

Mormons Raise Thousands in Funds for Family of Gunman Who Struck Their Congregation

Just days after a gunman killed four people and injured another eight inside of a Mormon church, members of the Latter-day Saints have decided to do one of the most selfless acts: financially provide for the family of their attacker.

According to the Washington Post, the members of the church started to collect funds for the alleged attacker's wife and son. The believed gunman, Thomas Jacob Sanford, died in a shootout with police.

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

Dave Butler, an LDS member who started the fundraiser, said, "Sanford leaves behind a wife and children who must be grieving. They will face financial hardship and psychological trauma as a result of this week's horrifying events. Butler also told the Washington Post, "The Epistle of James says that we should care for the widows and wanted to make sure that we were taking care of them, and thousands of people, it turns out, agree with me." Butler is not a member of the direct church that was impacted in Grand Blanc, Michigan.

As The Washington Post noted, Sanford's son is believed to have a rare congenital hyperinsulinism. Sanford's father also said via text that, "Our family is grieving so much right now, I can't find any words to express our appreciation but the right time will eventually come, thank you so much."

Religious scholar Dan McClellan told the Washington Post that this form of forgiveness is a critical part of the Mormon community.

“...they do quite a bit of marginalizing and persecuting of their own, but forgiving enemies is something that is always at the forefront of messaging for the LDS a grudge is like holding onto a burning coal with the intent of throwing it at some else. And it just hurts you more than it hurts think forgiveness is a way to put that down.”

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

This extreme act of forgiveness is the second one we've seen in just a few weeks. After the assassination of Charlie Kirk, his wife, Erika Kirk, publicly forgave her husband's killer during Charlie Kirk's memorial service.

“That man—that young man—I forgive him. I forgive him because it's what Christ did. And it's what Charlie would do,” Erika Kirk said.

These extraordinary acts of forgiveness reminds us of the radical calling of Scripture to love even those who harm us. In Romans 12:20–21, we are instructed, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Forgiveness, in its truest form, is not a passive act—it is a powerful weapon against bitterness, anger and the darkness that seeks to destroy communities. It frees the heart, honors God and reflects the very character of Christ, who forgave those who crucified Him.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Equally important is the focus on supporting widows and

orphans, a theme echoed throughout Scripture. James 1:27 declares, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..." Such acts of selfless love testify that God's grace is stronger than human brokenness—and that through obedience to His Word, communities can rise above hatred and cultivate peace where it is least expected. Ultimately, acts of forgiveness and care for the vulnerable reflect the core of God's calling for His people.

Abby Trivett is a writer and editor for Charisma Media and has a passion for sharing the gospel through the written word. She holds two degrees from Regent University, a B.A. in Communication with a concentration in Journalism and a Master of Arts in Journalism. She is the author of the upcoming book, *The Power of Suddenly: Discover How God Can Change Everything in a Moment*.