


Interfaith Action
SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative

104 Mount Tabor Road, Buchanan, MI 49107

**GUN VIOLENCE
REDUCTION SABBATH
A RESOURCE PACKET**



Wear ORANGE on June 3 - 5, 2022

GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION SABBATH

A RESOURCE PACKET

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INTERFAITH ACTION STATEMENTS

A Letter from the Director of Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action of SW Michigan joins in mourning the deaths of those victimized by gun violence in Atlanta and Boulder. The time for prayers must give way to action to pass legislation to ban all assault weapons and pass stringent and universal background checks for gun purchases.

The US is unique in the western world for its epidemic levels of gun violence. We, as people of faith, are committed to developing a society known for peace and a society that is committed to reducing gun-related deaths.

We call on our elected officials to take action now. We've had sufficient tragedies to raise the alarm; as people of faith we declare that now is the time to pass gun violence legislation.



Rev. Dr. Sid Mohn

Director, Interfaith Action of SW Michigan

March 25, 2022

A Letter from the Lead Advisor on Gun Violence Prevention, Interfaith Action

We embark on another year to mourn and respect all victims of gun violence. To take time to remember the significance of this moment and offer peace for the families, friends and communities that are impacted by the crisis. We have now raised a full generation since the Columbine High School shooting. The Oxford High School shooting is now a Michigan tragedy. We know of those impacted by gun violence and that the pain and tragedy never goes away. We must do more.

Firearms are now the #1 cause of death for children and adolescents. Our children, our communities, our state and our nation deserve more; in fact they deserve life.

Interfaith Action of SW Michigan remains committed to ending gun violence. We call on all elected officials and candidates to commit to reasonable and safe gun laws. We continue to collaborate with faith leaders and other organizations demanding the State Legislature hold hearings and votes on gun violence prevention proposals.

We offer prayers of peace and of action,

Vicki Schroeder

Lead Advisor, Interfaith Action of SW Mi

End Gun Violence Michigan

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

Shalom.

As a representative of Temple B’Nai Shalom, I support the efforts of Interfaith Action to reduce gun violence. Judaism sharply restricts the use of violence, and nonviolence often becomes the only way to fulfilling a life of truth, justice and peace, which Judaism considers to be the three tools for the preservation of the world.

The Talmud explains, "The entire Torah is for the sake of the ways of shalom". As such we as Jews are concerned about the gun violence and gun related deaths that are devastating our communities. We are a people of Shalom and we pray that peace will overcome the plague of gun violence.

Laura Kovnat

Temple B’Nai Shalom

As Muslims, we are encouraged to strive for peace and peaceful solutions to all problems. Our Faith calls us to work against violence in our community and we are concerned about the level of gun violence that is devastating our society. We support efforts to end gun deaths and appreciate Interfaith Actions work in gun violence reduction.

Imam Mustafa ElSayed

Islamic Association of SW Michigan

THE WITNESS OF HOLY BOOKS

(Scriptures Proclaiming Peace)

“All who live by the sword will die by the sword.” (*Matthew 26.52*)

“Be amongst the students of Aaron: Love peace and pursue peace. Love people and bring them close to Torah.” (*Pirkei Avot 1.12*)

“Without understanding, people become beasts and demons. [But] when one’s light merges into the Light, and one’s awareness is joined with Awareness, then one’s cruel and violent instincts and egotism depart; skepticism and sorrow are taken away.” (*Guru Granth Sahib*)

“Good and evil deeds are not alike. Repel evil with good, and he who is your enemy will become like a dear friend.” *Q’uran 41.34, surat “Fussilat”*)

“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” (*Psalms 34.14*)

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.”
(*Matthew 5.9*)

HOW CAN PEOPLE OF FAITH BE INVOLVED?

1. Pray for peace in our homes and our communities, and that we will end the horror of gun violence.
2. Open your worship space to be a gathering place immediately following a national mass shooting or one in your own community. Hold a Candlelight Vigil.
3. Deliver a sermon calling for faith-inspired action during your weekend worship service.
4. Organize a discussion exploring how faith's teachings compel believers to action on issues such as gun-violence reduction.
5. Organize a reading of the names of gun victims in your place of worship.
6. Research "Heeding God's Call", a faith-based campaign for gun-violence prevention: www.heedinggodscall.org
7. Write your US Congressional Representatives.
House- www.house.gov/representatives/find
Senate- www.senate.gov (*click state link in upper right corner*)
8. Let your local and state elected officials know that you are committed to gun violence reduction.
9. Educate families and youth about gun safety and storage.
10. Ask your local police to make a presentation on gun safety and gun violence prevention
11. Make your worship space a gun-free facility.
12. Participate in Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath (the first weekend in June) and encourage your community to **WEAR ORANGE**

OTHER GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION SABBATH IDEAS

1. Create bulletin inserts to announce Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath (or use the ones included in this kit.)
2. Encourage the congregation to wear orange as a message of support for the reduction of Gun Violence.
 - a. Orange t-shirts are readily available or special shirts can be ordered through <https://www.store.everytown.org/products/wear-orange>
 - b. Orange stoles for clergy are available through a number of sources; available inexpensively through Amazon.

Orange is the color that Hadiya Pendleton's friends wore in her honor when she was shot and killed in Chicago at the age of 15, just one week after performing at President Obama's second inaugural parade in 2013. After her death, they asked us to stand up, speak out, and wear orange to raise awareness about gun violence.

Since then, orange has been the defining color of the gun violence prevention movement. It is also the color for hunters, signifying "don't shoot me."

3. Use special prayers and/or liturgy on the Sabbath to remember those who have died due to shootings. (Prayers and liturgies are included in this packet)
4. Preach a sermon on God's love and the need to end this violence.

RESOURCES FOR FAITH COMMUNITY WORSHIP SERVICES

For those faith communities who will be commemorating Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath the weekend of June 3 - 5, the following are resources that can be used for worship services.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

An announcement for the bulletin that describes June 3 - 5 as Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath.

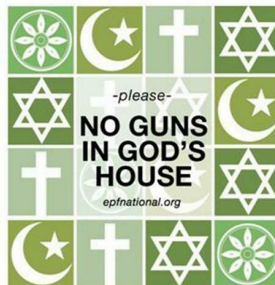
The first week of June is commemorated as Gun Violence Awareness Week; June 3- 5 is celebrated in faith communities around the US as Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath — a time to mourn those whose lives have been lost to gun violence and to recommit to building communities of peace and safety. We are including inserts that you may use each of the four weeks preceding June 3 - 5. These inserts contain messaging and prayers for gun violence reduction, and a reminder for everyone to wear orange on that day.

WEARING OF ORANGE

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. Lay persons often wear orange as well.

DOOR SIGNAGE

Gun Free Zone stickers for houses of worship are available for \$1/each from Episcopal Peace Fellowship or from Interfaith Action.



epfnational.org/store/

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

A Prayer for Gun Violence Reduction Sabbath:

O Creator 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 committing 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. 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. Amen.

Sample liturgies that can be used:

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. 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

(Adapted from a liturgy written by the Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane, former 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 Joseph, 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. (list names here)

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

MUSICAL OPTIONS

(Links to both songs are below. Both songs are in the public domain.)

- **God of Mercy You Have Shown Us**
 - <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/god-alone-lord-conscience/>
- **“If we just talk of thoughts and prayers”**
 - http://www.carolynshymns.com/when_people_die_by_hatred.html

CHRISTIAN SERMON CONCEPTS

For Christian liturgical churches, June 5th is Pentecost Sunday

Links to sermons on gun violence:

<https://rac.org/sermon-starters-gun-violence-prevention-rabbi-robert-nosanchuk>

<https://rac.org/sample-sermon-gun-violence-prevention-rabbi-lauren-grabelle-herrmann>

<https://interruptingthesilence.com/2018/02/19/the-wilderness-of-gun-violence-a-sermon-on-mark-19-15/>

<https://trinitycleveland.org/blog/2015/sermons/sermon-for-dec-6-2015-sermon-for-dec-13-2015-gun-violence-prevention-sabbath/>

<http://www.chriserdman.com/blog/2015/12/8/what-to-do-with-all-this-gun-violence-a-sermon>

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bulletin announcements are included for the 3 weekends before June 3 -5. They are formatted in orange and black as an example if you wish to use color. If you prefer to create your own insert(s), please feel free to do so. We ask you to share what you create with us.

For the May 13 - 15 bulletin:

Preparing for Gun Violence

Reduction Sabbath

Please remember to wear orange on June 3 - 5

A prayer of preparation for the Sabbath:

God of all mercy, who weeps with us as we anguish over lives broken and lost to the violence which so pains our community: Open our ears that we might hear their cries; open our eyes that we might see their fears; open our hearts that we might embrace them in love; and open our arms that we might protect them from all harm. Amen.*

**Courtesy of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri*

For the May 20 - 22 bulletin:

Preparing for Gun Violence

Reduction Sabbath

Please wear orange on June 3 - 5

In 2020 the leading cause of death for children and youth was gun violence. We need to reduce the deaths of our young people by reducing gun violence.

For detailed information on the Impact of Gun Violence in Michigan, the following 2022 report is an excellent analysis

www.americanprogress.org/article/the-impact-of-gun-violence-in-michigan/

For the May 27 - 29 bulletin:

Preparing for Gun Violence

Reduction Sabbath

Please wear orange on June 3 - 5

End Gun Violence Michigan, a coalition led by faith leaders and in which Interfaith Action participates as a member of its Steering Committee has the following priorities:

- Extend universal background checks from the current requirement for pistols to all firearms;
- Provide extreme risk protection orders for individuals determined by a judge to be of danger to themselves or others;
- Require safe storage of firearms when children are present in a home;
- Ban guns in government buildings.