



ENGAGE

Lutherans for Gun Violence Prevention

ENGAGE Table Talk

ENGAGE is a Work Group of the St. Paul Area Synod-ELCA

The Mission

MEDITATE on, EDUCATE about and ADVOCATE for gun violence prevention in the nonviolent Spirit of Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL PRECEPTS

The will of God is nonviolence

Genesis Creation Story is nonviolent

Violence happens because of human choice

The Fifth Commandment calls us to not kill or murder.

Warfare in OT is political violence theologically justified, yet contrary to God's will

Isaiah gives vision of "swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks".

Nonviolence is the foundational ethic of Jesus Christ

Paul is theologian of nonviolence: Fruits of Spirit and Armor of God

The state is justified in using harsh methods for the sake of order

Romans 13 is bookended by government responsibility to love

Revelation concludes with vision of "New Heaven-New Earth: No more dying or crying".

ELCA POSITIONS ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The 1989 Churchwide Assembly resolved to ban military-style semi-automatic weapons.

The 1993 CWA resolved to support the Brady Bill and urged several controls.

The 1994 Church Council calls on members to become involved in GVP actions.

The 1995 Social Statement "For Peace in God's World" calls the people to create peaceful environments.

The 2013 CWA urged members to contact elected officials and advocate for universal background checks, prevention of gun trafficking, reporting of lost or stolen guns, the need to address mental health issues and suicide prevention.

The 2016 CWA directed the Church Council and ELCA Committees to address universal background checks, an assault weapons ban, prevention of those on the Terrorist watch List from purchasing guns, and to organize entire Church for GVP.



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The SPAS overwhelmingly passed strong resolutions in 2013, 2016 and 2017 including calling upon legislators to address universal background checks, assault weapons ban, prevention of those on the TWL from purchasing guns and opposition to Stand your Ground and Permitless Carry Bills.

THE EVIDENCE

There are 33,000 gun deaths in the USA each year: 1/3 homicides and 2/3 suicides.

The USA has the highest gun homicide rate, the highest number of guns per capita, and the highest rate of deaths due to assault than other Western Developed Nations (WDN) The USA has more homicides by gun than all of the other high income countries combined. Americans murder each other with guns at a rate of 20x higher than other high income countries. (OECD) US rate of firearm homicide for children ages 5-14 is 13x higher than any other WDN. The gun homicide rate in the USA is 12-20x the average in WDN.

Since Florida passed “stand your ground” law, gun related homicides increased 31.6%.

48% more police officers are killed in states like MN that do not mandate UBC. States without a SYG law saw a decrease in homicides by 48%

74% of MN gun owners support background checks. 84% of all Minnesotans.

A 2013 FBI study concluded that an unarmed civilian is 20x more likely to stop a rampage shooting than an armed civilian.

A gun in the home increases chance of being killed by 72%, is 22x more likely to be used in suicide, homicide or accident than in self defense, and increases risk of an abused woman being murdered by 6x.

Toddlers kill more people than do terrorists and are 2x more likely to be killed than police.

American women are 16x more likely to be murdered by guns than in other WDN.

SYG laws in Florida resulted in a significant increase in homicides.

In Minnesota, suicide accounts for 82% of all gun deaths, disproportionately by males in rural areas. 9 of 10 suicides are committed by White people.

Total annual gun deaths in Minnesota are in the 400s.

90% of people who survive a suicide attempt do not die by suicide.

A recent Harvard study found that the presence of a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide by 3-5 times.



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THE NRA AND FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

The NRA is the most powerful lobbying group in the USA. Their motto could be: “Never give an inch to support GVP laws.” Their opposition to common sense gun laws is near 100%. They appeal to the 2nd Amendment: “A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” The NRA focuses on the second half of the amendment and forget about the “well regulated militia” portion. The NRA opposes research in causes of GV. The Declaration of Independence speaks of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for ALL. The Constitution says it is the duty of government to “insure domestic tranquility...and promote the general welfare.”

COMMON SENSE GUN LAWS

- 1) Support for universal background checks.
- 2) Denial of right to purchase for felons, severely mentally ill, those convicted of domestic abuse or awaiting trial.
- 3) Pass a “Red Flag” bill that would enable family members and law enforcement officers to petition the court to have guns temporarily removed from those who appear in danger of attempting suicide.
 - 4) Requiring trigger locks on guns and safes for gun storage.
 - 5) Development and sale of smart guns.
 - 6) Prohibition of assault weapons and sale of large ammo magazines.
- 7) Oppose Stand your Ground, Constitutional Carry and Permitless Carry Bills
 - 8) Increased funding for mental health treatment.
 - 9) Fund national research on GVP.

IN THE HOME

Keep guns unloaded and locked, with ammunition and guns separated.
Install cable loops through the barrel. Consider not having guns in home.

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Join the conversation about GVP by signing up on: Facebook/ENGAGE-ELCA

Visit our web site: www.engageelca.org

Invite the ENGAGE Team into your congregation or for a home gathering

Sign up to be part of the ENGAGE Action Team (Go to website)

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