



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



New reports indicate that last week's protests and political unrest in Kazakhstan, a Central Asian country and former Soviet republic, left 164 dead and cities looted and burned. Jan. 10 has been declared a day of mourning in that country.

Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan, is the hometown of Bishop Eduard Khegay, who wrote a request for prayer, "It was this city that was captured by the largest wave of riots, looting, murders, fires and shootings. How quickly the peaceful way of life collapsed and how fragile human life became. ... I lived there my first seventeen years. There I first learned good and evil, love and hate, friendship and betrayal, peace, and conflict. This city is filled with love and intelligence, hospitality and humor, the beauty of the mountains and music. In this city live my brother and sister, as well as many relatives, colleagues, parishioners, classmates, friends, and acquaintances. My grandmother and my mother, my uncles and aunts are buried there."

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling is calling on members of the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences to pray for the people of Kazakhstan and for those around the globe whose lives are troubled by violence.

"Just a few days ago we were celebrating the birth of Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, and the hope that his presence brings into the world," she said. "The atrocities in Kazakhstan remind us of how much violence still exists in our world and how much work is before us to effect lasting peace. Let us pray for those directly affected and use our voice, influence and power to make a difference at home and abroad."