

Father in heaven,

We come to you together this morning with a heightened awareness of our deep need of you. We come to you because you have first loved us. And we come to you because you call us to love one another as the Lord Jesus himself has loved us.

Lord, because of your love poured out into our hearts, our hearts break for our Asian-American and Asian-immigrant communities in this country and in the Twin Cities. The steady rise in violence against these image-bearers is both deplorable and shameful. O God: this should not be. How long, O Lord? Mocking. Bullying. Name-calling. Belittling. Blaming. Objectifying. Fetishizing. Hating. Murdering. Lord, we see.

And *you* see, Lord. The lives of eight image-bearers tragically, wickedly, taken away this week. Most were women; most were of Asian and Korean descent:

- Ms. Tan
- Ms. Feng (fung)
- Ms. Grant
- Mrs. Yuan (yoo-ahn) Gonzalez
- Ms. Kim
- Ms. Park
- Ms. Yue (yoo-eh)
- Mr. Michels

Help us look to you, Jesus. Help us lament this great loss *together in this local body*. Help us stand against such great evil. Help us resist any ideology that would view fellow-image bearers as less-than. Help us look to our sisters and brothers of Asian-descent in this church--to *mourn* with them, to *grieve* with them, to *understand* the fear with them, to love them. Help us to *care well* for them. Help us *patiently* to weep and to lament with them. Help us to *stand with you* as you stand with them, drawing near to the brokenhearted. Help us to function well as your body, Lord Jesus. When one member suffers, *all suffer together*. The bruised reeds you will not break. Make it also so of all of us--for your Name's sake.

Father, I ask now that you would be with *MY* brother and *MY* partner in the gospel, Pastor Ming-Jinn Tong, as he comes to proclaim your word to us in a moment. Let him know and feel your smile this morning. May your steadfast love--right now--be a powerful encouragement to him no matter how prepared he feels. *He is a beloved son in your family*. Thank you for making Ming-Jinn yours! Fill him with your Spirit. Sustain him by the unmitigated *gentleness* of our Savior. There is no depth of sorrow beneath which you will not go with him--to the bottom, and beyond, you are there, acquainted with grief. So open the ears of our hearts to receive this word from Acts 2. Open the eyes of our hearts that we would see *Jesus more clearly* and love the community he is creating *more fully*. In Jesus' Name...Amen.