



Gun Safety Advocacy Recommendations for Faith Communities

The following recommendations have been gathered from various national faith organizations and local KC metro ones. We hope Forum attendees will be inspired to encourage their place of worship to review, discuss, adopt or adapt all or some of the recommendations listed below.

1. Start a *Gun Safety Committee or Task Force* to discuss gun violence/gun suicide and ways to reduce gun injuries and death from suicide/homicide/unintentional shootings.
2. Participate in demonstrations in support of gun safety (Gun Violence Awareness Day in June, annual Sandy Hook Vigil in December, March for Our Lives, etc.)
3. Improve security measures at your place of worship. Create "safety teams" to provide safety monitoring on days of worship and during events..
4. Engage youth in your efforts and develop a 'youth support survival guide' to distribute to local schools. Connect with local community groups and groups in the other 50 states that are working to mitigate gun violence.
5. Encourage your congregants to participate in the ASK program (Asking Saves Kids) : When your children/grandchildren visit someone's home, ask if guns are kept in the home and if they are safely secured. In return, if you have firearms in your home, be sure they are safely secured.
6. Provide lists of resources to films, webinars, podcasts, and books about guns and gun violence in America. Discuss in your Gun Safety Committee and encourage members to share with their friends, family, and other congregation members.
7. During national weeks - June Gun Violence Awareness month and December Anniversary of Sandy Hook shootings – invite speakers from knowledgeable community groups to make presentations about the importance of gun safety and common ground gun legislation.
8. Partner with other faith leaders to work with existing gun safety reform organizations to build a coalition striving to make gun safety a community issue.

9. Encourage members of your community to attend **Grandparents for Gun Safety** monthly meetings and the **GGG Annual Community Forum**.
10. Take a questionnaire to test your knowledge about gun violence. See: www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/13/us/14xp-gun-facts-quiz.html
www.thetrace.org/2024/02/gun-regulation-america-background-check
11. Learn about your state's gun laws (Google "Missouri gun laws" or "Kansas Gun laws" and click "At Overview" for the list of gun laws in your state).
12. Obtain and distribute "No Guns Allowed" signs for homes, churches, community organizations, or businesses (you can download signs for free or go to website: www.mydoorsign.com/no-guns-knives-weapons-allowed
13. Host an open candidate forum on gun safety for individuals running for office in your local community or statewide office.
14. Become part of a speakers bureau to educate local organizations regarding gun violence/gun suicide, the history of firearms in America, and need for gun safety reform. Share personal stories with others of gun violence/gun suicide/gun accidents and its impact on family, friends, and extended community.
15. Ask your place of worship to put symbols outside - like crosses, etc., - with names of gun violence victims who have died in your community during the year.
16. Learn about the history of firearms in America:
www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/04/23/battleground-america
17. Learn about straw purchases for guns that are often involved in violent crimes and/or gun & drug trafficking, Blair's Law, Donna's Law, Child-Access Prevention Laws (AKA: CAP/safe storage laws), Extreme Risk Protection Order Laws (AKA: Red Flag Laws).

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Living Room Conversations - Guns & Responsibility An excellent place to start with a congregation, this series brings Americans of different perspectives together to talk about the difficult issues surrounding gun violence. See <https://livingroomconversations.org> (under 'have a conversation' - topic guides and resources, click "guns and responsibility")

Reducing Gun Violence in America: Evidence for Change Johns Hopkins University offers the best available science to show which interventions are the most effective for reducing gun violence. See <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/topics/gun-violence>

Gun Violence IS Public Health – A PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Susan L. Polan, PhD., American Public Health Association, which examines gun violence from the perspective of a growing public health crisis. <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1GHDlaJ7Y7ITa70GZBhgvBqYUN1XE8VELOSNI6iNdYQgU>

Violence – A biblically-based PowerPoint presentation by Rev. Alonzo Johnson, Coordinator, Self- Development of People, PC(USA) that relates gun violence to issues of poverty and race. <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hMY1hzEcPhstGFLn2-lpfa1pxQ09mvPMwmdD9yCmeAxl>

Not Your Grandparents 'NRA – How the Leadership of the NRA Puts Americans at Risk

The history of how the NRA changed from a hunting/sporting organization to the lobby for the gun industry.

<http://www.everytown.org/reports/not-your-grandparents-nra/>

Children & Gun Violence – This article underscores the need for funding research into gun violence. A professor at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore/Albert Einstein College of Medicine documents that, in the US, 16 children per day are admitted to hospitals because of gun violence. That's 5,862 per year, but we have no count on how many children die of gun violence in emergency rooms or before being admitted to a hospital.

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/04/health/children-gunshot-wounds-study/index.html>

The True Costs of Gun Violence in America Ground-breaking economic research combines with real- life stories to present the human and financial costs of gun violence. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/04/true-cost-of-gun-violence-in-america/>

Four Laws that Could Stem the Rising Threat of Mass Shootings, Scientific American, 2017

Films, Audio & Webinars

Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence This award-winning film produced by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance frames gun violence as both a disaster and a public health issue. It moves the conversation about gun violence prevention away from the polarizing extremes that have long dominated the debate and lifts up the voice and experiences of those who seek common ground and a new way forward. Trigger was produced as a collaborative effort of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, and the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). There is a DVD, study guide and bulletin insert for use in congregational or other community based meetings during screenings. See <https://youtu.be/rbQwzoKy-sw?si=XNSqgR7YrvN1>

Gun Violence Prevention - Count Me In! August 2019 Webinar by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, with Deanna Hollas leading 130 Presbyterian church members in training on gun violence prevention ministry for congregations of all sizes. See <https://youtu.be/mJEQ2Kjc6NE>

Standing Our Holy Ground This 2019 year-long Presbyterian Peacemaking Program webinar series started with the premiere broadcast from the Youth Triennium. It covers many aspects of this issue. Learn more and register at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/standing-our-holy-ground/>

Armor of Light – The Evangelical Case for Gun Reform Emmy Award-winning film unites an evangelical pastor and the mother of gun violence victim. See www.netflix.com/title/80071215 or www.armoroflightfilm.com

Americans Remember the Loved Ones They've Lost to Gun Violence The families of gun victims speak to their fellow Americans about the need for practical steps to prevent gun violence View this short video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIHQJlavfps>

Newtown: What Remains After All is Lost? Filmmaker Kim Snyder explores a traumatized community in the aftermath of one of the deadliest mass shootings of schoolchildren in American history. Screened at the Sundance Festival and other international film venues, Newtown tells the story of resilience in the face of unspeakable pain. See <http://www.newtownfilm.com>

Changing the Conversation: America's Gun Violence Epidemic Produced for use in high school and college classrooms and broad community settings, this film shifts the conversation from strictly Second Amendment rights to a broader

focus on preventing a public health epidemic of gun violence. Purchase info at <http://www.changeunviolence.com>

Making A Killing: Guns, Greed and the NRA This film tells the stories of how guns and the billions of dollars made by the gun and ammunition industry impact the lives of everyday Americans. It features people across the country who have been affected by gun violence, including survivors and victims' families. The film explores how the powerful gun companies and the NRA are resisting responsible legislation for the sake of profit. It looks into gun tragedies that include unintentional shootings, domestic violence, suicides, mass shootings and trafficking – and what we can do to put an end to this profit-driven crisis. Learn more at <http://www.bravenewfilms.org/makingakilling>

The Inside Scoop: May 15, 2017 Host Catherine Read Interviews Presbyterian Author James Atwood on his Book, Gundaamentalism This video offers an overview of the current impact of guns in America, in conversation with James Atwood, with a special appeal to gun owners to support gun safety and reasonable gun laws. The second half of the interview features Andrew Goddard, parent of a son injured at the Virginia Tech shooting and now Director of the Virginia Center for Public Safety. He gives an overview of the state of Virginia, as a case study for all 50 states. View online at <https://youtu.be/VfTSUM-6HZw>

Gundaamentalism & Where It Is Taking America By James E. Atwood, Discussion Questions by Jan Orr-Harter
Gundaamentalism and Where It Is Taking America offers an immensely readable overview of the issue of gun violence. While written from a faith perspective, the book is designed also for a broader audience, including college, law, medical and public health schools; law enforcement agencies; local government and community groups. James Atwood is a retired Presbyterian pastor and an avid deer hunter for half a century. He has been in the forefront of the faith community's fight for two constitutional rights: the right to keep and bear arms and the right to live in domestic tranquility, free of gun violence. Atwood explains why guns control so many of us. Chapters include How Did We Get Here?; Straight Talk to Anyone Buying a Gun for the First Time; Policing the Inner City; Can Guns be Made Safer? The book will provoke honest reflection and discussion for the building of a safer and saner America. Available at <http://wipfandstock.com/gundaamentalism-and-where-it-is-taking-america.html>

America and Its Guns: A Theological Expose by James E. Atwood, Foreword by Walter Brueggemann
James Atwood, right, cautions that an absolute trust in guns and violence morphs easily into idolatry. Having spent 40 years as a Presbyterian pastor fighting against the easy access to firearms, one of which took the life of a

friend, he uses his biblical and theological understanding to graphically portray the impact guns have on our society. He documents how we have been deceived into believing that the tools of violence will provide our ultimate security. He closes with a wake-up call to the faith community to unmask the extremism of the Gun Empire and to claim the moral role of the church on what is often considered to be a “hands-off” political issue. Available at <http://wipfandstock.com/gundamentalism-and-where-it-is-taking-america.html>