

## A Call to Action on Gun Violence

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)*

Whereas, we, United Methodists, are called to prayerfully address gun violence in our local context. (2016 Book of Resolutions, #3428, “Our Call to End Gun Violence”)

Whereas, every day in the United States, approximately 300 people—including 65 children and teens—are injured or killed with guns in murders, assaults, suicides, and accidents. In Wisconsin, approximately 500 men, women, and children are killed with guns each year, including the 75% who die as a result of suicide. Gun deaths devastate families in both urban and rural areas; while Wisconsin’s urban areas are disproportionately impacted by homicides, the state’s less populated areas experience greater rates of gun suicide. (Source: “Get The Facts.” (April 1, 2017) Waveedfund.org. Retrieved March 23, 2018, from <https://waveedfund.org/2017/04/01/get-the-facts/>)

And whereas, mass shootings, often in schools, have become routine news, and all innocent citizens, including children/youth are at risk, and in response to recent incidents, youth across the country are seeking answers and calling for action.

Therefore, be it resolved that Wisconsin United Methodist individuals and congregations educate themselves about gun violence and make preventing gun violence a regular part of their conversations and prayer times. Available resources include 2016 Book of Resolutions, #3428, “Our Call to End Gun Violence”; “Kingdom Dreams, Violent Realities: Reflections on Gun Violence from Micah 4:1-4”; and “Gun Violence 101 Cheat Sheet.” All are available on the website of the General Board of Church and Society, [www.umcjustice.org](http://www.umcjustice.org).

Be it also resolved that, while law-abiding citizens should be able to buy and keep firearms, we all call upon our congregations and individuals advocate at the local, state, and national level for prevention of gun violence through actions such as writing letters to political leaders, encouraging their church leaders to address this issue, and using social media to communicate their concerns to others. Some measures to prevent gun violence could include, as suggested by the Resolution #3428, (1) universal background checks on all gun purchases; (2) ensuring all guns are sold through licensed gun retailers; (3) prohibiting all individuals convicted of violent crimes from purchasing a gun for a fixed time period; (4) prohibiting all individuals under restraining order due to threat of violence from purchasing a gun; (5) prohibiting persons with serious mental illness, who pose a danger to themselves and their communities, from purchasing a gun; (6) ensuring greater access to services for those suffering from mental illness; (7) establishing a minimum age of 21 years for a gun purchase or possession; (8) banning large-capacity ammunition magazines and weapons designed to fire multiple rounds each time the trigger is pulled; (9) promoting new technologies to aid law-enforcement agencies to trace crime guns and promote public safety; and (10) ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Be it also resolved that individuals and congregations research community needs and partner with other communities of faith, community groups, and law-enforcement agencies to provide support to those who have experienced or are at risk of gun violence, including those who are most vulnerable, such as children/youth, those suffering from mental illness, and people in inner-city environments. Local/national organizations include: WAVE (Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort), Brady Campaign, and Heeding God’s Call.

And, be it also resolved that Conference District Superintendents, in conjunction with the Conference Board of Church And Society, offer a session of workshop on gun violence during one of their district events.