

GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION SABBATH- JUNE 5th-7th
A RESOURCE PACKET

For those faith communities who will be commemorating Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath the weekend of June 5th-7th, the following are resources that can be used for your worship services.

Any questions, please contact swmichinterfaithaction@gmail.com.

A. BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

An announcement for the bulletin that describes June 7th as Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath.

The first week of June is commemorated as Gun Violence Awareness Week; June 5th-7th is celebrated in faith communities around the US as Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath as a time to mourn those whose lives have been lost to gun violence and to recommit to building communities of peace and safety. Clergy often wear orange stoles on Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath, a symbol of “I’m a human don’t shoot me”, borrowing from the orange vests that hunters wear to indicate that no shooting should be directed towards them.

B. FACT SHEET

A fact sheet on gun violence in Michigan that could be used as a bulletin insert.

<https://everytownresearch.org/everystat#Michigan>

C. LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Some sample Christian liturgies that can be used - if you would like them translated into another faith tradition, please let us know and we will get the translated version to you within a 24 hour turn around.

Liturgy A:

Collect: O God who Remembers, we hold before you all who have died from the plague of gun violence in our land. We remember those who have taken their lives with a gun, those who have died in school shootings and mass shootings, those who have died by a gun in the course of an argument or from abuse or by accident or during the commission of a crime. We lift our voices in sorrow and frustration knowing that every life is infinitely valuable to you. Receive all who have died into the arms of your mercy, bless those who mourn with the hope of eternal life, and strengthen our hearts and our arms to bring an end to this scourge. This we pray in the name of the one who overcame the power of death, your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Community Prayer (said in unison): Healing and Holy God: we gather today in common grief for the epidemic of gun violence. Be with all those who suffer from the lasting trauma incidents of gun violence leave in their wake. Grant us strength and courage to live in hope of a better day, our minds fixed on the doing of your will, so that we, having been delivered from fear, may live in peace. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgy B: A Litany for the Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath

(written by the Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane, Episcopal Bishop of Maine)

Leader (L): Giver of Life and Love, you created all people as one family and called us to live together in harmony and peace. Surround us with your love as we face the challenges and tragedies of gun violence.

For our dear ones, for our neighbors, for strangers and aliens, and those known to you alone,
Loving God

All: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: God of Righteousness, you have given our leaders, especially Donald, our President, and Gretchen, our Governor, the members of Congress, the judges of our courts and members of our legislatures, power and responsibility to protect us and to uphold our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

For all who bear such responsibility, for all who struggle to discern what is right in the face of powerful political forces, Loving God

All: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: God of Compassion, we give you thanks for first responders, for police officers, firefighters and EMTs, and all those whose duties bring them to the streets, the lobbies, the malls and the homes where the carnage of gun violence takes place day after day. Give them courage and sound judgment in the heat of the moment and grant them compassion for the victims.

For our brothers and sisters who risk their lives and their serenity as they rush to our aid, Loving God

All: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: Merciful God, bind up the wounds of all who suffer from gun violence, those maimed and disfigured, those left alone and grieving, and those who struggle to get through one more day. Bless them with your presence and help them find hope.

For all whose lives are forever marked by the scourge of gun violence, Loving God

All: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: God Who Remembers, may we not forget those who have died, more than 30,000 this year, in the gun violence that we have allowed to become routine. Receive them into your heart and comfort us with your promise of eternal love and care.

For all who have died, those who die today, and those who will die tomorrow, Loving God

All: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: God of Justice, help us, your church, find our voice. Empower us to change this broken world and to protest the needless deaths caused by gun violence. Give us power to rise above our fear that nothing can be done and grant us the conviction to advocate for change.

For your dream of love and harmony, Loving God

All: Make us instruments of your peace.

L: All this we pray in the name of the One who offered his life so that we might live, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Liturgy C: Remembering All Who Have Been Affected By Gun Violence

(Adapted from Moral Call: a Vermont Interfaith Prayer and Remembrance Vigil, December 15, 2015)

Leader: We raise our prayers in remembrance of the victims of gun violence, both those who have been injured and those who have been killed. We hold their memories dear. We treasure those lives permanently altered through injury or those taken in senseless acts of violence, and we pray that they might find rest and peace. May their lives continue to make a difference in our world. Together we pray.

All: God of Mercy, heal our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers in remembrance of the families and friends of the victims of gun violence in our nation and in Michigan. Comfort those who mourn. Dry the tears of those who weep. Sustain those who feel diminished. Impart courage to the hearts of those who feel helpless.

Together we pray.

All: God of Peace, sustain our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers in remembrance of school teachers and administrators who put their students' needs ahead of their own safety. We pray for first responders, including police, fire and rescue personnel who witness the horror of gun violence while in service to our communities, and we pray for all those with responsibility for law enforcement. We give thanks

for their call to protect and serve and to seek justice, which is inspirational to others, and we pray that their emotional wounds will be healed. Together we pray.

All: God of Courage, inspire our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers for those lives taken by gun violence through suicide, and also for those lives taken through accidental shootings, especially when those shootings involve children. Console and strengthen those whose despair is great. Together we pray.

All: God of Hope, comfort our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers in remembrance of all people impacted by gun violence, as gun violence knows no boundaries but can affect all nationalities, races, cultures, faiths, genders, and socioeconomic classes; it can affect us where we live, where we worship, where we work, where we study, and where we play. Together we pray.

All: God of Love, transform our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers for those who have committed acts of gun violence and for their families, in our nation and especially here in Michigan. We remember those suffering from mental illness who have gone untreated, and those suffering from loneliness and isolation. We pray for those who would use guns, power and violence rather than respect and dignity to reconcile differences. Grant us the strength to pursue justice with a voice of love. Together we pray.

All: God of Forgiveness, enlighten our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers for all community leaders, elected officials and survivor groups. Give them insight, wisdom, and courage to address head on the epidemic of gun violence. Pour forth your Spirit on all our neighborhoods and break the chains of violence that bind your people. Together we pray.

All: God of Power, strengthen our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray today for ourselves and for others in our lives who have been touched by gun violence. During the silent pause, I invite you to offer the names (either silently or aloud) of those for whom you pray. ++++++

Together we pray.

All: God of Astonishing Mercy, Compassion and Immeasurable Love, restore our broken hearts and enliven our confidence to find new ways to revive our world to become one of peace.

Amen

D. CHRISTIAN MUSICAL OPTIONS (*Non-Christian Faith translations are available upon request.*)
(*Photos of both songs are below and can be sent via email.*)

- **God of Mercy You Have Shown Us**
 - <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/god-mercy-you-have-shown-us/>

- **When People Die by Hatred**
 - http://www.carolynshymns.com/when_people_die_by_hatred.html

E. SERMON CONCEPTS

As June 7th is also Trinity Sunday in the Christian calendar, these sermon concepts link Trinity Sunday and Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath.

General theme:

God (Father/Creator) created the world in love, God revealed the human dynamics of love through the incarnation of Jesus the Christ. The Spirit moves in each of us to advance love and promote life.

We are called to advance love and life as an expression of the Trinity. Given the surge of gun violence and its major impact on children and youth, our Trinitarian Love calls us to work to reduce gun violence.

Rublev's icon of the Trinity shows three angelic figures around a table representing the Trinity. The fourth side of the table is empty, a place for the viewer to also be around the table. In the flow of the Trinity we add ourselves and our commitment to be Love and Life in a world of gun violence. Here's the visual:

(<https://www.google.com/search?q=rublev+holy+trinity+icon&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&hl=en-us&client=safari&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3ME2qyqs0fcToyi3w8sc9YSmbSWtOXmM04-1Kzsgvd80rySypFNLgYoOy5Lj4pJC0aTBI8XAh8XI2MXHkl6UWIWWmli9ilSgqTcplVPIyM-pVCgpyswDmqCQmZyfBwCsleOBfAAAAA&ictx=1&ved=2ahUKEwjE0Ybz3YvpAhVEGM0KHRjLCJEQyNoBKAB6BAGTEBM>)

Revised Common Lectionary Readings

- Genesis 1.1-2.4a
 - We return to the beginning ... to creation - to God's love for us by creating us and making us stewards of all that God loves. As God's people we are called to Creation, and not to destruction.

- Psalm 8
 - Reminds us of our need for gratitude for these gifts and the responsibility that we have to all of creation as stewards, stewards of life, including all human beings.

- 2 Corinthians 13.11-13
 - As Paul bids farewell, he urges living in peace, seeking agreement with one another.
- Matthew 28.16-20
 - We are commissioned to go and do the work that God has called us to do ... to walk and teach the way of love.

Trinity Sunday Detailed Sermon Notes:

The First Sunday after Pentecost is the celebration of the Holy Trinity. This is not, however, a celebration of a doctrine, but the celebration of the God whose self-revelation is an interaction of love between Persons. The Doctrine came about as the Christian attempt to express, in human language, our experience of God—an experience that we are God’s children, that we are the brothers and sisters of God incarnate, and that we are people who find the Spirit of God living in us. Thus, the names given to God’s action toward us and God’s own being are Creator (Father), Christ (Son) and Spirit (Holy Spirit.)

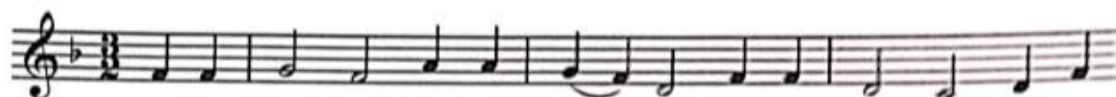
The Old Testament reading is the account of creation from the beginning of Genesis. Christians have seen the Trinity at work here as God determines to create the world, God’s Spirit hovers over the process, and the active agent in creating is God’s Word. In the New Testament we hear in its concluding Grace the earliest Christian formulary of the Trinity.

You are writing a Gospel,
 a chapter each day
 by the deeds that you do
 and the words that you say.
 [Folks] read what you write
 if its false or it’s true.
 Now what is the Gospel
 according to you? (Anonymous)

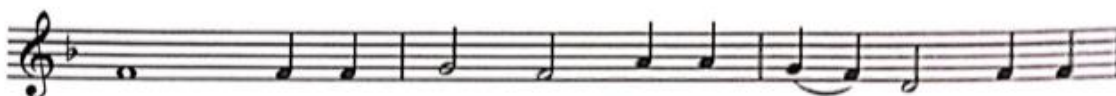
God of Mercy, You Have Shown Us

A Hymn Lamenting Gun Violence

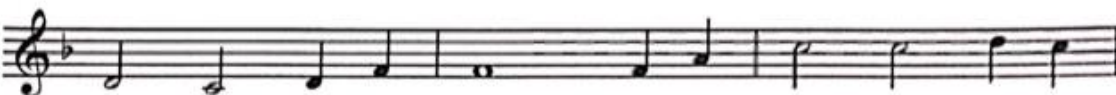
BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D



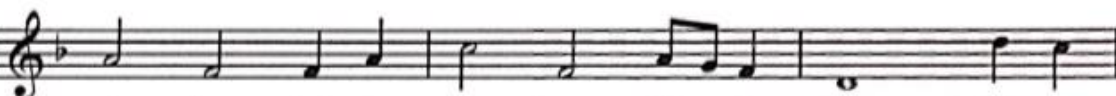
God of mer - cy, you have shown us ways of liv - ing that are
On a street where neigh - bors gath - er, shots are heard; a young girl
God, we pray for those who suf - fer when this world seems so un -
God, re - new our faith and vi - sion; make us those who bold - ly



good: "Work for jus - tice, treas - ure kind - ness, hum - bly
dies. On a cam - pus, stu - dents scat - ter as the
fair; May your church be quick to offer lov - ing
lead! May we work for just de - ci - sions that bring



jour - ney with the Lord." Yet your peo - ple here are
vio - lence claims more lives. In a fam - ily filled with
com - fort, gen - tle care. And we pray: ter - mid - the
true se - cur - i - ty. Help us change this vio - lent



griev - ing, hurt by wea - pons that de - stroy. Help us
an - ger, tem - pers flare and shots re - sound. God of
vio - lence, may we speak your truth, O Lord! Give us
cul - ture based on i - dols, built on fear. Help us



turn to you, be - liev - ing in your way that brings us joy.
love, we weep and won - der at the vio - lence all a - round.
strength to break the si - lence, say - ing, "This can be no more!"
build a peace - ful fu - ture with your world of peo - ple here.

Biblical References: Micah 6:8; Luke 1:79; Romans 12:15; 1 John 4:16-21; Matthew 5:9

Tune: The Sacred Harp, 1844. Harm. James H. Wood, 1958.

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In interfaith worship services, this line may be used:

Change the original text of "May your church be quick to offer loving comfort, gentle care."

to interfaith text: "May we all be quick to offer loving, comfort, gentle care."

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette is the author of *Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor* (Discipleship Resources — Upper Room Books, 2009) and *Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship* (Geneva Press, 2000) and the co-pastor of Limestone Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

Hymn - If We Just Talk of Thoughts and Prayers

If We Just Talk of Thoughts and Prayers

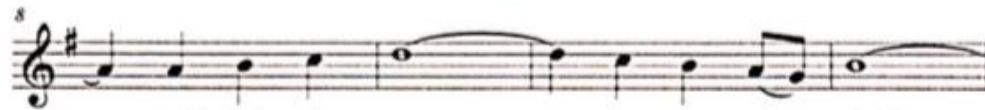
O WALY WALY LM ("Though I May Speak")



If we just talk _____ of thoughts and prayers _____
If we just dream _____ of what could be _____
If we just sing _____ of do - ing good _____
God, may our prayers _____ and dreams and songs _____



— And don't live out _____ a faith that dares, _____
— And do not build _____ com - mun - i - ty, _____
— And don't walk through _____ our neigh - bor - hood _____
— Lead to a faith _____ that takes on _____ wrongs -



— And don't take on _____ the ways of _____ death, _____
— And do not seek _____ to change our _____ ways, _____
— To learn its hope, _____ to ease its _____ pain, _____
— That works for peace _____ and just - ice, _____ too, _____



— Our thoughts and prayers _____ are fleet - ing breath. _____
— Our dreams of change _____ are false dis - plays. _____
— Our talk of good _____ is simp - ly _____ vain. _____
— Then will our prayers _____ bring joy to _____ you. _____

Biblical References: Isaiah 58; Matthew 7:21, 24-27; 1 Corinthians 13:1; James 2:14-26; 1 John 3:18-24

Tune: Traditional English melody

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Door decals available. Please contact swmichinterfaithaction@gmail.com for more info.

