

Bishop's E-Lumination 5-26-2021

May 26, 2021



A Plea for Action and Prayer to End Gun Violence

(Photo by Eric Gerhardy on UnSplash)

The nation is afire! Not the flames of wildfires burning in many places across the US, but rather, the fire of violence and shootings and killings, sometimes of innocent persons, and sometimes intentionally targeted persons. Some of these are triggered (literally) because of family disputes, others are random. Some of the killed and maimed have been children, women and men who were innocently in the line of fire. Daily reports demonstrate that the frequency of these horrific acts is escalating.

Today, a shooting in San Jose, California captured the headline: Breaking news! But what is breaking is not “news.” The story is far too old and familiar. What is breaking is the heart and soul of many who live in fear and anxiety over the proliferation of the evil of hatred and random violence. The most current information source can be found [here](#).

I call us to prayer as United Methodists. And I believe God listens and understands our prayers for consolation for those who have lost life or received injury. But I also believe our prayers are not enough. Prayer needs to be supported by action, and our actions have not been sufficient to extinguish the fires of violence, shooting, and killings that are proliferating day in and day out.

Remember your baptism, United Methodists! For you were baptized into a faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. As faithful United Methodists, these are among our beliefs and practices:

The United Methodist Church [calls congregations to address gun violence](#) locally through [prayer](#), conversation, [support for those affected by gun violence](#), practicing and teaching gun safety and partnering with law enforcement to help prevent gun violence.

The church also urges congregations to [advocate for laws that prevent or reduce gun violence](#), such as:

- Universal background checks on all gun purchases
- Ensuring all guns are sold through licensed gun retailers
- Prohibiting gun purchases for those under restraining order due to threat of violence and those with serious mental illness who pose a danger to themselves and their communities
- Ensuring greater access to services for those with mental illness
- Establishing a minimum age of 21 years for a gun purchase or possession
- Banning large capacity ammunition magazines and weapons
- Promoting new technologies to aid law-enforcement agencies to trace crime guns and promote public safety

This is our faith. May God give us the courage to practice what we preach; and to live what we teach. May the Prince of Peace touch hearts of those who are mourning this day, for first responders who live out their civic commitment in the midst of risk, and for a softening of hearts of those who have the authority to enact changes so that peace and safety can prevail.

In Christ's love,

Bishop Bob