



St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church - Saint Petersburg, FL
March 16, 2025 – Ann S. Kelly, Founder/Director

Good morning & A Very Good Day Everyone! I am happy to be with you all here in the Sunshine State!

Gratitude is my consistent word that rings true!

Thank you, Father Ethan! I am truly honored and blessed to have this amazing opportunity to share good news and thank you for your help in teaching and nurturing the Purple Hands Pledge here within your church family. Thank you, for your shared vision of creating a safer, kinder community and world one Purple Hands Pledge at a time.

And thank you Jenni Adams, my dear friend, for your generosity and for your tireless work here, knowing we can make a positive difference joining hands and hearts together! I know, Purpose + Passion = Positive Action! Your heart light shines bright for all to see!

Gratitude! I would like to recognize and thank my husband of 58 years, Dr. Robert Kelly, Emergency Physician retired after 34 years from Salem Hospital Emergency Department in Salem, Oregon. He has been by my side every step of the way on this journey to educate, encourage and inspire people of all ages (age 3 to 103) to take this 14-word Purple Hands Pledge to heart.

Bob was born and raised here in St Petersburg and is a 1963 graduate of Boca Ciega High School where we first met. After his many years of medical education and service as a medical officer in the US Navy we moved to Salem, Oregon in 1977. Together we raised three wonderful sons and have six amazing grandchildren.

My inspiration for writing the Purple Hands Pledge® and creating the Purple Hand/Red Heart logo comes from a lifetime of varied experiences.

I am a martial artist, a 3rd degree black belt, and self-defense specialist. I taught classes in self-defense for women and girls aged 12 and older in our community and around the country for over 20 years. I became acutely aware abuse, violence, and suicide were escalating, particularly in children.

Both my husband Bob and me, in our own way, worked routinely with victims and survivors and wanted to do more in abuse, violence, & suicide prevention education. The Hands & Words Are Not For Hurting Project, a nonprofit education organization, was founded in 1997 in Salem Oregon and has reached all 50 states and 26 foreign countries.

We believe education is the light in the darkness and the voice that breaks the silence!

Today, March 16, 2025, is an incredible opportunity to shine our Light on Acceptance and Accountability on Decency and Dignity in our world here and now! We are our world! Our world is who we live with, work with, go to school with, play with and pray with!

Be the Light! Lead the way! Take this Purple Hands Pledge to help us all, in our own world be better, be safer, be healthier in every relationship and in all aspects of our lives! We are taught in scripture to “Love One Another” to live by the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”...”Love thy neighbor as thyself” The PH Pledge reinforces these values and principals most of us were taught as children.

Abuse, violence, and suicide is a public health crisis in our communities, our nation and our world. The Hands & Words Are Not For Hurting Project is addressing this crisis with a universal public health approach. The dramatic rise in all forms of abuse (domestic and family violence, child abuse, gun violence, bullying, self-harm, and suicide) demonstrates the need to educate at the earliest ages that anger is a feeling; abuse and violence is always a choice.

Our way of standing up to all forms of abuse is to teach and take our 14-word Purple Hands Pledge to heart: “I Will Not Use My Hands Or My Words For Hurting Myself Or Others®” These 14 words teach empathy, self-control, respect for self and others and accountability for our words and actions that either help or hurt.

Why is the Hand Purple? The hand is not black, it’s not white, it’s not brown it is Purple!

A Purple Hand with a Red Heart Embedded in the Palm represents all people as one, is inclusive regardless of skin color, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or nationality. We are all different on the outside!

The Color Purple is our national color used to honor and remember victims and survivors of abuse and violence. Those who are no longer with us, victims of suicide and murder, and those who are suffering in silence... afraid to ask for help.

The Purple Heart*...our Nation’s oldest medal of honor is awarded to men and women wounded or killed in combat. We honor their service and their sacrifice with our Purple Hands!

Why is a Heart in the middle of the palm?

The Red Heart in the palm of the hand serves to represent when

you hurt yourself or another person, or someone hurts you with words or by actions, it hurts deep inside, it hurts your heart, it hurts your spirit.

When I spoke at school assemblies at all age and grade levels around the country, I asked the kids, “has anyone ever called you a name? Almost every hand went up. “So, tell me how did it make you feel?” The smallest and youngest were eager to answer...”it made me feel sad”...”it made me mad”...made me feel scared...one little boy in about the 5th grade said, “it made me feel depressed.” We all know how it makes us feel!

We are all alike on the inside... This is how we teach Empathy!

We are All Valuable Irreplaceable Human Beings! We are all created of equal value! No one is better than another! It is about human rights and human dignity!

Repetition is how we learn everything...how to read, write, ride a bike, this is not a one-time thing! Practice makes Permanent! Not perfect...when we forget, and we will as imperfect human beings...take it again!
Don't just say it, live it!

Be the Light in the darkness! Be the Voice that breaks the silence for those suffering in silence afraid to ask for help! Our purple hands remind us to Never Forget those who are no longer with us lost to suicide and murder.

Take this Pledge with your family. Trace your hand on purple paper, sign your name in your handprint and put it in a prominent place in your home. Lead the way for your family and friends to take these 14 words to heart!

The kindest and most loving thing we can do for ourselves, and others is to make this promise! To lift up not tear down! Do the right thing...Day after day. Year after year.

In addition to reaching schools & homes, our outreach expanded to include daycare facilities, Head Start programs, birthing centers, places of worship, youth organizations, government agencies, public officials, law enforcement, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, battered women's shelters, batterer treatment programs, businesses, mental health counseling services, child abuse assessment/treatment centers, and hospitals/ healthcare facilities.

The Purple Hands Pledge® is for everyone working with children and families!

Gratitude. Since we began 28 years ago another generation is teaching their children this simple reminder. It takes time to create social change. We must do this for our kids, grandkids, everyone!

Our Vision: Safe Homes. Safe Schools. Safe Communities

I invite you all to stop by our table. You are invited and encouraged to trace or paint your hand and sign your Purple Hand. I am eager to visit with you and answer any questions. Please visit our website for more information and inspiration!

In closing, I want to ask Father Ethan and Jenni Adams to please join me. Please accept this purple heart as a gentle reminder of how much I appreciate all you are doing for the families and children gathered here in this beautiful, accepting and loving place of worship! And now, as always, you are the open door, a beacon of light of love and acceptance for this community. We are all indeed enlightened and blessed to have you in our lives!

Thank you from my heart to yours!