

Franklin Graham, Major Christian Leaders Issue Urgent Call to Prayer After 12 Killed in Virginia Shooting

Franklin Graham and other major Christian leaders issued an urgent call to prayer after a gunman killed 12 people in Virginia Beach.

Police say 40-year-old DeWayne Craddock opened fire in the Virginia Beach municipal building where he had worked for the past 15 years. In addition to killing 11 city employees and one contractor, Craddock injured six other people. His exact motive, however, is yet to be determined.

In the wake of what city manager Dave Hansen calls “Virginia Beach’s darkest hour,” the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team deployed to the area to offer physical and spiritual ministry. Franklin Graham, president of BGEA, urged Christians everywhere to respond with prayer:

Doug Stringer, founder of Somebody Cares, told Charisma News that Christians must respond to this tragedy with listening ears and open hearts:

Heartbreaking! There are no words adequate to express the depth of sadness and heart ache caused to the families and loved ones who have suffered from this terrible and horrific act in Virginia Beach. Our prayers join with many from across the nation for all the families and loved ones of the victims whose lives were cut way too short, and for all those injured and traumatized by this senseless tragedy.

The depth and breadth of a tragedy of this magnitude also affects all the co-workers and employees, the city of Virginia Beach and surrounding communities, as well as impact the psyche of our nation. May we all join in continued heartfelt prayers and tangible support to all the families affected. They and the community will need a time to sort through the grief and trauma, both individually and corporately.

There will be many who immediately have opinions and comments, yet what they need more now than anything, is to be surrounded by listening ears, and the ministry of presence. May we as the Church community be an ark of refuge and comfort, a place of healing and hope, a place to find peace in the midst of the plethora of emotion, questions and pain.

Other prominent Christians took to social media to express their condolences and prayers.

Karen & I offer our deepest sympathies and prayers to the families of the victims of the Virginia Beach shooting. Thank you today – and always – to the great first responders & law enforcement for their swift response.

– Vice President Mike Pence (@VP) June 1, 2019

RT @BGEA: The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team is on its way to VA Beach after a mass shooting killed 12 people. Please keep those affected by this tragedy in your prayers.

– Lee Strobel (@LeeStrobel) June 1, 2019

Dear Lord, we look at the devastation of what happened in Virginia Beach with such sorrow. Bring comfort to the victims' families, friends, first responders & everyone affected. We turn to You as our hope, Jesus. In the darkest

times, we know You are there. #PrayForVirginiaBeach

– Lysa TerKeurst (@LysaTerKeurst) June 1, 2019