

Annual Report of the Saving Lives, Ending Gun Violence Committee October 2024–September 2025

Saving Lives, Ending Gun Violence is a ministry including members from our diocese and beyond seeking to faithfully respond to the epidemic of gun violence in our nation and commonwealth. We meet quarterly via zoom to work together on areas of focus that include: prayer, advocacy, formation, liturgy and community outreach. *With One Voice: Faith Leaders United to End Gun Violence* is a group of interfaith leaders working together with Ceasefire PA to advocate for meaningful legislative change. We meet once a month via zoom.

Prayer Circle: Our prayer circle team faithfully prays for any individual or congregation impacted by gun violence. This ministry is led by Mr. Don Baldwin. If you would like to submit a name for prayer, please contact Don at dwbduke74@yahoo.com

Advocacy: Through the enactment of sensible and effective legislation, we believe Pennsylvania can take concrete steps to reduce the illegal trafficking of handguns and unsafe use of guns. We recognize that our Commonwealth is a place where many enjoy the recreational use of firearms through hunting, target shooting and gun clubs. We also recognize the choice of many to own handguns out of a sense of personal safety in their homes. Our advocacy ministry supports the key areas of legislative change as identified by the five Episcopal Bishops in their 2023 letter "With One Voice: Seeking Peace in Our Commonwealth" These key areas include: One Handgun A Month limitations Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) Prohibition on sales/possession of assault weapons and large-capacity ammunition magazines Prohibition on sales/possession of ghost guns. Advocacy efforts have included meetings with local legislators, letters to the editor and days of action organized at the Capitol, including an event on November 23rd that featured an interfaith prayer service and demonstration by Philly Raw Tools. Members supported a CeaseFire PA event at the Capital on April 6th that included an Interfaith prayer gathering led by Bishop Audrey. The Rev. Martha Harris serves as the chair of our advocacy ministry. She is also the convenor of "With One Voice", an Interfaith Coalition working with CeaseFire PA to advocate for an end to gun violence. If you would like to learn more or volunteer with this ministry, please email Rev. Martha at marthaharris314@gmail.com

Formation: We seek to support congregations in our diocese who would like to learn more about ending gun violence in PA. We have compiled resources and have leaders willing to offer presentations and help with formation efforts in congregations. Committee members have spoken with convocation convenors and at convocation meetings about these resources. On Sunday, October 28th of 2024, we hosted Diocesan-wide screening of the "Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting" documentary, to be held at St. Thomas, in Lancaster, St. Andrew's, in Lewisburg and Prince of Peace, Gettysburg. If you are interested in learning more or would like to receive materials to use in your congregation, please contact The Rev. Anne Flynn at flynnanner@gmail.com

The Rev. Martha Harris attended a gathering this year at the Presbyterian PeaceFellowship to network and learn more about advocacy efforts to end gun violence. In addition to forging valuable relationships, Rev. Martha returned with resources to share at the parish level. Please email Rev. Martha at marthaharris314@gmail.com

Liturgy: This group seeks to provide liturgical resources and support for worship services and community gatherings. They also provide a prayer to begin each of our meetings. An interfaith service to end gun violence was held last November at the Cathedral. If you are interested in learning more, email The Rev. Jennifer Mattson at jennifer.e.mattson@gmail.com

Community Outreach: Our committee supports local outreach efforts, including community events led by local survivors of gun violence such as the "Peace on the Streets" block party held every June in Lancaster and a Community Meal and Day of Remembrance in November. Community outreach efforts have also included displays of the "Memorial to the Lost", including a display at St. Luke's in Mount Joy and St. Thomas in Lancaster last fall. If you are interested in participating or learning more in hosting a display, please email Ms. Sue Heilman at heilmangirl@gmail.com

The Rev. Jennifer Mattson and Lindsey Martin, a local survivor of gun violence and advocate in Lancaster, are being trained as blacksmiths to create a newly formed local chapter of Raw Tools in Lancaster, under the direction and support of Philly Raw Tools and Colorado Raw Tools. They will be ready to take their travel forge for demonstrations later this year. Please contact The Rev. Jennifer Mattson for more information at jennife.e.mattson@gmail.com

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, November 8th, Community Meal and day of Peace at the Crispus Attacks Center in Lancaster, from 12-4 p.m.: Community Meal and Day of Peace, including demonstration from newly formed Lancaster Raw Tools. Contact The Rev. Jennifer Mattson for more information at jennife.e.mattson@gmail.com

Respectfully Submitted by,

The Rev. Jennifer Mattson
Co-Chair of "Saving Lives by Ending Gun Violence" and RAW Tools Lancaster faith leader

And

The Rev. Martha Harris
Advocacy Chair of "Saving Lives by Ending Gun Violence" and Clergy Convenor of "With One Voice: Faith Leaders United to End Gun Violence"