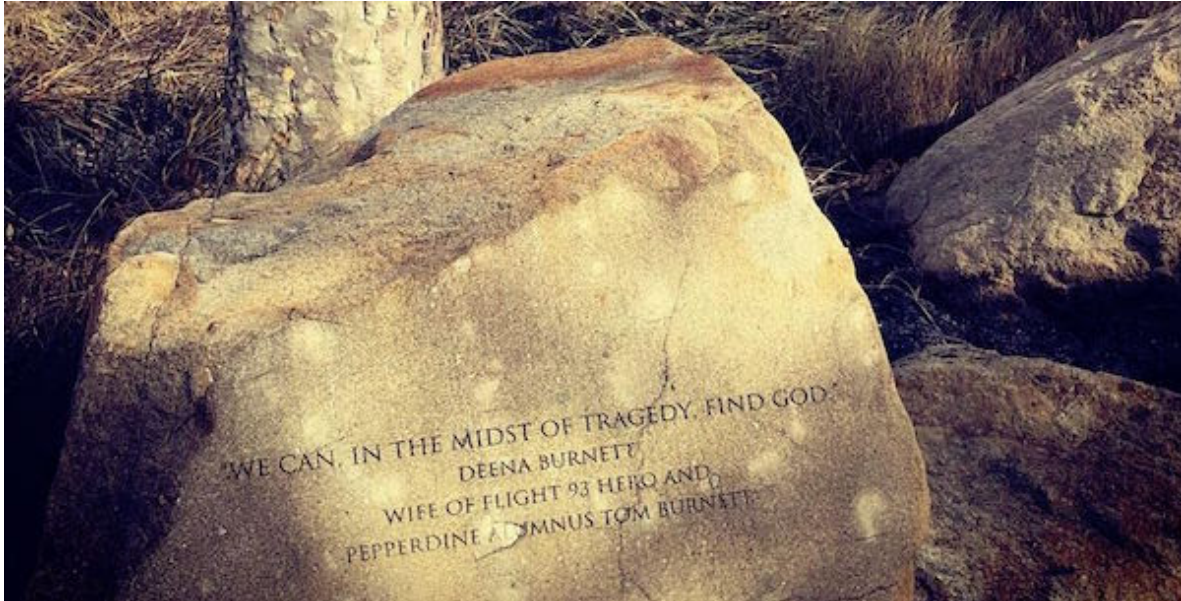


# PEPPERDINE

## Human Resources



*Photograph taken by Al Sturgeon.*

Over the past two weeks, I have found it difficult to find the right words to do justice to our feelings of grief, loss, anger, fear, displacement, and sadness. In a harrowing season of shared loss and tragedy, I am confident in my collective claim - that we, as a community, have been in a season of lament.

To lament is to passionately express pain, sorrow, and anger. Nearly one third of all Psalms are laments. The verses tell the story of loss, despair, loneliness, and devastation. They describe what it feels like to be in the pit of despair.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?  
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.  
Psalm 22:1-2

Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.  
I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold.  
I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.  
I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched.  
My eyes fail, looking for my God. "  
Psalm 69:1-3

Lament psalms typically include a cry to God, a description of the affliction, and a request for rescue or redemption. However, these psalms do not end in despair. Instead, the close of most laments swell toward trust, hope, praise, and ultimately, thankfulness.

"But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."  
Psalm 86:15

"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving."  
Psalm 69:30

Amidst tragedy, we have witnessed unparalleled collaboration, generosity, and love within and beyond our community. It is clear that beauty can indeed come from ashes, just as the wildflowers and new growth will eventually emerge from our charred landscape. For this, I am very thankful.

As we approach this season of thanks, many of us are still mired in the pit of lament - which is okay. Others of us have emerged and are getting a glimpse of how our thankfulness is different because of the lament.

No matter where you are this Thanksgiving week (geographically, emotionally, or spiritually), I pray that you feel the love of family both personally, professionally, and in community.

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