

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

CONGREGATIONAL TOOLKIT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.	3
In the PC(USA).	4
Bible Study	6
Conversation Starters	14
Citizen’s Test on Gun Violence in America	14
Citizen’s Test Answers and Sources.	16
Gun Violence in America Statistics.	18
Guns and Violence in Our Language	20
Visual Resources.	22
Worship Resources	24
A Litany on the Tragedy of Gun Violence	24
Hymn - God of Mercy, You Have Shown Us	25
Scripture Passages in Addressing Gun Violence.	26
Appendix: Heeding God’s Call	28
Proposal for Public Witness Heeding God’s Call	30
Starting the Movement Step-by-Step	31
Covenant of Commitment	32
Code of Conduct	33
Media Guide	34



Greetings!

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is committed to reducing violence in our own communities as well as in areas of conflict around the world.

The [219th General Assembly \(2010\)](#), held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, unanimously approved this ground-breaking report, “Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call.” The next page of this toolkit contains the opening page of the report, a letter written by Rev. Dr. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA), who encourages all members of our church to take seriously the problem of gun violence in our communities.

We have created this Gun Violence Prevention Toolkit to help lead individuals, small groups and churches to explore the issues of gun violence as they affect our communities and congregations. It is our hope that after learning more about this issue and exploring Biblical texts that you too may feel called to engage gun violence prevention in your local community. Resources found in the various sections of this toolkit and in the Appendix are meant to help start conversations about local gun violence in congregational settings.

The final part of this packet focuses upon the work of Heeding God’s Call, a faith based movement to prevent gun violence, a new and growing grassroots movement that focuses on organizing faith communities to take concrete actions that make a real difference in reducing gun violence in communities:

Handguns reach streets and neighborhoods through a highly developed illegal trade – gun trafficking. These are the guns used to threaten, wound, maim and kill. The linchpins of gun trafficking are criminal entrepreneurs, traffickers, the straw buyers who stand in for them to make their purchases and gun dealers who look the other way and enjoy the profits.

Both PPF and HGC were named in the “[Gun Violence and Gospel Values](#)” report as organizations with whom Presbyterians are encouraged to work. Heeding God’s Call helps faith communities organize to publicly pressure local gun stores to adopt a set of practices to deter straw purchasing.

Information in this toolkit has been compiled from a number of reputable resources. We give a special thanks to the [Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#), [Heeding God’s Call](#), and the [Mennonite Central Committee US Washington Office](#), [Katie Rains](#), and [Carolyn Gillette](#) all of who have given us permission to incorporate excerpts of their work in this resource.

Presbyterians across the nation have been leading the way on this issue. We hope you will join with us, raising our voices together proclaiming, “Life!” above the clamor of gun shots that wreak death in our city.

Peace of Christ,

[The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship](#)

PC(USA) AND GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

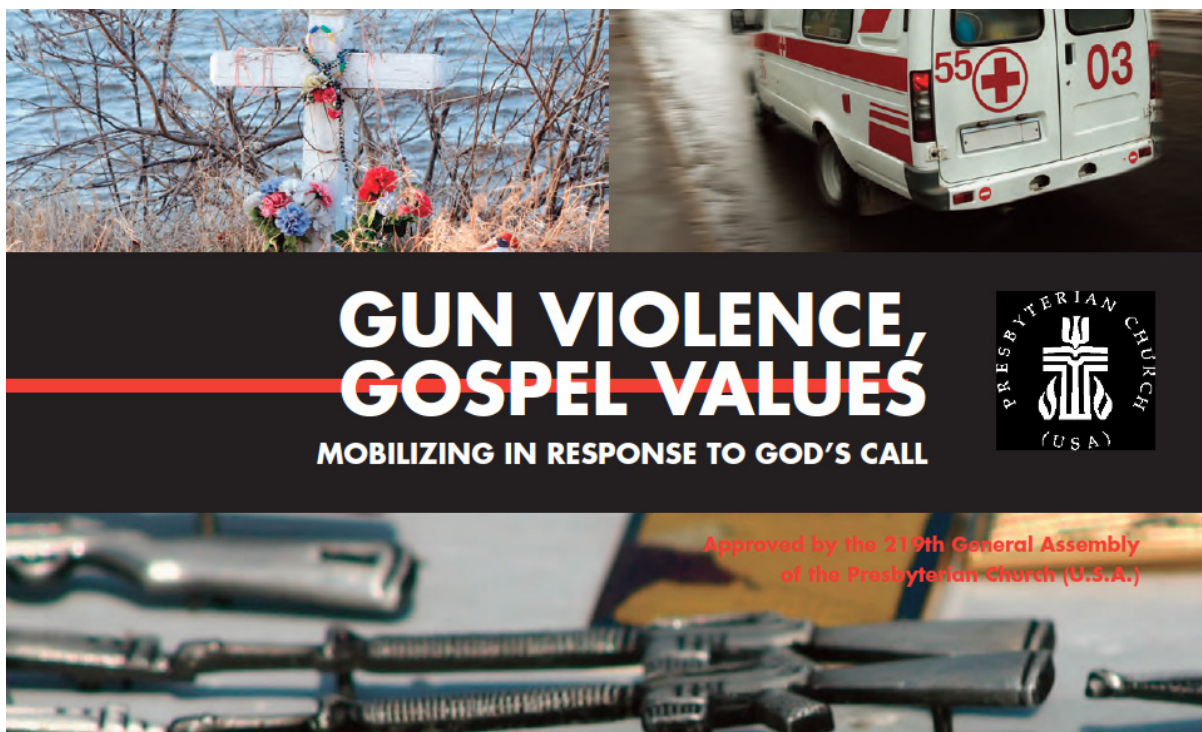
The PC(USA) and its predecessor bodies have addressed gun violence through the actions of eight General Assemblies in the last thirty years. Beginning in the late 1960's, in response to the assassinations of public leaders, the General Assembly called for "...control [of] the sale and possession of fire arms of all kinds." Similar resolutions were passed again in 1976, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1996 and 1998.

Each resolution reflected a sense of moral urgency in response to rising gun violence and the cultural trends that contributed to it. These resolutions have called on the church to be involved in education and advocacy at the federal, state, and community level to prevent gun violence. In 1991 and 1996, these resolutions were backed up with strong educational curricula as well as comprehensive strategies for advocacy.

More recently, in 2008 the General Assembly recommended that churches should take seriously the pastoral implications of caring for members of our community who have experienced the pain that gun violence wreaks, advocate for legislation that would increase the safety and well being of communities in relation to the presence of guns, and perform a national study regarding these concerns of gun violence. From this recommendation, a gun violence prevention task force of ten people was formed under the auspices of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The task force worked tirelessly over the next two years and produced a comprehensive study of contemporary gun violence in the United States, complete with recommendations for the church as to how to address this critical issue. This study was called, "[Gun Violence and Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call.](#)"

The 219th General Assembly (2010), unanimously passed this resolution. Unanimity is not an adjective usually attributed to gun violence prevention work, however given the unique, pastoral, and positive tone of this resolution, the assembly offered much energy and affirmation to this work.



Approved by the 219th General Assembly
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



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THE REV. DR. GRADYE PARSONS
STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Fall 2010

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

The 219th General Assembly (2010) adopted the resolution, “Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call,” in exercise of its responsibility to help the whole church address matters of “social righteousness.” As a social witness policy statement, it is presented for the guidance and edification of both church and society, and determines procedures and program for the ministries and staff of the General Assembly. It is recommended for consideration and study by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and commended to the free Christian conscience of all congregations and members for prayerful study, dialogue, and action.

Preventing gun violence is sometimes a quite controversial matter as it can be associated with efforts to ban certain weapons, ammunition, or recreational uses of guns. This resolution presents a different approach, one focused on preventing illegal guns from getting into the wrong hands, especially in our cities. As a Tennessean raised with hunting as part of my culture, I appreciate the difference in strategy though some new regulation is still recommended.

The essential Christian motivation in this is saving lives, as the U.S. annual death toll is approximately 30,000 people, with many more wounded. A bit more than 50% of these deaths are suicides, and Presbyterians fall into the category of those using guns for this purpose when depressed or facing health problems. What receives more attention, of course, is the urban murder rate among young men, often young men of color, and the all-too-regular phenomena of mass shootings, often by young white men, some of whom then commit suicide as well. As a pastor who has dealt with gun deaths and suicides it confirmed my hard experience to learn that owning a gun quadruples our own danger of being shot for whatever reason.

The good news in this report is that Christians and some interfaith neighbors have joined in groups such as “Heeding God’s Call,” which focus on local education and organizing efforts to prevent irresponsible gun sales at shops or gun shows. Considerable work can be done in cities and towns and in the country to make sure gun buyers will not funnel weapons to gangs. These efforts also have a public health dimension aimed to stem vectors of crime weapons from entering cities or regions. The core of the approach is a shared spiritual awakening that seeks to protect not only one’s own neighborhood, but others in perhaps greater need.

I urge you, then, to read, discuss and act on this report. It has a realism about the tragic dimensions and a hopefulness about how all of us can respond with impact, and in ways that strengthen our churches and build relationships with other faith communities. At the back of the booklet are examples of codes of conduct and other “how to” elements.

With prayer for a real decline in gun violence and a rise in gospel values, I commend [the report “Gun Violence and Gospel Values”] to you.

Yours in Christ,

Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk



GUN VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

DEADLY NUMBERS

More than 800,000 people died from gunshot wounds and other firearm fatalities in the United States during the last 25 years.

Approximately 30,000 people are killed by firearms each year. Many more are wounded.

This number marks an improvement since 1993, when a record 39,595 gun deaths occurred. But progress toward lowering the number further stalled during the last decade.

CAUSES OF DEATH

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which tracks and provides reputable figures for domestic mortality rates, breaks gun deaths into four categories: homicides, suicides, legal interventions and accidental deaths.

Homicides

In 2005, 12,352 people were murdered with a firearm. The vast majority of all murders, 68 percent, were committed with firearms.

More than 30 people are shot and murdered each day, and more than six in 10 are young adults between the ages of 18 and 35.

Suicides

In 2005, 17,002 people committed suicide using a firearm. Firearms were used in 52 percent of all suicides.

This makes suicide the most common cause of gun death in the United States.

Taking steps such as implementing thorough background checks for mental illness might help reduce this number.

Legal intervention

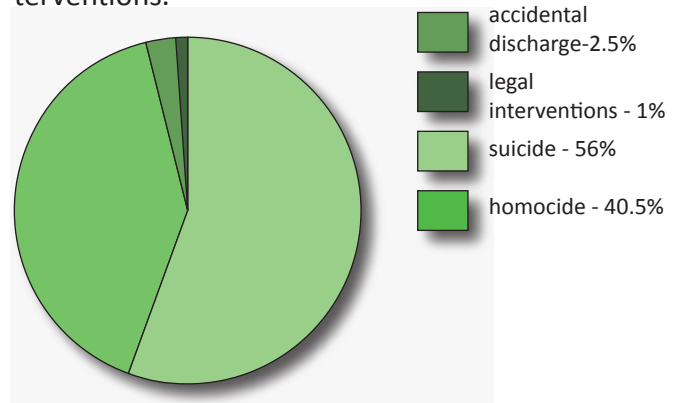
In 2005, 330 people were killed in “legal interventions,” acts such as self-defense or police action.

Only 1 percent of all gun deaths are “legal interventions.”¹

Accidental deaths

In 2005, 789 people were killed through an accidental discharge of a firearm, and 127 of these were children.

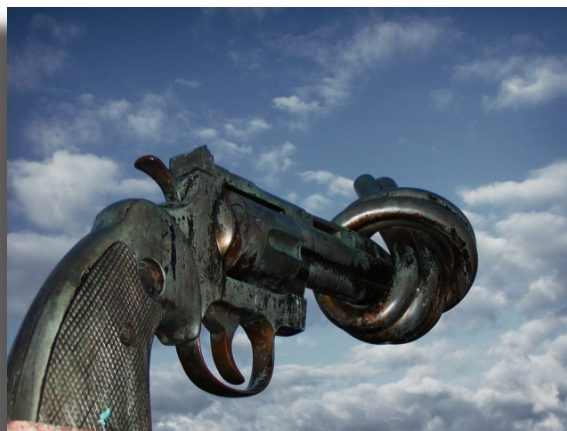
More than twice as many people die each year from accidental firearm injuries than from legal interventions.



A CALL TO ACTION

Thousands of lives could be saved each year by implementing smart and non-intrusive gun violence prevention laws that can strategically target places where legal guns are trafficked to illegal, under-

¹ Official government fatality statistics take two to three years to be released. The fatality statistics referenced in this document from 2005 were found at <http://wisqars.cdc.gov:8080/nvdrs/nvdrsDisplay.jsp>. Newer statistics can be found at that Web site, once they are available. Official government fatality statistics take two to three years to be released. The fatality statistics referenced in this document from 2005 were found at <http://wisqars.cdc.gov:8080/nvdrs/nvdrsDisplay.jsp>. Newer statistics can be found at that Web site, once they are available.



Courtesy of Francois Polito



ground markets. These laws would not threaten gun ownership for adults who have a legal right to own firearms. However, they would prevent many guns from falling into the hands of criminals and others who shouldn't use them.

to pass the required federal background check or desiring to not have his or her name associated with the transaction, uses a proxy buyer who can pass the required background check to purchase the firearm for him/her.

ILLEGAL MARKETS

What is Straw Purchasing?

A straw purchase is an illegal firearm purchase where the actual buyer of the gun, being unable

The straw purchasing cycle is the most common way that guns are trafficked and sold to individuals who are restricted from owning them. According to a 2000 report, "nearly 50 percent of ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) investigations involved firearms being trafficked by straw purchasers either directly or indirectly."

STRAW PURCHASING

STEP 1:

Illegal arms dealer seeks out someone with a clean record to make firearms purchase in their stead. This buyer is called the "straw purchaser."

STEP 2:

Illegal arms dealer provides the straw purchaser with money, both to pay for the firearms and their services.

STEP 3:

The illegal arms dealer sells the guns to individuals who would not otherwise be able to buy weapons legally. These guns are frequently used in crimes.

STEP 4:

When guns used in a crime are traced back to a straw purchaser, they claim the guns were lost or stolen. In some states, this gets them off the hook and able to continue supplying guns to the underground market.

OUR RESPONSE

Gun Control?

It is our hope to focus on preventing gun violence rather than the guns themselves. *The term "gun control" is intentionally left out of this guide.* In order to reach a consensus on policies that can save lives, the main goal of our community work around gun violence prevention is to concretely engage shops around their selling practices and doing advocacy work that implements practical laws that would prevent gun deaths and injuries.

Our Security is Connected

Advocates for gun violence prevention actions should acknowledge regional differences in gun usage and gun violence prevalence. Many guns used on the streets of cities were originally purchased in

rural areas. Similarly, illegally sold guns frequently flow across state lines as well. Gun sales in one area can affect gun violence in others. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny." We must stand with those in our community who suffer.

Stay faithful

Work for gun violence prevention should focus on finding ways to reduce gun deaths and to faithfully guard God's gift of human life.

We are promoting gun violence reduction actions that primarily attempt to prevent guns from reaching the hands of people who would use them criminally or irresponsibly.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SECOND AMENDMENT?

In June 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court released its verdict on the largest gun rights lawsuit in decades, *The District of Columbia v. Heller*. The Court ruled that the blanket ban on handgun ownership in Washington, D.C., violated the Second Amendment. The District had to allow Dick Heller, a security officer who uses a handgun on the job, to apply for a gun license for his home.

The Heller ruling was significant because it took a strong stance on a long-running constitutional question. Does the Second Amendment refer to an individual's right to bear arms or to a group right, guaranteed only for well regulated militias? The Supreme Court decision, written by Justice Antonin Scalia, unambiguously supported the "individual right" interpretation, arguing that a right to individual self-defense was assumed by the authors of the Constitution.

Nevertheless, the Supreme Court did not rule that all restrictions on guns were unconstitutional. Scalia specifically wrote, "The Court's opinion should not be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms."

Scalia also explicitly noted that the Court was not ruling on the legality of requiring the licensing of handguns in the District of Columbia.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Help individuals, small groups, and churches educate themselves about the issue of gun violence in our communities
- Help readers to engage this issue in the context of the Reformed tradition
- Empower Presbyterians to lead their local communities in addressing this issue and prevent gun violence by stemming the flow of handguns to illegal markets.

NOTES



in our communities

BIBLE STUDY

Luke 10: 25-37

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was neighborly to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Question: What do *you* think Jesus is saying?

Interpretation for Discussion:

A lawyer in the crowd stands up to test Jesus. When Jesus easily answers the question, it seems that the lawyer feels slightly embarrassed; he then asks a follow up question to justify the complexity of his question. Instead of outright answering his question, Jesus tells a story and flips the question.

The story that Jesus tells is one of violence on the outskirts of town. It describes a man who is beaten and left for dead. When made aware of such violence, the men of faith turn their gaze and steps, avoiding the mess. They were not willing to respond to the violence that occurred or offer their help and support to a person whose very life depended on it. Later, when a Samaritan passes by, a person of a different social, ethnic, and religious background, he is moved with compassion. The Samaritan stops, tends to the wounds of the hurt man, carries him to a safe place. Once at the inn, the Samaritan pays the innkeeper the equivalent of two days wages, which could house

the man at the inn for two months, with the promise of more, to ensure that the injured man would continue to be cared for.

Instead of answering what the lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus asks the lawyer, "Which of these three do you think was neighborly to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" The answer that Jesus affirms and commands the man to carry out in a similar fashion is to show mercy - to show kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them.

The question that the lawyer originally asked of Jesus was a way of determining who was in and who is out. He essentially asks, "who are the people I *have* to love?" Jesus' response to him tells us, "The question is not who do you *have* to love, but rather how can you be certain that you *are* acting in a way that shows love through mercy."



FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel about the suggested interpretation of the passage?
2. How might the priest and Levite interpreted the commandment quoted in verse 27?
3. How does Jesus encourage a different interpretation?
4. What reasons do you think the priest and Levite had for passing by?
5. What reasons could the Samaritan have for passing by?
6. For you, what does it mean to act neighborly?
7. How do the words “love,” “compassion,” and “mercy” relate to one another?
8. How could this parable be told using your local context as the setting?
 - Are there places in your community plagued by violence?
 - Who attends to those affected by that violence?
 - Can more be done to support those affected by gun violence?

LEADER'S GUIDE FOR BIBLE STUDY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. "Love your neighbor as yourself" is an exact citation from Leviticus 19:18, however, for Leviticus, "neighbor" is the equivalent to "sons of your own sons" or Israelites. This commandment could be interpreted rather narrowly.

3. Jesus reverses the question from one of legal obligation (according to Jewish law - who deserves my love?) to one of moral action (to whom can I act as a neighbor). He is not concerned so much with defining who is worthy of love, but considering how do one's action reflect neighborly intent.

4. Certainly, we cannot know the motivation of these nameless characters for their actions in Jesus' story, however it can be helpful to understand cultural implications to which the listeners would have been attuned.

Priests were particularly enjoined to avoid uncleanness, which would ritually occur if the priest were to come in contact with a dead body. Levites assisted priest with rituals and performed certain duties in the temple. The priest and Levite may therefore have assumed that the fallen traveler was dead and avoided him to keep themselves ritually clean.

Though, it should also be noted that the depiction of travel downhill (Jerusalem literally lies at a lower altitude than Jericho) may indicate that their temple duties had already been completed, making this argument less likely.

5. There was much tension between Samaritans and Jews. In fact, just one chapter earlier ([Luke 9: 51-56](#)) a Samaritan village refused to receive Jesus because he was Jewish. Samaritans were descendants of intermarriages between the people of Samaria and non-Jewish people who inhabited Samaria after the Assyrians invaded the land around 722 BC. They opposed rebuilding the temple and Jerusalem and constructed their own place of worship on Mount Gerizim. They were ceremonially unclean, socially outcast, and religiously a heretic.

By stopping, the Samaritan also made himself vulnerable to potential violence on the road. He also made generous use of his possessions (oil, wine, donkey, and money) and time to care for the hurt man, with no expectation of receiving something in return.

7. definition of Greek word translated as:

"mercy" - kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them

"compassion" - to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)

"love" - to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

NOTES



bible study

CITIZEN'S TEST ON GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

1. The PC(USA), other faith communities, The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence , The Brady Campaign, and gun violence prevention groups throughout the country are all opposed to hunting, target shooting, and are determined to ban all guns.

True _____ False _____

2. Since John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, more Americans have died by gun-fire within our own country than servicemen and women who were killed in wars in the 20th century.

True _____ False _____

3. The annual overall cost of firearms violence for the US economy is _____.

- a. \$876 million b. \$28.5 billion c. \$50.4 billion d. \$100 billion

4. Suspected terrorists cannot leagally buy guns.

True _____ False _____

5. Each year, _____ persons are killed by guns in the US.

- a. 10,000 b. 17,000 c. 25,000 d. 30,000

6. The most frequently used murder weapon is a[n] _____.

- a. handgun b. assault rifle c. shotgun d. knife

7. Americans in the _____ own the most firearms.

- a. South b. Midwest c. West d. Northeast

8. The highest homicide rates per 100,000 population are in the _____.

- a. West b. South c. Midwest d. Northeast

9. Americans are more likely to be murdered by _____.

- a. a friend, acquaintance, or family member
b. a stranger
c. a person who has a criminal record
d. a person of another race

10. The Second Amendment guarantees America citizens the right to own any type of firearm for any purpose.

True _____ False _____

11. A gun kept in the home for self-defense is _____ times more likely to be used in an accidental shooting, suicide attempt, or criminal assault/homicide.

- a. 5 b. 7 c. 11 d. 22



12. Recent polls indicate that more than _____% of Americans support the licensing of gun owners and mandatory registration of all handguns.

- a. 10% b. 25% c. 50% d. 75%

13. The Consumer Product Safety Commission is prohibited by law from regulating any firearm or any piece of ammunition for consumer safety.

True _____ False _____

14. A majority of gun owners do not lock up their firearms in the home.

True _____ False _____

15. To keep guns away from criminals, terrorists, and other dangerous individuals, the NRA has consistently supported the work of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

True _____ False _____

16. The ATF knows the identity of many corrupt licensed dealers who are funneling guns to criminals, but The Tiahrt Amendment is shielding them from the public.

True _____ False _____

17. The United States is the largest supplier of *illegal* guns to countries around the world.

True _____ False _____

18. Many persons who carry guns to town hall meetings, presidential speeches and other political events believe that they have a constitutional right to take violent action against our government should it become "tyrannical." (not defined)

True _____ False _____

CITIZEN'S TEST ON GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

ANSWERS AND SOURCES

1. **False:** The PC(USA) has never expressed opposition to hunting, sports shooting, or gun ownership. Present policy advocates a ban on assault weapons.
2. **True:** Center for Disease Control. National Vital Statistics Report, July 24, 2000, and the US Department of Defense. See also "America's Tragedy," *The Economist*, April 19, 2007.
3. **d. \$100 billion:** *Gun Violence: The Real Costs*, by Philip J. Cook and Jens Ludwig, Oxford Press, 2000
4. **False:** Individuals on the FBI's Terrorist Watch List can legally buy firearms even from licensed dealers, as long as they can pass the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) database. Even if they cannot pass, they can buy guns from private firearm sellers in more than 40 states and in 5,000 gun shows.
5. **d. 30,000:** In recent years, more than 30,000 people have been killed annually in the US by gun violence. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS tool, <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>
6. **a. handgun:** FBI, 2008 Uniform Crime Report, Expanded Homicide Data Table 8, http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_08.html
7. **a. South:** followed by the West. "Guns in America: Results of a Comprehensive National Survey on Firearms Ownership and Use," Philip J. Cook and Jens Ludwig, 1996, <http://www.policefoundation.org/pdf/GunsinAmerica.pdf>
8. **b. South:** The highest percentage of murder rates are in the South with Louisiana as #1 in the country. FBI, 2008 Uniform Crime Reports, Crime in the United States by State, Table 5, http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/data/table_05.html
9. **a. a friend, acquaintance, or family member:** 2008 FBI Uniform Crime Report, Expanded Homicide Data Table 10, http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_10.html
10. **False:** Even though the Supreme Court recently interpreted the Second Amendment as an individual right for the first time in more than 200 years, Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the five justices in the majority in that decision, stated, "Like most rights, weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose: for example, concealed weapons prohibitions have been upheld under the Amendment or state analogues. The Court's opinion should not be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibi-



tions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or law imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms.” <http://www.scotusblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/07-290.pdf>

11. **d. 22:** Kellerman, et al, “Injuries and Death Due to Firearms in the Home,” *Journal of Trauma*, 1998. vol. 45. p. 262.
12. **d. 75%:** The 2006 General Social Survey found that 79% of Americans favor laws requiring individuals to obtain a police permit before buying a gun. 77% favored the mandatory registration of handguns. <http://www.news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/070410.guns.norc.pdf>
13. **True:** CPSC can regulate teddy bears and toy guns, but not real firearms and ammunition. Consumer Products Safety Act, 1972.
14. **True:** 53% of gun owners do not keep their firearms locked up in the home. “Loaded Guns in the Home: Analysis of a National Random Survey of Gun Owners,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 267, June 10, 1992, pp. 3033-7, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1588716>
15. **False:** For decades the NRA has drafted and pushed the legislation to decrease the regulatory authority, budget, and manpower of the ATF. In 1995, the NRA infamously described federal law enforcement agents as “jack-booted thugs” in a fundraising letter to members.
16. **True:** Because of the NRA-drafted “Tiahrt Amendments,” the ATF is barred by law from telling the American people the identity of the 1% of gun dealers who are responsible for more than 57% of crime guns recovered from crime scenes in the US.
17. **True:** “Setting the Record Straight: The UN and Small Arms,” New York, June 26 - July 7, 2006; William Hartung and Rachel Stohl, “Hired Guns,” *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2004. As guns and small arms are placed in the hands of vindictive militias and child soldiers, even if they should side with us in “our global war on terror,” the already high death rates of women and children in those regions escalate even further.
18. **True:** Encouraged by the recent Supreme Court decision that declared an individual right to bear arms to defend against government “tyranny,” numbers of “insurrectionist” gun owners are increasingly carrying their guns as a show of force. One who carried an AR-15 outside a presidential speech in Phoenix stated, “We will forcefully resist people imposing their will on us through the strength of the majority with a vote.” The CEO of the NRA, Wayne LaPierre, declared, “The people have a government.” At 2009 Conservative Political Action Conference he added, “The guys with the guns make the rules.”

GUN VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES STATISTICS

GUN OWNERSHIP

- The US has an estimated 283 million guns in civilian hands
- Each year about 4.5 million firearms, including approximately 2 million handguns, are sold in the United States
- An estimated 2 million second hand firearms are sold each year
- The percentage of American households with a gun has been steadily declining (high of 54% in 1977 to 33% in 2009)
- The average number of guns per owner has increased from 4.1 in 1994 to 6.9 in 2004.

Sources: Injury Prevention (2007); ATF (2000); National Opinion Research Center (2008); Pew Research Center (2009)

GUN DEATHS

- More than 30,000 people are killed by firearms each year in this country
- More than 30 people are shot and murdered each day
- 1/2 of them are between the ages of 18 and 35
- 1/3 of them are under the age of 20
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-24 year-olds
- And the primary cause of death among African Americans of that age group
- Gun Homicides (average annually):
 - Less than 50: Japan
 - Less than 150: France (and many other European countries)
 - Less than 200: Canada
 - More than 10,000: USA

Source: IANSA (International Action Network on Small Arms of the United Nations)

INJURIES AND DEATHS FROM GUNS

Every time a gun injures or kills in self-defense, one is used:

- 11 times for a completed or attempted suicide
- 7 times in a criminal assault or homicide
- 4 times in an unintentional shooting death or injury

Source: Journal of Trauma, Injury, Infection and Critical Care (1998)

PER CAPITA ANNUAL GUN DEATH RATE (PER 100,000 POPULATION):

- National: (10.32)
- Highest: Louisiana (19.04, 45.6% households contain guns)
- #25: Pennsylvania (10.90)
- Lowest: Connecticut, New York, New Jersey (4.99), Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Hawaii (2.20)

Source: Centers for Disease Control

COSTS OF GUN VIOLENCE

- Gun violence impacts society in many ways: medical costs, costs of the criminal justice system, security precautions such as metal detectors, and reductions in the quality of life because of fear of gun violence.
- U.S. lifetime medical costs for gunshot injuries total an estimated \$2.3 billion
- U.S. taxpayers pay for almost half (\$1.1 billion or 49%) of lifetime medical costs for gunshot injuries



GUNS RECOVERED FROM CRIME

- Only 1% of gun dealer account for almost 60% of crime guns recovered by police and later traced
- In one year, at least 30,000 guns were “lost” out of gun dealers inventories
- Guns with a short “time to crime” are disproportionately represented among crime guns. Guns manufactured and sold 3 years or less, prior to recovery by police in crime make up 34 % of recovered and traced crime guns, but only 14% of the US gun stock.
- Guns sold as part of a multiple sale at a gun dealer were up to 64% more likely to be used in a crime than guns not part of such sales.
- “No background check” sales account for an estimated 40% of gun sales in the U.S.

Sources: ATF (2000); Brady Center; National Institute of Justice (1993, 2007); Police Foundation (1997)

DISTANCE FROM LEGAL POINT OF PURCHASE TO CRIME RECOVERY:

	Within 10 miles	More than 100 miles
Philadelphia	61.2%	18.1%
Pittsburgh	62.9%	12.6%
Newark	9.1%	81.5%
New York City	4.4%	83%

Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

PERCENT OF RECOVERED CRIME GUNS FIRST LEGALLY PURCHASED IN-STATE:

- Pennsylvania: 78%
- New Jersey: 27% (18% from PA)
- New York: 28%

Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

SOME INTERESTING POLL DATA

- 77% of NRA members favor a waiting period for purchase of a handgun
- 82% of American support limiting the sales of military-style assault weapons
- 94% of police chiefs favor requiring a background check for all handgun sales.

Support for background checks on private gun sales, including gun shows:

- 87% of American
- 83% of gun owners
- 69% of NRA gun-owners

Support for limiting handgun sales to one per person per month:

- 65% of Americans
- 59% of gun owners

Support for registration of handguns

- 79% of Americans
- 69% of police chiefs
- 61% of gun owners
- 59% of NRA members

Sources: CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll (2008); Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research (2008); Mayors Against Illegal Guns (2009); National Opinion research Center (2003); American Journal of Preventative Medicine (2006); Violence & Victims (1993)

GUNS AND VIOLENCE IN OUR LANGUAGE

Compiled by Jim Atwood

Big shot
Shot down
Gun shy
The smoking gun
Lock, stock, and barrel
Like shooting fish (monkeys) in a barrel
We reached a stand off
Trigger an idea
Trigger happy
Brushed his teeth with gunpowder
He shot his mouth off
Don't jump the gun
A shotgun wedding
He's a trouble shooter
She blew me away
Go off half-cocked
She's a pistol
That's a notch in the old gun belt
Stick to your guns
I'll be a son of a gun
Take true aim
Sure shot
Go off with a bang
I dodged a bullet
The Senator is under fire
I hope he won't go postal (re: fired employees)
She went ballistic
Shoot to the top
A scatter shot approach
Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition
Shoot for the moon
Have gun will travel
Supershot
Hot shot
Going great guns
On a hit list
Sharpshooter
I'll give it my best shot
He's just shooting blanks
He's shell shocked
Shoot me for a billy goat
Shot to hell
Where is your piece? (gun)
You call the shots
Gang bang
Gat (gang slang for a gun)
Shoot the works
Shoot up the joint
Went off like a gun
Who is our target audience?
He is packin heat
A bang of a good time
On target
Right on target
Off target
Bullseye
My aim was off
Forewarned is forearmed
It's a long shot
Shooting the bull
It's just a warning shot
A shot over his bow
He grabbed the wrong end of the barrel
Pulling the trigger
He shoots from the hip
He's a straight shooter
He took a shot to the head (Boxing)
Keep firing (Basketball-hockey)
Rodriguez is their big gun
There goes the whole shooting match
Faster than a speeding bullet
Just take a shot in the dark
What weapons are at our disposal?
High caliber, low caliber people
Pop a cap
Bite the bullet
The world ends not with a bang but
With a whimper
Pistol whipped
Who's riding shotgun?
He blew his brains out



He blew it to smithereens
 He jumped the gun
 The third bullet on the page(a list of items)
 He's got an arm like a cannon (baseball,
 football)
 He shot through the line (football)
 She's got an explosive personality
 Pull out the big guns
 Shot down an argument
 Shoot holes in one's approach
 Be loaded for bear
 Stick to your guns
 He is grace under fire
 He got flack from the citizens
 I've got a question. - O.K. Shoot
 I've got a question. - O.K. Fire away
 Someone's gunning for me.
 What are we aiming at?
 What are we shooting for?
 He's shooting blanks
 We were outgunned.
 You've given me some ammunition for my
 talk
 Getting shot at from every direction
 He's a hired gun
 He shot his mouth off
 We killed them 42-0
 Is that a trigger for you? (Used in
 counseling)
 Nice kill, Mary! (Volleyball)
 Shoot me an e mail
 Double barreled approach
 Looking down the barrel of a gun
 Blast off
 She's a blast
 Torpedo an idea
 I bombed out (failed)
 We oughta nuke 'em.
 Give me some cover
 He was bombarded by questions
 Now, this is the "killer"
 Where are the land mines?
 Let's get fired up.

Aiming to kill
 You do that & I'll kill you
 Fire at will
 Fire when ready
 Got a rocket in my pocket
 Draw a bead on you
 They've got you in the crosshairs
 Sounds like a booby trap
 It's a straight shot into the city
 Duck and cover
 It will backfire on us
 We'll have a shootout
 Got him in our sights
 We'll have three shots to the end zone
 Reporters asked rapid-fire questions
 It's not a magic bullet, but it will help
 Where's the silver bullet?
 Shotgun formation (football)
 He's (quarterback) in the gun
 She knocked 'em dead
 What's the plan of attack?
 It was a bang-bang play at first base
 Don't shoot the messenger
 The guy needs killin'
 They took pot shots at the speech.
 It's a shotgun approach, not a rifle.
 He went to a gun fight with a knife.
 More bang for your buck
 Young guns (new leaders)
 Guns (for biceps)

151 EXPRESSIONS IN THIS LIST



VISUAL RESOURCES ON GUN VIOLENCE

PC(USA) 2011 Peacemaking Offering Video

<http://bcove.me/qw532nwc>

Fix Gun Checks, Mayors Against Illegal Guns: Martin Luther King III and others remember the loved ones they have lost to gun violence

<http://www.fixgunchecks.org/detail/34americans>

Colin Goddard is “Living for 32,” Associated Press

<http://youtu.be/ODTPcaGwxWM>



conversation starter - video resources

A LITANY ON THE TRAGEDY OF GUN VIOLENCE

Written for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2010 by Rev. W. Mark Koenig of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

One: We celebrate and give thanks for the life and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Many: Who proclaimed a vision of all people living together, and bore witness to the power of non-violence,

One: We gather, to remember his words, his commitment, his life and to rededicate ourselves to addressing the evil of gun violence

Many: which claimed his life and which continues to plague our country and the world.

One: Some 30,000 Americans die by guns each year in the United States.

Many: And we grieve.

One: An average of eighty people is killed by guns every day, including eight children.

Many: And our hearts break.

One: Guns kill some 1,000 people each day in the developing world.

Many: And we mourn.

One: An American child is twelve times more likely to die by a gun than are the children who live in all twenty-five industrialized nations combined.

Many: And we weep.

One: The annual economic cost of gun violence in America is estimated to at least \$100 billion. Medical costs, decimated families, the court system, our jails and prisons, and security measures in airports, schools, and public buildings all contribute to this sum.

Many: And sorrow sweeps over us.

One: Since John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, more Americans have died by gun fire within our own country than American servicemen and women who were killed in all our wars of the 20th century.

Many: And we pray.

One: Faced with gun violence,

**Many: We grieve for those are killed and those whose lives are forever changed;
We seek to comfort for those who have lost loved ones;
We pray for a change of heart for those who resort to violence.**

One: Faced with gun violence, may we

**Many: Educate; Organize; Advocate;
And in all the ways we can, work for that day when
Guns and weapons of destruction
Are transformed into instruments of healing.**

One: May it be so.

Many: May we so do.



God of Mercy, You Have Shown Us

A Hymn Lamenting Gun Violence

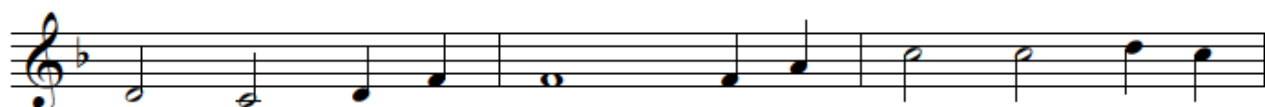
BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D



God of mer - cy, you have shown us ways of liv - ing that are
On a street where neigh - bors gath - er, shots are heard; a young girl
God, we pray for those who suf - fer when this world seems so un -
God, re - new our faith and vi - sion; make us those who bold - ly



good: "Work for jus - tice, treas - ure kind - ness, hum - bly
dies. On a cam - pus, stu - dents scat - ter as the
fair; May your church be quick to of - fer lov - ing
lead! May we work for just de - ci - sions that bring



jour - ney with the Lord." Yet your peo - ple here are
vio - lence claims more lives. In a fam - ily filled with
com - fort, gen - tle care. And we pray: A - mid the
true se - cur - i - ty. Help us change this vio - lent



griev - ing, hurt by wea - pons that de - stroy. Help us
an - ger, tem - pers flare and shots re - sound. God of
vio - lence, may we speak your truth, O Lord! Give us
cul - ture based on i - dols, built on fear. Help us



turn to you, be - liev - ing in your way that brings us joy.
love, we weep and won - der at the vio - lence all a - round.
strength to break the si - lence, say - ing, "This can be no more!"
build a peace - ful fu - ture with your world of peo - ple here.

Biblical References: Micah 6:8; Luke 1:79; Romans 12:15; I John 4:16-21; Matthew 5:9

Tune: The Sacred Harp, 1844. Harm. James H. Wood, 1958.

Text: Copyright © Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2009. Email: bcgillette@comcast.net

In interfaith worship services, this line may be used:
Change the original text of "May your church be quick to offer loving comfort, gentle care."
to interfaith text: "May we all be quick to offer loving, comfort, gentle care."

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette is the author of *Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor* (Discipleship Resources — Upper Room Books, 2009) and *Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship* (Geneva Press, 2000) and the co-pastor of Limestone Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES IN ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

OLD TESTAMENT

- **Genesis 1:27** - We are created in the image of God
- **Exodus 20:13** - Thou shall not kill
- **Leviticus 19** - God's shalom to reign in all aspects of life
- **Deuteronomy 21:1-9** - Take Responsibility for a murder
- **Deuteronomy 30:11; 19-20** - Choose life that you may live
- **Isaiah 2:3-4** - Beat swords into plowshares
- **Isaiah 9:5-7** - Unto us a child is born
- **Isaiah 11:1-9** - A vision of peace
- **Isaiah 30:9ff** - Those who spurn God's call to righteousness
- **Isaiah 40: 1-11** - Comfort for God's people
- **Isaiah 58:12** - Being a repairer of the breach
- **Jeremiah 29: 1ff** - Seek the Welfare of the City
- **Zechariah 8:1ff** - Zechariah's vision of New Jerusalem

NEW TESTAMENT

- **Matthew 5:9** - Blessed are the peacemakers
- **Matthew 5:13ff** - You are the salt of the earth, light of world
- **Matthew 6:10** - Thy Kingdom Come on earth
- **Matthew 19:19** - Love your neighbor as yourself
- **Matthew 26:52** - Those who live by the sword die by it
- **Luke 10:25-28** - Thinking is important The Great commandment
- **Luke 22:47-53** - Jesus and Violence
- **I Corinthians 13** - Greatest of these is love
- **II Corinthians 5:16ff** - God gave us the ministry of reconciliation
- **Galatians 6:7-10** - Don't lose heart
- **Ephesians 6:10ff** - Wrestling against a gigantic evil
- **Philippians 2:1ff** - The Mind of Christ
- **Revelation 5:9-13** - The victor over evil is Lamb who was slain
- **Revelation 11:15** - Kingdoms of world become kingdoms of Christ
- **Revelation 19:6** - God's certain victory over evil

These texts certainly do not exhaust the Biblical witness against humanity's bent to call evil good and good evil. The Bible presents God's recurring call for us to love mercy and do justice and to fight against violence, injustice and exploitation as we trust in the ultimate victory of God over all that negates and degrades human life.

The Bible is brim full of hope because God is sovereign. "Though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet." God's word encourages us to be a reconciler, a peacemaker, to love neighbors, to do justice, to build shalom (the well being of all people in human society.)



worship resources



INSPIRING HOPE, RAISING VOICES, TAKING ACTION TO END GUN VIOLENCE

Our Mission and Objectives

Heeding God's Call is a new faith-based movement to prevent gun violence. We unite people of faith in the sacred responsibility to protect our brothers and sisters and our children. We seek to do so through:

- Helping local faith communities organize advocacy campaigns to encourage gun shops to adopt a code of conduct to deter illegal purchasing and trafficking of handguns;
- Providing support and resources of faith communities to form multi-racial, ecumenical, and interfaith partnerships to work together to actively support gun violence prevention on both social and legislative levels;
- Serving as a 'connection point' for these congregations and partnerships to connect with, learn from and support the work of gun violence prevention organizations and efforts already in place;
- Advocating for faith communities to make commitments to raise voices and take action to end gun violence prevention.



Courtesy of Heeding God's Call

Our Goal

Save lives by ending gun violence

Our Ministry

Raise moral and social barriers to handgun trafficking and to inspire hope by giving people the ability to do something that makes a real difference.

Our Belief

As people of faith...

- We embrace Dr. Martin Luther King's hope for peace and safety in our communities.
- We resist apathy to this epidemic of violence, because fear, closed doors, and separation will not end it.
- We unite to bring God's vision of a peaceable kingdom, without the violent loss of over 30,000 American lives by gunfire each year.

Our Witness

Handguns reach streets and neighborhoods through a highly developed illegal trade – gun trafficking. These are the guns used to threaten, wound, maim and kill. The linchpins of gun trafficking are criminal entrepreneurs, traffickers, the straw buyers who stand in for them to make their purchases and the gun dealers who look the other way and enjoy the profits from volume sales.

Heeding God's Call helps faith communities organize to publicly pressure local gun stores to adopt a set of practices to deter straw purchasing.



Your Invitation

Because we are losing eight children a day to gun-related deaths;

Because too many children, families and communities are thrown into desperate grief and trauma; *Because* too many congregations have buried children and sought to bring the comfort of God's peace to families wracked by this epidemic of violence;

Because we cannot do this work alone...

We join in covenant with other communities of faith to raise awareness of gun violence as a spiritual and moral crisis. We call on every congregation, synagogue, mosque, and gathering of people of faith to work toward a peaceable society where all children have the opportunity to grow and prosper, and where everyone can live without fear of being cut down by firearm violence.

We invite you to become a Partner Faith Community and join an interfaith coalition of religious groups to raise awareness and put faith into action.

The Commitment

- Take steps to educate Faith Community members and attenders about gun violence.
- Adopt a Covenant of Commitment to Act to End Gun Violence.
- Work with local gun shops to adopt a "Code of Conduct" to eliminate legal purchases of guns for illegal resale (straw purchases).
- Partner with other faith communities across geographic, religious and racial lines to develop programs, promote awareness and develop legislative and other strategies.

Resources

- Connection with other Faith Communities for collaboration and joint action
- Speakers and storytellers to visit your faith community
- Help with advocacy in working with local gun shops
- Information and support for legislative advocacy campaigns
- Connection and collaboration with community action and advocacy groups
- Information sharing between Partner Faith Communities about events & strategies
- Gatherings of Partner Faith Communities to share experiences, ideas and materials
- Staff support through both Heeding God's Call and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Contact Info

Heeding God's Call

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"Create positive energy, take positive action, and make positive change!"

HEEDING GOD’S CALL: PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC WITNESS

THE EPIDEMIC: It’s a surprise to no one that our country suffers from an epidemic of gun violence. More Americans die from gun violence annually in each of several large American cities than in any other entire developed country. Contrary to the impression of many, gun violence besets all portions of the country, large cities, small towns and rural areas. In fact, studies show per capita rates of gun violence in urban and rural areas to be nearly identical.

Cities and towns of any size across the country are negatively impacted by gun violence, fueled by gun trafficking and the straw purchasing that makes it possible.

Handguns reach streets and neighborhoods through a highly developed illegal trade – gun trafficking. These are the guns used to threaten, wound, maim and kill. The linchpins of gun trafficking are criminal entrepreneurs, traffickers, the straw buyers who stand in for them to make their purchases and gun dealers who look the other way and enjoy the profits from volume sales. Many such rogue gun dealers are located in markets throughout the country.

For many reasons, it is likely to be difficult to gain enactment of meaningful legislative barriers to the illegal gun trade by a number of state legislatures for several years. Yet there is action citizens can take that may go far to disrupting the illegal gun business.

BACKGROUND TO ACTION: The retailer who sells the most guns nationally, Wal-Mart, recently signed a Partnership Agreement with the coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, intended to make straw purchasing far less likely. The coalition includes mayors from across the country.

The Partnership Agreement is a ten-point Code of Conduct that Wal-Mart has promised to follow for all gun sales. Analysts believe it will go far toward severely diminishing the trafficking of guns from Wal-Mart stores.

If Wal-Mart can act as a good corporate citizen in the interest of preventing straw purchasing of guns and resulting gun violence, so can gun shops across the country. Doing so would make a serious and permanent dent in the illegal gun business, making illegal guns far less available on streets and in neighborhoods, which would be likely to cut into the current carnage.

PUBLIC WITNESS: We propose that local faith communities organize public demonstrations in front of certain gun stores with a record of selling many guns that have eventually been recovered from crimes and call for all gun shops to adopt a Code of Conduct identical to the Wal-Mart/Mayors Coalition Agreement. Such an event has several attractive features, including:

- It is radically different from the usual call for legislation, so is likely to gain substantial press coverage and appeal to many citizens who oppose activist government;
- The ‘ask’ is not punitive to gun dealers and will be seen by press and public as reasonable. The fact that Wal-Mart has already adopted a similar Code will also provide excellent justification.
- The ‘ask’ can and should be taken back to local faith communities, for churches, youth groups and etc. to seek adoption by local gun shops.



Courtesy of Sam Mugarby

HEEDING GOD'S CALL: STARTING A MOVEMENT



Step 1 - STUDY - Invite 1-4 friends/co-congregants to a commitment-free conversation about gun violence and its prevention.

- Organizing around an issue is about building relationships and connections between people.
- Use information from this packet and at www.heedinggodscall.org, personal stories and timely local reports about gun violence to build interest and concern.
- Seek to move discussion to the responsibility of all Christians to care for the fellow sisters, brothers, and children.
- Emphasize that Jesus was an activist, working among the people and confronting evil directly.
- [with Presbyterians] Introduce and hand out copies of Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing to Heed God's Call (GV2).
- Determine which discussion members are prepared to take next steps.
- Define the next step as seeking a meeting with appropriate clergy and any relevant congregational committee
- Divide contact responsibilities up among members.
- Those with energy for the work should invite other friends and/or co-congregants to a second/third/etc. commitment-free conversations.

Step 2 - NETWORK - Pursue outreach to other local Presbyterian congregations and those of other faiths.

- Ask pastors to contact their local interfaith colleagues and invite them to an informal 'open house' at a local coffee shop to discuss local gun violence and the Heeding God's Call model.
- Ask heads of social witness committees to contact comparable committees of other faith bodies to arrange an educational meeting about gun violence, its prevention, and Heeding.
- Enlist clergy and laity to participate in a Planning Committee to create a Heeding coalition; ask willing congregations to sign the Covenant of Commitment.

Step 3 - INVESTIGATE - Explore the gun shop culture of your community and decide your strategy

- Reach out to and include churches in the neighborhood where the shop in question is located into the conversations; folks in the immediate community will know best - let's do this mission in partnership!
- Devise a plan for which shop(s) you want to contact and why - has there been an investigative report about illegal sales? Will you contact everyone in a specified area? What is the strategy that works for your area?

Step 4 - ORGANIZE-Develop planning committee meetings and move plans toward a 'Call to Action' within a month's time.

- Planning committee should divide up responsibilities among members for liturgy, publicity, outreach, sign making, speakers and etc.
- Planning committee should meet frequently until Call is held. Each meeting should include short educational piece.
- Determine frequency of gun shop witnesses.
- The Call to Action is a rally day with all Covenanted churches and faith communities in attendance.
- The Call should be a multi-faith service at which church and the wider community is called to affirm and become aware of the call to participate in gun shop action.
- The event should include singing, prayers, education about gun violence, and sign making for future vigils.
- During run up to Call, planning committee should continuously engage local faith bodies in conversation about future plans, hopes, and partnership.

Step 5 - CONTACT - Pursue outreach to selected gun shop owner.

- Write to shop owner to schedule initial meeting and talk about the possibility of the owner signing the 10-point Code of Conduct; templates are available on Heeding website.
- Follow up letter with phone calls.

**If the gun shop refuses to sign the Code of Conduct.....*

Step 6 - CALL TO ACTION - gather for initial gun shop witness and begin sustained gun shop action.

Important: The above steps are simply brief guides and are not meant to be rules. Do not hesitate to customize your program to make it best fit your needs and locality. Please stay in continuous touch with PPF as you move forward. PPF and Heeding stand eager to help you with ideas, advice, materials and enthusiasm.

COVENANT OF COMMITMENT to Act to End Gun Violence

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.

- Deuteronomy 30: 1

Through these words, we are called to order our communities and human relationships to reflect God's justice and the promise of Shalom. We are deeply committed to upholding the value of human life and opposing those forces which threaten it. The overwhelming presence of guns in our national consciousness cannot be separated from the communal despair we feel as we witness our self-destruction. It is time to address this helplessness with action to reverse the unrestricted proliferation of guns in our communities.

We, the congregation of _____ covenant to work with our
(community name)

sisters and brothers in the common pursuit of ending gun violence in the _____
(city/region)

area through the following acts of faith:

- We will embark upon a program of teaching and preaching about the scourge of gun violence upon our communities.
- We will partner with other faith communities across geographic, religious, and racial lines to develop programs, promotes awareness and develop community and legislative strategies.
- We will actively support and collaborate with Heeding God's Call in _____ as well as other gun violence prevention organizations and efforts in our local communities.
- We will pray as a community for the work of Heeding God's Call, for the victims of gun violence and for the retailers who participate in the proliferation of illegal firearms.
- We will identify local gun shops with high sales of crime guns and engage them to adopt a "Code of Conduct" which will eliminate straw purchasers of guns for illegal resale (straw purchases).
- We will organize and/or actively support actions of nonviolent prophetic witness to bring spiritual and public pressure to certain gun stores with records of selling many guns that have been recovered from crime scenes.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Position: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT

Responsible Firearms Retailer Partnership: A 10-Point Voluntary Code



The 10 points of the Responsible Firearms Retailer Partnership are:

- 1. Videotaping the Point of Sale for All Firearms Transactions.** Participating retailers will videotape the point-of-sale of all firearms transactions and maintain videos for 6 months to deter illegal purchases and monitor employees.
- 2. Computerized Prime Gun Trace Log and Alert System.** Participating retailers will maintain a computerized log of crime gun traces relating to the retailer. Once the program is in place, if a customer who has a prior trace at that retailer attempts to purchase a firearm, the sale will be electronically flagged. The retailer would have discretion to proceed with the sale or stop the sale.
- 3. Purchaser Declaration.** For sales flagged by the trace alert system, participating retailers will ask purchasers to fill out a declaration indicating that they meet the legal requirement to purchase the firearm.
- 4. Deterring Fake IDs.** Participating retailers will only accept valid federal- or state-issued picture IDs as primary identification. Retailers will utilize additional ID checking mechanisms.
- 5. Consistent Visible Signage.** Participating retailers will post signage created by the Responsible Firearms Retailer Partnership to alert customers of their legal responsibilities at the point-of-sale.
- 6. Employee Background Checks.** Participating retailers will conduct criminal background checks for all employees selling or handling firearms.
- 7. Employee Responsibility Training.** Participating retailers will participate in an employee responsibility training program focused on deterring illegal purchasers. The Responsible Firearms Retailer Partnership will create an online training system based on Wal-Mart's training program.
- 8. Inventory Checking.** Participating retailers will conduct daily and quarterly audits. Guidelines will be based on Wal-Mart's existing audit procedures.
- 9. No Sales Without Background Check Results.** Participating retailers would prohibit sales based on "default proceeds," which are permitted by law when background check has not returned a result within 3 days.
- 10. Securing Firearms.** Participating retailers will maintain firearms kept in customer accessible areas in locked cases or locked racks.

Participating retailers will phase in the provisions of Responsible Firearms Retailer Partnership over time.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

PRESS COVERAGE

Make Friends with the Press

- call each media outlet for the name and contact information of the person who considers submissions for editorials or would cover events such as Heeding God's Call vigils

Write a Press Release

- make sure it is well written and free of spelling and grammar mistakes
- keep it short
- highlight the human/local angle
- stay true to the story, don't exaggerate events
- do not format the release like an advertisement
- have a great headlines or subject lines
- distinguish yourself from the other pitches. Be concise, be creative, and be smart!
- date the release
- provide contact information for others to follow-up with the local Heeding God's Call movement

Initial Contact with Media Sources

- do your homework - find out who specifically would cover an event like a Heeding God's Call vigil
- familiarity - when you contact a reporter, be familiar with that reporter's work. Talk about a specific article or subject matter that reporter has written about and how Heeding God's Call events would fit in well with the kind of stories she has already written.
- you're the expert - help with with finding information - provide links to other articles written about the Heeding movement, information



Courtesy of T. Voekler

about gun violence in our communities. and informative and entertaining quotes.

Understand the Newsroom

- Give editors/ assignment desks at least 24 hours' notice before a press conference or special event.

- If you have more than 24 hours to inform the press of an event - email a formal invitation to all the primary media contacts, and their editors.
- Email/fax a secondary press release, company information and another invitation to your primary press contacts. Exclude the editors this time. If you haven't hooked them yet, chances are a 10-page fax won't do it, but it could give the beat reporter enough information to do a small story, even if she is not planning to attend your event.
- Follow-up the next day with a phone call to inquire as to whether or not the media contact plans to attend the event.
- Greet reporters as they arrive at the event; help them get situated and offer to provide any additional information your press contacts may need for a story.
- Provide a spokesperson who is well informed about Heeding God's Call activities and gun violence prevention work.
- Answer media requests in a timely manner - reporters have strict deadlines and will not run a story if they don't get the information they need
- Typically, newspapers and TV stations have a 2 or 3 pm deadline.
- Follow up after the event by sending thank-you notes to everyone, even before you see the story they wrote.
- Try to develop a rapport with the editor and/or reporter.
- Always look out for breaking news or events that relate to gun violence prevention. Contact the media as soon as possible after such events.
- Follow up any written or e-mail correspondence with a phone call. *Don't forget to put in a reminder call the day before your event and the morning of the event.*

Types of Press

make and maintain a file of contacts

- local paid-for newspaper
- local free community paper
- local radio station
- local television station



MEDIA ADVISORY

**For Immediate Release
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*HEEDING GOD'S CALL ANNOUNCES PRESS AVAILABILITY DURING CLYDE'S SPORT SHOP'S
'CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY'*

Baltimore Area Faith Leaders Will Be Available for Comment at Nearby Church

WHAT: Press availability on part of Heeding God's Call faith leaders to comment on campaign to gain adoption by Clyde's Sports Shop of Code of Conduct to diminish 'straw buying' and gun trafficking.
<http://home.comcast.net/~clydessportshop/THENnNOW/gunprotest/protest.html>

WHEN: 2pm, Sunday, November 21.

WHERE: Light Street Presbyterian Church, 809 Light Street, Baltimore, 21230

WHO: Rev. Peter Nord, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Baltimore
Rev. John R. Sharp, Chair, Central Maryland Ecumenical Council
Gary Gillespie, American Friends Service Committee Faith-based community leaders

WHY: ~To explain why Heeding God's Call interfaith service originally planned for Nov. 21 near Clyde's Sports Shop was postponed to Dec. 11.
~To explain purpose of Heeding God's Call's gun shop focused campaign to prevent gun violence.
~To relate series of events to date regarding Heeding God's Call's effort to gain adoption of the Code by Clyde's.
~To counter Clyde's incorrect arguments against adopting the Code.

VISUALS: Faith leaders speaking in front of church.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OTHER OP-ED PIECES

Letters to the Editor are letters written to the editor of a newspaper stating your opinion on an issue, event, etc. They may be written in response to a news story that was printed by the paper or to draw attention to a story that in the newspaper. Letters to the Editor are not news stories. However, as in any conversation, your opinion will be more robust if you support it with facts. Two kinds of facts are particularly important in letters to the editor: local information and personal experience.

Opinion pieces are generally, but not always, written by people not employed by the newspaper. These can be local experts in a subject area, a local leader – civic or political, or a “syndicated columnist.”

TIPS:

1. Keep your **Letter to the Editor between 50 - 150 words**, not including your name and contact information and the reference to the source. **Opinion essays should be between 500-570 words.**

- **Make one point** - two at most - in your letter.
- **State your point clearly, ideally in the first sentence.** Since people generally scan through these pieces, it will not work to your benefit to craft a “big finish.”
- To **keep your thoughts focused**, try and write your letter, then go back through it reading just the opening sentence of each paragraph. You should be able to tell what the letter says just from those sentences.
- If you are **calling the community to action**, be clear as to how it is that you want people to respond to the information you are sharing.
- **Use plain language**, avoid jargon. It can alienate people not familiar with the issue and/or confuse your point.
- **Statistics** about your local community can be found in a number of online and print resources. The first stop for most kinds of local statistics should be your chamber of commerce—if they don’t know the answer to your question, they probably know where to find it.
- **Significance to readers** - why should the community care? Know your audience.
- **Geographic Proximity** - how does this affect where you are?
- **Prominence** - is there anyone famous or interesting that makes this story more interesting?
- **Human interest** - connect it to people!

2. **Timeliness**

- If you are writing in response to a story you read in the paper, the sooner you get your letter in after you read the original story, the better chance that it will be printed.
- Address why this issue is relevant now - tie it to a recent event if not a recently printed article.



3. **Submit your letter by email** (preferred) or fax. Since September 11 2001, media organizations have had to take time-consuming precautions opening mail, and your letter might not get opened for several days if you send it via the U.S. Postal Service.
4. Don't forget to **include your full contact information**, including phone number and email. The newspaper uses that information to verify that you actually submitted the letter.
5. Once you submit your letter, **follow up with a phone call** one day later. Call the editorial page editor to make sure that your letter was received. Ask if the paper will print your letter, you can make a pitch here for why it should be. This call is essential! By bringing more attention to your letter, you increase the odds of it being published.
6. Remember that the purpose of this kind of letter to the editor is to help make other newspaper readers aware of the news, not to berate the editor for failing to print a story.
7. You usually can't get printed more than once a month. However, you can submit letters as often as you want.
8. **Even if your letter doesn't get into print, it may help another one with a similar point of view get published!**



Courtesy of Marjory Collins

SOCIAL MEDIA



facebook

Create a [Facebook](#) page for your Heeding God's Call chapter

- Strategically send out invites asking people to "like" your page or group. It is important to identify the audience you are targeting to bring into your movement - Who is most likely to be interested? -and send them personalized messages via Facebook or email with a link to the page.

- Draw people to your Facebook page by hosting exclusive content on it that's not featured on other platforms or sites you use. Do you have a contest, survey, or video you could feature exclusively on FB? Want to share behind the scenes photos or videos of your work? This will entice people to visit your page frequently.

- You'll need a volunteer or staff member to be frequently monitoring the page for abuse - remove inappropriate/irrelevant content and/or abusive members from the group.

- Don't just say your page is interactive. Actually make it interactive. Bring fans into the planning process of your campaign by asking them questions as status updates or using the questions for pages tool, and iterate on the fly based on what they tell you.

Using this forum you can:

- *Post "status updates" about Heeding Activities.*

Any update you make appears in the News Feeds of your fans ensuring that your attendees do not miss out of on updates. A Facebook fan page for event also gives it more visibility, when people "Like" the event updates and "Share" it with their friends on their wall.

- *Create event invitations*

With a Facebook Invite, fans can RSVP to events, be reminded of upcoming events, and can easily access event information, including time, date, location, overview of event, and any special instructions about the event.



Twitter is a microblogging platform that enables users to post messages in 140 characters or less. Twitter is one of the best tools for quickly amplifying your organization's message, communicating with influencers, and crowd-sourcing requests for ideas and information.

Sign up for a Twitter account on <http://www.twitter.com>. Make sure you choose a short username



(Twitter “handle”) so that people can respond to you or retweet you without going over the 140-character limit. Take the time to set up your user profile. The more information you provide, the easier it will be for people to find you on Twitter and to learn more about you. Include an image for your account, feel free to use the Heeding God’s Call logo.

Start tweeting! When you are sharing information, try to write the tweet as if it’s a headline—short, sweet, and to the point. It’s also great to phrase it as a question.

Use hashtags strategically and appropriately to spread, share and organize information. Hashtags are words or phrases prefixed with the ‘hash’ or ‘pound’ symbol (#), similar to category tags on a blog, and are used in Tweets to add context.

Following other Twitter users and gain a following for your own account - by follow other organizations that do similar work you can learn about their latest activities and read their recommended links. It’s also a good idea to follow influential targets—media figures and politicians, for example—so that you can respond to their tweets and potentially get noticed by them.

Respond to other Tweets. If you want to add to what someone says, disagree with what they write, or just want to connect with them, use the @ symbol in front of their Twitter handle (no space in between!) and write a message back. The @ reply feature can be used for more than just responding to other Twitter users. For example, if you are posting something that an influential Twitter user might be interested in, include their handle in your Tweet. This is a great way to get another user’s attention.

Twitter is the best tool to give your followers real time updates on the event. Have an event hashtag and ask people to retweet the important messages being tweeted. By tweeting during the event, you can let those who have been unable to attend the event know what’s happening and experience the event through Twitter.



When you are logged into Google, you will see what others have “plussed” around the web. If you are logged in and searching for content using Google search, you will see what content your friends on Google have plussed. If a friend has plussed a piece of content on another site, his or her name will show up next to that specific website in search returns.

Within Google’s search returns itself you can +1 any search return by clicking on the +1 button next to or below a certain return (faded until you place the cursor over it). Additionally, the total number of +1s on a website will appear next to Google ads for that site.

Simply put, Google is showing you how your friends are using the web, and vice versa.

You can also post to your Google+ “stream,” which is used very much like a Facebook status or Twitter feed.

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BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE THIS WORK.**

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*Presbyterian
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<http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/two/giving>
and designate the funds to our work with Gun Violence Prevention.

If you would like to get more involved with PPF's work with Gun Violence Prevention, please contact Maggie Leonard at maggie@presbypeacefellowship.org