

THE LANGFORD LETTERS

SERVING AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

CRU@STATE.COM | FEBRUARY 2023

What is there to do after a tragedy?

Brian was in Dallas when I got the first text alert on Monday night, February 13. He had flown there earlier that morning to be part of a week-long conference for local team leaders with Cru. I texted, then called Brian immediately. While the texts and alerts kept coming in, I sat at the kitchen table and prayed. A lone gunman had opened fire in 2 buildings at MSU, killing 3 college students and injuring 5 others, all image-bearers of our Father, all valuable to Him. Coming on the heels of a month in which Nick's high school had seen 2 shelter in place orders, the unfolding events felt all the more heavy. I finally turned off my phone and went to bed.

Catching the first flight he could out of Texas, on Tuesday Brian and his co-leader Mary drove straight from the Detroit airport to a prayer service at a local church where Brian helped lead the prayer time. We talked with many of our students, crying and lamenting with several. The rest of the week was a whirlwind, with vigils on campus, multiple prayer gatherings, one on one meetings with students to process and pray, and staff meetings to figure out "What do we do next?" Our first priority was to establish where and how all our Cru students were, starting with those most connected, then moving towards those who are less so. Most students left campus right away, including our Cru students. Only about half of our students stayed in town, mostly our older leaders. These incredible women and men sat with younger students and listened while processing their own grief and confusion.

Wednesday I made a huge pot of soup and we opened our home for anyone who wanted to come over. Close to 30 staff and students spread out on our couches and carpet and yard. Some colored; some read; some sat alone and journaled; others chatted and played catch. The soup was gobbled up quickly and I turned to our freezer and heated up frozen chili. Then most piled into cars to attend a candle light vigil at the Rock on campus. Over a thousand students and community members attended. A few students weren't ready to go back to campus, opting instead to stay snuggled on our couch or seated on the floor with Bree. .

As I write this, just over 2 weeks later my mind is flooded with memories of conversations and prayers. I see the face of



DINNER & WORSHIP TIME HOSTED BY OUR CHURCH



A SAFE SPACE AWAY FROM CAMPUS



OUR KITCHEN SANCTUARY

Looking for light in the darkness

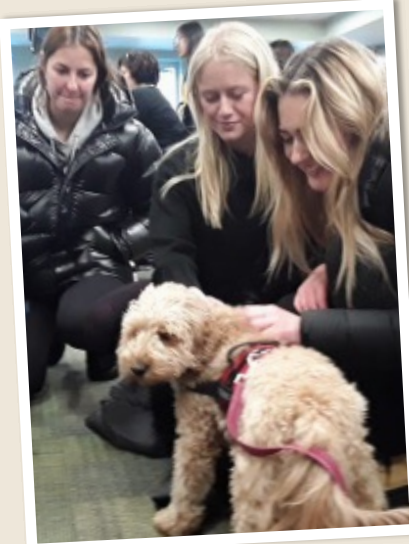
Stephanie who, with tears streaming down her face, wondered if it was ok to feel angry. She had been locked in a rec building on campus, then told to "RUN!" by police. So she did—two miles to her apartment. I see Zuriel who sat with Brian and me in the basement of her dorm and wept after we prayed with her, the trauma on campus surfacing old hurts and fears from being homeless after her father abandoned their family. I see Ryan who endured a mass

GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH, AN EVER-PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE, THEREFORE WE WILL NOT FEAR... PSALM 46:1,2

casualty shooting at his high school in Oxford, MI less than 2 years ago. And I see numerous others whose worlds have been turned upside down, who are seeking to trust God even though they don't understand.

In the midst of the sadness and trauma, we've seen God. Scriptures have played on repeat in our minds. We've received literally 100s of calls and texts from you, people who love and care for us and this campus. With pounding hearts, three of our students were able to share the hope of the Gospel with their classes. *Bhavana, PJ, Enzo, and Peter*, students who have been part of Cru since the fall, *all prayed to receive Christ in the past 2 weeks.* Students are much more open to talking about spiritual things. Though the conversations aren't always easy, our staff and students are having them.

THANK YOU for caring for us, for making food, for sending money so that we can feed our students and reach out to new students, for texting. We are grateful for your continued prayers as we navigate these deep waters.



THERAPY DOGS

MARY, ONE OF OUR TEAM LEADERS, RECENTLY ADOPTED AND TRAINED KONA TO BE A THERAPY DOG. KONA AND MARY HAVE WORKED THE CAMPUS, BRINGING JOY AND COMFORT TO HURTING FOLKS. THEY WERE EVEN ABLE TO HOST A GATHERING ON THE FLOOR OF ONE OF THE VICTIMS. THE RA WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE CARE AND KONA LOVED THE BELLY RUBS.



VIGIL AT THE ROCK

A LOCAL PASTOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE MSU RELIGIOUS ADVISORS' ASSOCIATION OPENED THE VIGIL AT THE MSU ROCK. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE HEARD OF THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE THAT JESUS OFFERS. THERAPY DOGS OFFERED LOVE AND SNUGGLES. CLUSTERS OF PEOPLE PRAYED. THE TIME ENDED WITH A WOMEN LEADING THE CROWD IN SINGING AMAZING GRACE.



HOPE IN FEAR

HANNAH, A SENIOR LEADER, TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL WITH ONE OF HER CLASSES. AS SHE WAS PACKING UP TO LEAVE AFTER CLASS, A GIRL SNUCK THIS NOTE ON HER DESK. THE TRAGEDY ON CAMPUS HAS SURFACED A TON OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SEEING THEIR NEED TO EITHER LIVE OUT THEIR FAITH IN A REAL AND VISIBLE WAY OR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO TALK MORE ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH AND KNOWING GOD.