

## Laity Resolution on Gun Violence

Approved: North Texas Conference UMC 2022 Annual Conference Laity Session: Sunday, 06.05.22

**Whereas** gun violence is an epidemic in our country, including that tragedy of gun violence which occurred on May 24, 2022, in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 children and 2 teachers were murdered at an elementary school.

**Whereas** children and teachers must be allowed to learn and teach without the fear of gun violence in their school and parents should have confidence that their children will be in a safe environment while at school.

**Whereas** we support the resolution on hate crimes that the clergy of the North Texas Conference unanimously approved following the murder of 10 people at grocery store in Buffalo, New York, which targeted the black community.

**Whereas**, as people of faith, we do not believe in hopelessness or despair and that our faith in Christ assures us that with God all things are possible, that we can do all things through him who strengthens us, and that evil and sin and suffering and death and darkness will never get the final say.

**Whereas** it is a sin to be resigned that there is nothing that can be done in the face of evil and every United Methodist Christian is asked in baptismal vows: "Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?"

**Whereas**, our Council of Bishops has called on us, as lay people, "to determine today how we will take the faith we nurture each week in a pew to the streets, the places where we work, and the homes where we live, and further, that our churches not settle for just active shooter training, but rather how we will actively work to transform lives from violence to peace, elect officials that will not settle for inaction, and inject communities with the grace and love of Christ that will alter the course of our current behaviors."

**Whereas**, our own Bishop Michael McKee has reminded us to "be doers of the word not merely hearers." (James 1:22)

**Therefore, be it resolved that**, as the lay members of the North Texas Conference, we re-commit to our baptismal vows to resist the evil of resignation and work within our churches to educate and end the evil of gun violence.

**Be it further resolved that** as lay members of the North Texas Annual Conference, we will follow the Bishops' call to go on the offense, stating what we believe the power of God can do in our midst, opening ourselves to the power of God at work within us, and doing whatever we can to alter the current course of behavior once and for all.

**Be it further resolved that** during the first weekend of June members of the North Texas Annual Conference will wear orange to demonstrate our commitment to a future free from gun violence as part of the Wear Orange Movement during National Gun Violence Awareness Weekend so that the world may know that Christ's people are opposed to such violence and so that the victims and their communities may know that we stand with them.

### Submitted By:

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