



## Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

### Statement from Bishop Gates and Bishop Harris following shootings in Buffalo

*Bishop Alan M. Gates and Bishop Gayle E. Harris issued the following statement on May 17, 2022, regarding the May 14 shootings in Buffalo, N.Y.*

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*“Christ has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” ~ Ephesians 2:14*

Last Sunday’s reading from Acts explored ways in which Jesus’ followers came to understand that – in his teachings and in his salvific death and resurrection – Jesus was breaking down dividing walls of hostility and alienation. We do not need to tell you that this mission is not completed, that dividing walls endure, that distinctions are still bitter and deadly. We remain in the midst of our deep national reckoning with the dividing wall of racism, which is stubborn, systemic, and sinful. The weekend massacre in Buffalo displays yet again that toxic intersection of simmering racism, online indoctrination into white supremacist philosophies, and appallingly simple access to lethal weapons.

“The loss of any human life is tragic, but there was deep racial hatred driving this shooting, and we have got to turn from the deadly path our nation has walked for much too long,” said our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, in his [May 16 pastoral statement \(https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/pastoral-statement-on-mass-shooting-in-buffalo-from-episcopal-church-presiding-bishop-michael-curry/\)](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/pastoral-statement-on-mass-shooting-in-buffalo-from-episcopal-church-presiding-bishop-michael-curry/). He called on us “to uphold and protect the dignity of every human child of God, and to actively uproot the white supremacy and racism deep in the heart of our shared life.” Likewise, Bishop Sean Rowe of the Diocese of Western New York – which includes Buffalo – urged prayer, “not as a substitute for taking action, but to prepare to do so. In the coming weeks, we will need to gather our resolve and raise our voices again against racism and hatred, and commit ourselves to freeing our nation from this epidemic of gun violence.” (Read Bishop Rowe’s statements [here \(https://episcopalpartnership.org/from-bishop-sean-a-hate-crime-in-buffalo/\)](https://episcopalpartnership.org/from-bishop-sean-a-hate-crime-in-buffalo/) and [here \(https://episcopalpartnership.org/from-bishop-sean-our-response-to-the-mass-shooting-in-buffalo/\)](https://episcopalpartnership.org/from-bishop-sean-our-response-to-the-mass-shooting-in-buffalo/).)

All around us old dividing walls are being shored up and new dividing walls constructed with bigotry, vitriol, and a righteous furor. May God grant us courage and strength to resist, refuse, and combat these sinful separations.

The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates

The Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris

*Find liturgical resources from Bishops United Against Gun Violence [here \(https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/resources/liturgical-resources/\)](https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/resources/liturgical-resources/).*

May 17, 2022