

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

WORSHIP RESOURCES



A LITANY ON THE TRAGEDY OF GUN VIOLENCE

Written for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2010 by Rev. W. Mark Koenig of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

One: We celebrate and give thanks for the life and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Many: Who proclaimed a vision of all people living together, and bore witness to the power of non-violence,

One: We gather, to remember his words, his commitment, his life and to rededicate ourselves to addressing the evil of gun violence

Many: which claimed his life and which continues to plague our country and the world.

One: Some 30,000 Americans die by guns each year in the United States.

Many: And we grieve.

One: An average of eighty people is killed by guns every day, including eight children.

Many: And our hearts break.

One: Guns kill some 1,000 people each day in the developing world.

Many: And we mourn.

One: An American child is twelve times more likely to die by a gun than are the children who live in all twenty-five industrialized nations combined.

Many: And we weep.

One: The annual economic cost of gun violence in America is estimated to at least \$100 billion. Medical costs, decimated families, the court system, our jails and prisons, and security measures in airports, schools, and public buildings all contribute to this sum.

Many: And sorrow sweeps over us.

One: Since John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, more Americans have died by gun fire within our own country than American servicemen and women who were killed in all our wars of the 20th century.

Many: And we pray.

One: Faced with gun violence,

**Many: We grieve for those are killed and those whose lives are forever changed;
We seek to comfort for those who have lost loved ones;
We pray for a change of heart for those who resort to violence.**

One: Faced with gun violence, may we

**Many: Educate; Organize; Advocate;
And in all the ways we can, work for that day when
Guns and weapons of destruction
Are transformed into instruments of healing.**

One: May it be so.

Many: May we so do.



God of Mercy, You Have Shown Us

A Hymn Lamenting Gun Violence

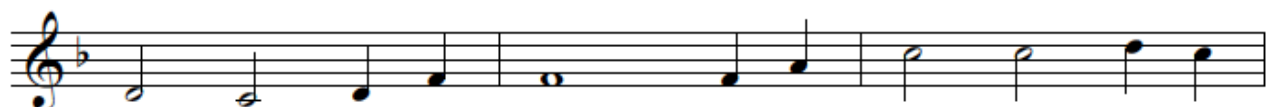
BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D



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 - tice, stu - dents scat - ter as the
fair. May your church be quick to of - fer 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: A - 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; I 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.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES IN ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

OLD TESTAMENT

- **Genesis 1:27** - We are created in the image of God
- **Exodus 20:13** - Thou shall not kill
- **Leviticus 19** - God's shalom to reign in all aspects of life
- **Deuteronomy 21:1-9** - Take Responsibility for a murder
- **Deuteronomy 30:11; 19-20** - Choose life that you may live
- **Isaiah 2:3-4** - Beat swords into plowshares
- **Isaiah 9:5-7** - Unto us a child is born
- **Isaiah 11:1-9** - A vision of peace
- **Isaiah 30:9ff** - Those who spurn God's call to righteousness
- **Isaiah 40: 1-11** - Comfort for God's people
- **Isaiah 58:12** - Being a repairer of the breach
- **Jeremiah 29: 1ff** - Seek the Welfare of the City
- **Zechariah 8:1ff** - Zechariah's vision of New Jerusalem

NEW TESTAMENT

- **Matthew 5:9** - Blessed are the peacemakers
- **Matthew 5:13ff** - You are the salt of the earth, light of world
- **Matthew 6:10** - Thy Kingdom Come on earth
- **Matthew 19:19** - Love your neighbor as yourself
- **Matthew 26:52** - Those who live by the sword die by it
- **Luke 10:25-28** - Thinking is important The Great commandment
- **Luke 22:47-53** - Jesus and Violence
- **I Corinthians 13** - Greatest of these is love
- **II Corinthians 5:16ff** - God gave us the ministry of reconciliation
- **Galatians 6:7-10** - Don't lose heart
- **Ephesians 6:10ff** - Wrestling against a gigantic evil
- **Philippians 2:1ff** - The Mind of Christ
- **Revelation 5:9-13** - The victor over evil is Lamb who was slain
- **Revelation 11:15** - Kingdoms of world become kingdoms of Christ
- **Revelation 19:6** - God's certain victory over evil

These texts certainly do not exhaust the Biblical witness against humanity's bent to call evil good and good evil. The Bible presents God's recurring call for us to love mercy and do justice and to fight against violence, injustice and exploitation as we trust in the ultimate victory of God over all that negates and degrades human life.

The Bible is brim full of hope because God is sovereign. "Though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet." God's word encourages us to be a reconciler, a peacemaker, to love neighbors, to do justice, to build shalom (the well being of all people in human society.)

NOTES



worship resources

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Peace
Fellowship*

<http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/two/giving>
and designate the funds to our work with Gun Violence Prevention.

If you would like to get more involved with PPF's work with Gun Violence Prevention, please contact us at gvp@presbypeacefellowship.org.

This resource was edited by Rev. Margaret Leonard.
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