

## Manchester Bombing Attack - 22nd May 2017

North West Baptists will be among the many ordinary citizens across our region who are stunned and shocked by the terror attack in Manchester Arena on Monday evening. At this stage, we do not know whether any of our churches and families will have been affected, but our thoughts and prayers are with all who have been harmed by this act of mindless evil.

We know already that young people from across the North West and beyond, attended Monday's concert, and while Manchester has borne the brunt, this is an attack on all of us. As Regional Minister, it is truly heart-breaking to hear the names of familiar communities identified as the places from which many of the victims have come. I am sure, in the days ahead, that many local congregations will be reaching out to provide care and support in the neighbourhoods that they serve.

This is also a moment to affirm faith as that which heightens our awareness of divine love and human goodness, and to renounce any attempt to use it to justify wickedness and harm. Such actions have no place in any civilised society or faith community.

Our emotions at this time will be raw and varied. A mixture of dismay, horror, fear, anger and defiance will no doubt emerge as we struggle to comprehend what has happened. These reactions are inevitable, but it is vital that we do not give in to those who perpetrate such evil and allow these natural human emotions to cultivate the division and distrust that they seek to sow.

As churches and individual citizens, let us commit ourselves afresh to building communities of hope, goodness and compassion - reflecting the values of God's Kingdom and the principles of love, kindness and self-giving on which our faith is founded.

Phil Jump – Regional Minister

**God of endless love and unchanging truth,  
Our hearts despair at the extent of human wickedness,  
And break for those who have been so tragically and unjustly hurt and harmed by this attack.  
Yet we give you thanks that even in its midst,  
We have caught so many glimpses of hope  
In the human kindness and generosity that has prevailed.**

**Today and in these days that follow,  
We pray for every life that has been damaged or lost;  
For those whose mourning and despair we will struggle to measure;  
For those who have selflessly responded,  
And will continue to provide care, support and healing.  
We pray for our leaders  
And all who face the difficult task of protecting our communities,  
And nurturing those values on which our well-being depends.**

**Help us to build a better world;  
A world where difference is seen as an opportunity to broaden our understanding;  
Disagreement as the chance to learn and grow,  
Where faith is reclaimed  
As that which brings out the best in us,  
And turns our hearts to all that is good and true. AMEN**