

GUN VIOLENCE

What does the Bible say?

Many nations shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God’s ways and that we may walk in God’s paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. **(Micah 4:2-3)**

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. **(Matthew 5:9)**

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. **(Matthew 5:43-44)**



What does The United Methodist Church say?

God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world’s warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.

And so shall we.

(2016 Book of Discipline, “A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed”)

The stunning imagery of Micah’s dream is the transformation of weapons into instruments of harvesting food...God does not collect or hide the weapons from the nations, nor does God transform the weapons outside of human effort...the nations themselves “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”

Violence, in so many ways, is fueled by fear and self-protection. Iron plows and pruning tools can be used as weapons. Yet, in Micah’s vision, genuine peace and security are given to all people by God after the weapons of violence are transformed: “they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid.” Culture as well as weapons will be transformed: Indeed, “neither shall they learn war any more.”

Whether it happens in the towns of northeastern Nigeria, a suburb in the United States, the streets of Australia, or an office in France, gun violence has become an all-too-frightening phenomenon. We need the reality of Micah’s vision more than ever. **(2016 Book of Resolutions, #3428, “Our Call to End Gun Violence”)**



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

GUN VIOLENCE

What do the facts say?

- In the United States, approximately 360 people in the United States are shot every day, among whom 109 die from their injuries.¹
- Though attracting widespread media attention, mass shootings account for less than 1% of firearm deaths annually in the United States.²
- Many of the guns used in crimes around the world are manufactured in the United States. At least 98 percent of the guns used in crimes in Canada, 70 percent used in crimes in Mexico, and approximately 50 percent used in crimes in Costa Rica, Belize, and El Salvador originated in the United States.³
- Researchers conservatively estimate that gun violence costs the U.S. economy \$229 billion per year in medical treatment, criminal-justice proceedings, corrections, new security precautions, and reductions in quality of life. U.S. taxpayers carry half of these costs.⁴
- Violence against women and girls worldwide is indisputably linked to small arms, which include revolvers and assault rifles. The best strategies related to reducing intimate-partner violence include stronger gun ownership regulations, policies that raise awareness about the danger of firearms in homes, and interventions to change cultural attitudes towards guns in relation to concepts of masculinity.⁵



¹ *Amnesty International*, ² *Pew Research Center*, ³ *Center for American Progress*, ⁴ *The True Cost of Gun Violence in America*, ⁵ *Small Arms Survey*

What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

- **Talk** about the impact of gun violence nationally, internationally, and in your local context. Host church and community conversations; join ecumenical and interfaith partnerships; walk alongside local gun violence survivors and encourage them to share their stories. See items 1-8 in *2016 Book of Resolutions, #3428, "Our Call to End Gun Violence"* and visit www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/peace-with-justice/gun-violence-prevention
- **Advocate** for laws that prevent and reduce gun violence, including universal background checks, ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty, banning concealed firearms on school campuses, banning assault weapons, and ensuring all guns are sold through licensed gun retailers.
- **Register** for alerts on gun violence prevention from www.umcjustice.org



For more information contact:
advocacy@umcjustice.org

www.umcjustice.org

General Board of Church and Society

100 Maryland Ave, NE Washington, DC 20002

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