colorado, which is already known for organizing an ongoing series of interreligious gatherings participated in a special interfaith prayer on May 2nd, 2019 - this year's National Day of Prayer.

Four religious leaders and three faith representatives gathered to honor, comfort and pray for the mostly Christian victims of the Sri Lanka massacre that occurred on Easter Sunday. Pastor Patrick Lewis of the Fruita United Methodist Church in Colorado graciously hosted this small, but beautiful event. The faiths represented were Christian (Evangelical, Lutheran and United Methodist), Hindu, Muslim and Family Federation for World Peace (FFWP).

A Channel 5 News and Fox 2 local newsman was inspired that a Hindu, United Methodist and FFWP/WFWP representative had worked together to have this meaningful event. We were all briefly interviewed.

Pastor Lewis spoke of his church as being an open, sacred space for all to gather to mourn, to pray for the victims, but also to triumph in hope. Each person offered a prayer, a thought or a poem and then lit a candle on the altar.

The Hindu leader said we must continue to gather and pray for innocent religious victims of violence or we will become complacent and unmoved by violence.

The Evangelical minister shared that God gives His Grace to us in the form of strength to help us respond

in the opposite way of evil: forgiveness, optimism, and love.

The Lutheran representative explained she is trying to effect change in the world by making effort to express love better to those she encounters in her daily life.

Gale Alves, representing both FFWP and WFWP, shared that she wanted to comfort the victims who suddenly and shockingly found themselves in the spirit world, separated from this physical life, from their family, their friends, their work, and from their life on earth. She read a poem by a London Catholic priest entitled, "Death is Nothing at All" (read below).

The Muslim representative expressed sadness for all of the Christians killed and that he was grateful to be a part of the Remembrance Gathering. "I am Palestinian. A person who has no country. If I saw a Palestinian lying on the road, I would help them. If I saw a Jew in distress, my heart would be the same for that person and I would help them. I mourn for all victims of violence, no matter their religion."

As the last candle was lit, Pastor Lewis concluded by paraphrasing a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr: "Even the smallest candle can illuminate the darkest corner."

"Death is Nothing At All" by Henry Scott-Holland (1847-1910)

Death is nothing at all.
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.
I am I, and you are you.
And the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we still are.

Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak to me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.
Let it be spoken without effort, without the ghost of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it has ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute and unbroken continuity.
What is death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am but waiting for you, for an interval,
Somewhere very near,
Just round the corner.

All is well.
Nothing is hurt, nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!