

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION MODEL RESOLUTION FOR CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS AND DENOMINATIONS

WHEREAS, gun violence is an increasing public health crisis in our state and nation.

- Gun violence takes the lives of over 36,000 Americans every year. More Americans die every year by gun violence than by opioid overdoses.¹
- Gun violence is the third leading cause of death of children and youth in America, the second leading cause of death of all male youth, and the first leading cause of death of African American male youth.²
- 2-3 times as many toddlers as police officers die of gun violence every year in America³, and toddlers with guns kill more Americans every year than foreign terrorists do.⁴
- Women in the U.S. are 16 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries, making America the most dangerous country in the developed world when it comes to gun violence against women.⁵
- Gun violence claims the lives of more than 400 people every year in Minnesota, devastates the lives of over 500 others who are wounded but not killed⁶, and costs the state over \$764 million in measurable expenses.⁷ 75% of gun deaths in Minnesota are suicides.⁸

WHEREAS, as Christians we are called to recognize the pain of those who have lost loved ones by gun violence, the suffering of those who have been injured by gun violence, and the anguish of those incarcerated on account of gun violence--and then to act to prevent such devastations in the future. From scripture we learn that:

- Every human being is created in the image of God and beloved God, so that the senseless loss of even one life from gun violence is an affront to our Creator. (*Genesis 1:27, Romans 8:31-19*)
- God hears the cries of those who are oppressed and victimized, and sends his faithful servants to respond by speaking truth to those in positions of power. (*Exodus 3*)
- Our Lord wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus, experiencing human grief over the loss of a loved one; he also said "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (*John 11:35, Matthew 5:9*)
- "Thoughts and prayers" are not enough; Christians are also called to action on behalf of the our suffering neighbor. (*James 2:14-26*)

WHEREAS, public health studies have repeatedly shown that states with the strongest gun laws have the lowest rates of gun death in all forms, and states with the weakest gun laws have the highest rates of gun death in all forms.⁹

BE IT RESOLVED, that (Name of congregation or denomination) urges our congressional representatives and state legislators to support gun violence prevention measures [and oppose any bills that would weaken gun laws].

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Bishop, pastors and congregational leaders of (denomination name) express the intent of this resolution to all congressional representatives, state legislators and the governor;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all members of (denomination name), in accordance with their consciences, be urged to contact their state representatives, senators and the governor, and express their support for gun violence prevention measures.

NOTES

¹ Rudd RA, Seth P, David F, Scholl L. *Increases in Drug and Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths — United States, 2010–2015*. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. And ProCon.org. "US Gun Deaths, 1999-2015: Suicides, Homicides, Unintentional Deaths, Legal Intervention Deaths, Deaths from Undetermined Consequences."* July 31, 2017.

² Miniño, 2010; Webster, Whitehill, Vernick, & Curriero, 2012. As reported in "Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention and Policy," *American Psychiatric Association*, by Eric Mankowski

³ Mindy Fischer, *Writer*. Posted October 24, 2015. Using 2013 data from the FBI and CDC.

⁴ 11/29/2015 08:46 am ET Updated Nov 25, 2016 "Toddlers Involved in More Shootings Than Terrorists in 2015" by Benjamin Powers.

⁵ Grinshteyn, E., & Hemenway, D. (2016). *Violent death rates: the US compared with other high-income OECD countries, 2010*. *The American journal of medicine*, 129(3), 266-273.

⁶ Minnesota Department of Health

⁷ "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence in Minnesota," Americans for Responsible Solutions, December 1, 2017.

⁸ Minnesota Department of Health

⁹ *Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Fatalities in the United States*. Eric W. Fleegler, MD, MPH; Lois K. Lee, MD, MPH; Michael C. Monuteaux, ScD; David Hemenway, PhD; Rebekah Mannix, MD, MPH. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2013;173(9):732-740. Doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.1286