

A Meditation on the Global Nature of the Recent Tragedy

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Now more than ever I understand the power of a congregation spread all over the world. As you look out your windows, some of you see the Alps, standing as solidly as ever. Or the Rockies, or the Andes, or the Himalayas. Today you bought a mango at the supermarket, the bazaar, or at the farmers' market in the village center. And somehow you heard the news.

Your teacher told you, or your best friend emailed you. You overheard the clerks talking as they restocked the shelves. Your husband called you at the office. And then you knew that in two small corners of the United States, a tragedy was unfolding.

But the thing is, at least according to the members of our congregation, the tragedy is not local, but global: a tragedy borne by the human family. In spite of initial speechlessness, we find that messages of shock, then support, fill cyberspace and the airwaves. We know how to come together as a congregation. Never have we seen so many posts on our email list.

As Unitarian Universalists, we have a wide variety of religious anchors. Some of us rely on words, others on silence. Hugs help for some, for others it's walks, tea, perspectives from news commentators and religious leaders, ritual, favorite passages of poetry, talking it through. If you found yourself cleaning your closets, shopping for a replacement washer, gathering with other UU's, donating blood, pruning the hedge, writing checks to charity, holding your children, corresponding with your Muslim friends, calling your mom--fine. It's what we do, and all of it is holy and helpful.

If you are grieving for direct losses, please know that the rest of us hold you in our hearts. And for all of us, know that we are standing together, in view of those mountains, strong and steady.