Holy God,

There are no words. There is nothing that we can say but instead we cry out. We cry out in shared grief and pain for the loss of so many children. We do not understand, and we cannot imagine why someone would murder, why someone would justify this act of violence. We cannot comprehend.

We come to You in prayer, but our prayer is jumbled. We pray for the families who are grieving. We pray for those who are wounded and recovering. We pray for those adults who put themselves in harm’s way to protect others. We pray for those children that have witnessed this horrific tragedy and will live with this for the rest of their lives.

Our grief is raw. The wound gapes open and we do not know how to stop it. But we call upon You, O Lord, to comfort those who mourn, to bind-up the brokenhearted.

It is Hanukkah, it is Advent, many are now preparing for the rest of Hanukkah and Christmas without their loved one. God, we surround them with our prayers, for we know not what else we can do. We surround them with our love, knowing that You are with them, that You hold them close.

Call us together as a community, and as a nation, loving God, to work to end violence, to build a safer community and safer schools for our children. In this time, help us to come together, for we are stronger together than we are alone, and we know Your comfort and love is shared when we are together.

Keep us close, O God. Help us to turn to each other, to seek the help we need, to build up instead of tearing down. Guide us with wisdom in how we teach our children, and work to end this violence. Loving God, help us to know You are always with us, and You are grieving with us now.

In Your name we pray. Amen.