



## **A Call to Prayer and Action in Response to Gun Violence**

*“Thou shall not kill.” -Exodus 20:13*

We are called as United Methodist Bishops to respond to the devastation and disruption due to gun violence. Communities around the world are traumatized, we are facing a global and national health crisis, and children, families, and communities are left with emotional scars that beg for angels of mercy and the healing balm of Gilead.

The Bible declares in Exodus 20:13 *“Thou shall not kill”*—yet gun violence continues to escalate. In 2021 and 2022, 43 million more guns were sold in the United States, in addition to the 400 million guns already owned. As of June 2022, the United States has experienced over 300 mass shootings in this year alone.

Gun violence is more than a U.S. problem. Across the globe, 44% of all homicides involve guns. According to Amnesty International, 2,000 people are injured every day by gun shots and more than 500 of them die.

The Church is called to be an instrument of God’s grace. As people of prayer, we followers of Jesus are called to be “counter-cultural change makers.” To that end, we must reject the idolatry of guns and the distorted attachment to our right to own guns without safeguards for the communities of the world.

**This is a call to prayer, beginning this September, for all who follow Jesus, the Prince of Peace. This is a call to action for all to weep with those who weep and demand, insist on, and push for positive change from our elected officials.**

As United Methodists we have made our claim for a more excellent way to live and bring change.

***“As followers of Jesus, called to live into the reality of God’s dream of shalom as described by Micah, we must address the epidemic of gun violence so ‘that he may teach us his ways and the way we may walk in God’s paths.’ Therefore, we call upon United Methodists to prayerfully address gun violence in their local context.” (Book of Resolution #3428 2016)***

This call to prayer is not a shallow request but one that firmly believes that the collective prayers of God’s people will keep this issue in the forefront of our consciousness and guide our intentional discernment of the action needed to bring about change.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops commits to leading as peacemakers and prophetic witnesses to make our communities safer by reducing the tragedy and trauma of daily homicides and suicides. We call people to prayer and to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners in our public witness. We call for congregations to use United Methodist Church resources for Bible study and advocacy in their efforts to reduce gun violence. We support the ban on assault weapons and urge Church and government support for communities affected by the trauma of gun violence. We are committed to sharing Christ centered compassion as we walk alongside those who have been victims of gun violence. We call on all United Methodist to advocate for safer communities, safer schools and building bridges to beloved community.

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