

Let Us Reason Together

Why People of Faith Must Care About Gun Violence

Scripture has much to say about misplaced trust, but we seem to respond more readily to a culture of fear than a climate of trust. Our fear is reinforced by the actions we undertake in the name of security: stripping down to our “inner cloak” to enter an airport terminal, walking through metal detectors to attend a basketball game, and installing alarm systems on half the houses in our neighborhoods. We are conditioned to be afraid and are convinced a gun will keep us safe.



For people of faith, how we relate to guns should be viewed through the lens of our beliefs. Are they the tools of a hunter or target-shooting hobbyist or do they prime us for violence? In Christianity, there is the seminal witness of the Prince of Peace.

And for many who share the Abrahamic traditions there is the long-standing confession of the prophets reminding us not to put our trust in false idols. In too many cases, guns have become idols worshiped in the misguided pursuit of safety. But the statistics bear out that guns do not inherently keep us safe; in fact, they can and often do put us and those we love in danger.

Many gun owners and gun violence prevention advocates share similar safety goals. Communities of faith can provide spaces for these allies to work for reasonable and fair laws that go beyond political polarities. The NC Council of Churches and our allies call on people of faith to live into the hope-filled future promised to us rather than succumbing to the fear propagated around us.

“Come now, let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18 RSV).

There is a way for us to own guns and be safe about it.

Jennifer E. Copeland
Executive Director, NC Council of Churches

LEARN MORE AT:

www.ncchurches.org/gun-violence-prevention

FACTS ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE:

- American children die by guns **11 times as often** as children in other wealthy nations (Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence).
- The presence of guns in the home increases an individual’s **risk of death by homicide by 90%** (American Journal of Epidemiology).
- The risk of suicide is **up to five times higher in gun-owning households** (American Journal of Preventative Medicine).
- **More than half of women killed by their intimate partners** in the U.S. are killed with guns (Everytown for Gun Safety).
- Of 355 mass shootings in the US in 2015, **12 were in North Carolina** (North Carolinians Against Gun Violence).

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **Participate in the Stand Up Sabbath, June 17-19, 2016** -- faith communities are being encouraged to mark the first anniversary of the massacre at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina with a prayer, liturgy, or other acknowledgement of the lives lost. Go to www.ncchurches.org/gun-violence-prevention for ideas and suggestions.
- **Contact elected officials** -- let them know that you are a person of faith who supports common sense gun laws that keep North Carolinians safe, including universal background checks, waiting periods to purchase, and limits on where guns can be carried. Find information for your NC elected leaders as well as your US Senators and Representatives at www.usa.gov/elected-officials.
- **Become involved and informed** through organizations working against gun violence, including those listed below.

Coalition Partners Include:

Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People: www.dcabp.org

Moms Demand Action: www.momsdemandaction.org

MomsRising: www.momsrising.org

North Carolinians Against Gun Violence: www.ncgv.org

North Carolina Council of Churches: www.ncchurches.org

NC Justice Center: www.ncjustice.org

Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham: www.nonviolentdurham.org

Wilmington Faiths Against Gun Violence