

# GUN VIOLENCE

### What does the Bible say?

Many nations shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God’s ways and that we may walk in God’s paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. **(Micah 4:2-3)**



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

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. **(Matthew 5:43-44)**

### What does the United Methodist Church say?

God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world’s warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly. And so shall we. **(2020/2024 Book of Discipline, “A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed”)**



The stunning imagery of Micah’s dream is the transformation of weapons into instruments of harvesting food...God does not collect or hide the weapons from the nations, nor does God transform the weapons outside of human effort...the nations themselves “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”

Violence, in so many ways, is fueled by fear and self-protection. Iron plows and pruning tools can be used as weapons. Yet, in Micah’s vision, genuine peace and security are given to all people by God after the weapons of violence are transformed: “they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid.” Culture as well as weapons will be transformed: Indeed, “neither shall they learn war any more.”

Whether it happens in the towns of northeastern Nigeria, a suburb in the United States, the streets of Australia, or an office in France, gun violence has become an all-too-frightening phenomenon. We need the reality of Micah’s vision more than ever. **(2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #3212, “Our Call to End Gun Violence”)**



**CHURCH & SOCIETY**

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

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### What do the facts say?

- In the United States, between 2002 and 2022, more children were killed by gunshots than on-duty police officers and active military combined. Gun violence is the number one cause of death for kids and teens.<sup>1</sup>
- Chicago has a gun-homicide rate four times the national average, with 90% of homicides being committed by guns. Illinois has some of the strongest gun laws in the United States, and so much of its gun violence is due to trafficked guns from neighboring states with weak gun laws.<sup>2</sup>
- Suicide and domestic violence are hugely implicated in gun violence. In 2021, 54% of gun deaths were by suicide (26,328).<sup>3</sup> The U.S. gun suicide rate is nearly 12 times of other high-income countries.<sup>4</sup>
- Black youth are four times more likely to be killed with guns than their white peers.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Giffords, <sup>2</sup> Giffords, <sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center, <sup>4</sup> Everytown, <sup>5</sup> Children's Defense Fund

### What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

- **Talk** about the impact of gun violence in your communities: Host church and community conversations; join ecumenical and interfaith partnerships; and walk alongside gun violence survivors through prayer, pastoral care, creating space, and identifying other resources.
- **Use** the Kingdom Dreams Violent Realities, a Bible study on gun violence prevention, in your congregation to learn how to address gun violence as a spiritual and moral issue: <https://www.umcjustice.org/latest/kingdom-dreams-violent-realities-bible-study-412>
- **Join** the UMC Gun Violence Prevention Network, a group of grassroots leaders nationally in the United States who are working in their communities to prevent gun violence. Email [advocacy@umcjustice.org](mailto:advocacy@umcjustice.org) for more information.
- **Advocate** for laws that prevent and reduce gun violence, including banning assault weapons, universal background checks, safe storage, banning concealed firearms on school campuses, and ensuring all guns are sold through licensed gun retailers.
- **Sign up** for email alerts on gun violence prevention at <https://www.umcjustice.org/>.



For more information contact:  
[advocacy@umcjustice.org](mailto:advocacy@umcjustice.org)

[www.umcjustice.org](https://www.umcjustice.org)

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**General Board of Church and Society**

100 Maryland Ave, NE Washington, DC 20002

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