

Friends,

Several years ago we woke to the horrifying news of the terrorist attack at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. On the first anniversary of this massacre, the NC Council of Churches, along with many of our gun prevention allies, organized a Stand Up Sabbath weekend during which we encouraged people of faith across North Carolina to talk together about the preponderance of gun violence in our country. We offered worship and education resources as well as discussion points about gun violence to stimulate thinking. We also coordinated well-timed awareness raising through social and traditional media. We repeated this focused attention on the 2nd anniversary of the Mother Emanuel attack.

Since that time, gun violence has continued to plague our communities and the headlines confront us weekly. While mass killings make the headlines, the sad truth is that guns kill more people in venues that seldom draw sustained attention: accidental deaths, planned suicides, crimes of passion, and calculated murders. We could impose some barriers that could reduce the hemorrhaging. Some people should not own guns, and some places should never allow guns. This is where the real work of sensible gun control laws can make a difference. We implore you to learn the statistics, understand the gun laws, and think faithfully about what God would have us do in order to strive for genuine safety and not a false sense of security. Love of neighbor calls for nothing less.

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