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| |  | | --- | | ***Epidemic of Gun Violence and***  ***Loving Our Neighbors***  *by Miriam Casey | Co-Chair, Commission for Intercultural Ministries*  Our country is experiencing an epidemic of gun violence. It is on the front pages of our newspapers and on TV and online breaking news. Again and again, we learn about mass shootings taking innocent lives. All ages, including children Any location, including churches. In small towns and large cities.  Many times, from the use of automatic weapons.  In the midst of this epidemic of gun violence, we are called to love our neighbors. How do we answer that call?  **Prayer**  Presiding Bishop Michael Curry [**invites us to pray together.**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkjdUB2pqxo8Ipk3SvlPoFjqwtCLEz9dakJIwfrOtR2kptB2zbwBQ5967Vnk5D624qfklF59IClMYL_JH3G1KubVSZVFTmmt1TM4ejqppMsoavm_d8F3CGbdyuTWf_Rsa1wMAgu_aoFIJXDJg9OhRPPZUqhjCgAefV&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==)  **Message from the Pulpit**  Many of our spiritual leaders are speaking to us from the pulpit about what it means to love our neighbors in this time of extreme gun violence.  In his May 29 sermon, Dean Randy Hollerith of Washington National Cathedral reminds us we are all connected to each other, all one family together, and connected to God. And we need to care for each other.  He reminds us that “we have to do something about the never-ending trail of death caused by gun violence.”  He reframes the issue for us.  It is not a political issue but a moral issue.  Dean Hollerith closes with words from John Wesley, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.”  [**Link to the sermon**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkOTD4rjsgpoiXoxCu9GyFc7MB3jGrcPWOzYVR2nVwCDGoGJi1PZMpSlv-RonxOr22hk5OIbV3kp_KvIa1otBQlk4-myVdH7_8B-wTlPHut17kdsfcWgbV4ImNGaT17WRLQqBYnY9Of88AHRM-1UCYv_NYGRd0IkkQ&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==)  **Advocacy**  The Episcopal Church has a long history of advocating for legislation to reduce the risk of gun violence in the United States.  Unfortunately, pro-gun groups have successfully blocked the passage of new gun restrictions.  The current surge in gun violence has prompted Congress to begin new discussions about restrictions on gun use that would improve the safety of our communities.  The Office of Government Relations published an action alert to support gun reform to strengthen and expand background checks. Please take a moment to  use this [**online tool**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkBAq2pcdwR2vmoov0g1XLDc4SUWPTHExWlJy7Pfp6pGu0Pg0S1YamaJZewr8K9eBVJFZ6mSxA8fORyiLcNVswLx18qVj8H-4SEb9NPgJBGGIsFxZNzZCbqLpoEuVrdr7VlMjs3oQTfaxRXmR33BBq_x3XI_BQHyxmVfTZfBDMcNm7QcKUhFVRFPEpCLY1JYSqYfIz9o60c3cG60kfGsF8T6PHJQEswr5b-GzhQTE8nY8=&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==) to send a message to your Senators and Representatives to vote in support of gun reform.  **Other Actions**  The Episcopal Peace Fellowship is a national organization that focuses on peace and justice-building in our communities, based on our call to love and to fulfill our Baptismal promises. They provide this resource about [**10 ways our churches can reduce gun violence.**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkw6qGJytPJ5vTAzB60B84ex4mnCkuIOE4BPTtO2qgI4lM2-lkUFCwzc2YYw4qLFkqzejx1SBoGaVh-srR5FFnfncaGiJo9xt1fNmDwXGz9gaVxpskuj2_JFg4u165onl87YtA55x33C1mNdal5MmSR3e_Li9lY3sEy61L9YUhIzo=&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==)  There are a number of organizations that are working to promote greater gun safety. Please consider supporting one of these organizations.  ﻿   * [**Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkz9Iesf-sqcIwC3p5yRb0uMiNW9k9GVkudVLeNdbbTxZb4u8ljtktfoCtFYNIb2GaH77mkbB3fZwdTF4otsmhXQ==&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==) * [**Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkJs8sj477a_Fp0Rz5jAmvYh0MfUJr4KEe--3hjH8IKBiwDk3kcZGCQ_XghEanZxAaXHYq3lhW70eHNZSH9UBJyg==&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==) * [**Gifford-Courage to Fight Gun Violence**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001ETNJgUJiK74G_JXeD8WrmgREAWMYHxSEMDjOwT9usfqWObKirKUjzItqTfX5cFhkPHJErX1xlUX-pW0lK1RhTnO4_EQiQtPIRTd55Lc8cGoz4DYA_qS7Ivt0Hx9f-IEmGzGii3BFkno=&c=PazJRP0aqqpvD5BTx1nAq-aA3UERd1ZK14ydYWmtAGgc3fhhwGsnWQ==&ch=WraTocB5FglV1vrrYAiCZdJE5BvIKVe5S9Akwwp0IZKUNLJyPjUIaQ==)   **Prayer for God's Help**  Gracious God,  With heavy hearts and troubled minds, we pray for the victims of mass shootings. We remember all who have lost their lives to gun violence and commend them to your merciful and loving presence. We hold before you all families and communities who are facing the turmoil and trauma of loss, whose lives have been forever changed, and we place them into your loving arms…. We seek your divine help for our nation at this time and pray that our leaders will have the courage and compassion to address the epidemic of gun violence so that all homes, schools, houses of worship, and communities may be places of safety and peace. We ask this in your most Holy Name. Amen. | |