

Responding to Gun Violence

How to start a gun violence prevention ministry

1

Let us pray:

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn from the scabbard of righteousness, no strength known but the power of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit that this people may be gathered under the wings of the Prince of Peace; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

- adapted from the Prayer For Peace, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 815

2

Isaiah 57:18-19

I have seen their ways, but I will heal them;
I will lead them and repay them with comfort,
creating for their mourners the fruit of the lips.
Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord;
and I will heal them.

Silent reflection

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Psalm 46:9-11a

Come now and look upon the works of the Lord, *
what awesome things he has done on earth.

It is he who makes war to cease in all the world; *
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear,
and burns the shields with fire.

Be still, then, and know that I am God.

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2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NRSV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

Silent reflection

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What are your theological, liturgical, and/or scriptural touchstones for this work?

(Feel free to share them in the chat, or contemplate in silence)

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Let us pray:

Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and the creation of peace in our time, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

- adapted from the Collect for Social Justice, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 260

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Why start a gun violence prevention ministry?

"Faith leaders cannot console our communities while not also holding them responsible for making a change in our society. Our communities are filled with people like me who cannot be consoled with empty prayers, because the stain is too deep. When our very lives are on the line, we must end our fear-ridden excuse making and become the embodiment of our prayers, as the Masai prayer 'You have our faith with our bodies,' urges us to do."

...

"Father, help us to do with our bodies what we proclaim, that our faith be known to you and to others, and be effective in all the world."

Elinor Kleinbeck is the director of the Thriving in Ministry Coordination Program at Leadership Education at Duke Divinity. In addition, she serves Duke Divinity School as director of youth ministry initiatives. Quote from www.dukedivinity.org received via www.dukedivinity.org

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Community Condolence Cards

Have a volunteer or team keep track of significant events locally and nationally, and mail cards to affected communities and/or their closest Episcopal church.

Cards also remind us of our responsibility to act on our promises.

Note: keeping track takes a toll. Plan to rotate/relieve volunteers regularly.



WE SEND YOU OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCE.
WE PRAY FOR GOD'S SPIRIT OF COMFORT TO REST WITH YOU, AND, IN GOD'S TIME,
WE PRAY FOR THE RECONCILEMENT OF PAIN.

WE PLEDGE, WITH GOD'S HELP, TO WORK TOWARD THE ELIMINATION OF GUN
VIOLENCE.

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding, O'er graciously with St. Stephen's in their grief, surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their grief. Give them the strength and courage to go forward through the days to come. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (NCP)

THE CHURCH OF THE EPISCOPAL (EPISCOPAL), EXCUL, OHIO

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Prayer walks

Invite others from the community to participate.
Rotate leadership of walks and prayers, starting from different churches or community locations month by month.
Visit locations where violence has erupted, offering prayers of peace.
If permissible/practical, leave a marker of prayer - a peace stone, etc. (Make sure it will not become litter.)



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Children's and Family Ministries

Include a prayer and contact information for concerned parents/families in school supply donations where permitted.

Order safety cards from GodBeforeGuns.org



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Art against violence



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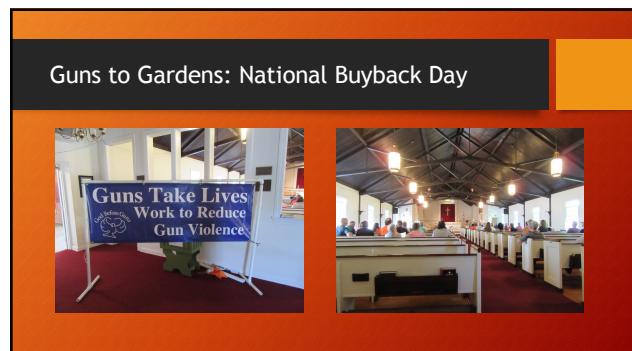
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Guns to Gardens: National Buyback Day



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Advocacy

This is not politics. It's life and death.

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life, so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days ..." (Deuteronomy 30:19-20a)

It's not *exactly* or *only* politics - but contacting our politicians can help save lives!

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Advocacy

A few avenues for research and ideas for advocacy:

- <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr/resources-to-respond-to-gun-violence/>
- gnational.org
- <https://giffords.org>
- <https://everytownresearch.org>
- <https://momsdemandaction.org>
- <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/health-policy-and-management/research-and-practice/center-for-gun-violence-solutions>
- pewresearch.org

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