

# 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](http://www.ncchurches.org/gun-violence-prevention)

## FACTS ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE:

- On an average day, 93 Americans are killed with guns. (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- America’s gun homicide rate is more than 25 times the average of other high-income countries. (American Journal of Medicine)
- In America, 1.7 million children live in a home with an unlocked, loaded gun, and 80% of unintentional firearm deaths of children under 15 occur in a home. (Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence)
- When a gun is present in a domestic violence situation, the woman is five times more likely to be killed. (Everytown for Gun Safety)
- In NC, firearms are the leading method of suicide, 85% of which are fatal. (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence)
- 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 16-18, 2017 -- faith communities are being encouraged to mark the second 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. For ideas and suggestions, go to [www.ncchurches.org/gun-violence-prevention/](http://www.ncchurches.org/gun-violence-prevention/).
- 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](http://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](http://www.dcabp.org)  
Moms Demand Action: [www.momsdemandaction.org](http://www.momsdemandaction.org)  
MomsRising: [www.momsrising.org](http://www.momsrising.org)  
North Carolina Council of Churches: [www.ncchurches.org](http://www.ncchurches.org)  
North Carolina Justice Center: [www.ncjustice.org](http://www.ncjustice.org)  
North Carolinians Against Gun Violence: [www.ncgv.org](http://www.ncgv.org)  
Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham: [www.nonviolentdurham.org](http://www.nonviolentdurham.org)  
Wilmington Faiths Against Gun Violence