



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

J. HERBERT NELSON, II  
STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Monday, November 5, 2018

- *Almost two dozen pipe bombs sent by mail to political leaders and other prominent national figures.*
- *The murder of eleven worshipers in Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue.*
- *The random, point-blank assassination by a white nationalist of a black grandfather in a Louisville, Kentucky, Kroger store while his grandson watched, with the shooter going immediately into the parking lot and murdering a black woman standing nearby.*

And the tie that bind them together is hatred – political hatred, religious hatred, racial hatred, and racial arrogance.

To our shame, this tragic, senseless web of violence is the fruit of an atmosphere of pride, prejudice, and hatred that has infused our whole body politic. It is the manifestation of a disease that has infected our daily lives, our ability to dialog with one another, and the workings of our political process to the point that we see only absolutes. We are deafened by the rhetoric of division, of selfishness, of the demonization of anyone who is different or who thinks different thoughts about our life together socially, politically, religiously.

At such a time as this, the voices of people of faith are more urgent than ever. Across our nation the scream of partisanship grows more deafening as we approach critical elections in this country. Our voices are imperative as those who worship and serve a God who loves us all equally, and who grieves over our inability to deal graciously with one another in times of disagreement. We have no hope if we cannot recommit ourselves to offer to all, and especially those with whom we disagree, the humble recognition of our common humanity. We cannot succeed when we do not honor all persons regardless of their racial, ethnic, religious, and political differences.

As the rhetoric grows about winning and losing, those of us who confess Jesus Christ as Lord must return to the one who lost his own life in order that we might be made whole. May our God touch us all with the spirit of reconciliation and with new resolve to bring healing to this torn body we call our home.

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)