

Gathering Day, May 17, 2022

At Gathering Day on May 17, President Surridge, celebrated the end of the academic year with faculty and staff, honored retirees for their years of service, and provided updates on the North Park Next strategic planning process and timeline. The President invited faculty and staff to attend one of four Strategic Planning Input Sessions in June and August to build on the discussion questions from last year's Community Day.

Also, at Gathering Day, the President offered the following remarks related to the racially motivated mass shooting in Buffalo, NY, and a prayer for peace and rest:

Today President Biden is visiting with the grieving families of the victims of the racist massacre in Buffalo, NY.

The violent racism in our society is outrageous and heartbreaking.

We know North Park can't fix the evil in the world -- but we *are* a force for good, and we are *not* helpless.

Here on our campus, we are blessed to pursue an educational mission in a peaceful, hopeful environment that seeks Jesus, and that welcomes the Kingdom of God in all its beautiful diversity, each and every one of us created in His image.

We educate our students to respect the dignity of all God's people, to seek justice, and to apply their gifts to solving society's most difficult problems.

We teach and model the imperative to regard every human face we encounter with the reverence that is due to a human being created in God's image.

And we pray.

Let us pray for peace and rest.

Lord Jesus,

Help us make our lives a sign of Christ's love for this broken world -- that love may overcome hatred, that unity may overcome estrangement, that forgiveness may heal, and that joy may conquer sorrow.

Send us now into the summer months in peace – praying for one another and thanking You for the giftedness and the service of each member of our community.

We love You, Lord – and we lift our voice to worship you.

May your living Word feed us, and your Holy Spirit lead us, forward.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.