

Resources for Engaging in the National Vigil and December Sabbath

This December, people around the country are gathering to honor and remember those who have lost their lives to gun violence. It's important for us as a broader faith community to hold these lives in the light and show solidarity in the face of persistent gun violence. By engaging in the issue at our houses of worship and holding vigils we can help keep this issue front of mind and do not become numb to this violence or accept it as a new normal.

Below you'll find helpful resources for you and your house of worship to engage in gun violence prevention (GVP) events happening around the country. If you have any questions, please reach out to Andre Gobbo, Co-Chair of Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, at andre@fncnl.org.

National Vigil

The National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence will be happening on Dec. 4th, from 7-9 PM at the St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. The vigil was originally held on the anniversary of the Sandy Hook shooting and has since expanded to honor victims of all forms of gun violence.

If you can't make it to DC for the event, we encourage you to host a local vigil in your community. You can find more information about the National Vigil and how to host a local vigil below.

- Overview and general information about the National Vigil ([link](#))
- Toolkit on how to set up and host a local vigil ([link](#))
- How to register your local vigil with National Vigil ([link](#))
- If you would like to see a sample program for a previous vigil that was held, see [this example](#)

Note: your local vigil doesn't have to take place on the same day as the National Vigil. Feel free to host it at a time that works best for you and your community.

December Sabbath

If you are unable to attend the National Vigil and don't have the opportunity or means to host a local vigil, we ask that you lift up the issue of gun violence prevention during your house of worship's time of prayer over the weekend of December 12-15. Below you'll find a list of resources available to help you and your house of worship get started.

- Christianity
 - Sermons
 - Children's Sermon on Gun Violence Outline, adapted from "Walking Cheerfully", with special thanks to the Swarthmore United Methodist Church ([link](#))
 - Re-turning to God – The Rev. Sally Johnston of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (2015) ([link](#))
 - Get Out of the Gun Empire with Father Abraham – Dr. Linda Gaither, Courtesy of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (2014) ([link](#))
 - Hope Has Two Daughters: Anger & Courage – Rev. Shannan R. Vance-Ocampo, Courtesy of Justice Unbound and the Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church (2012) ([link](#))
 - Enough. Is. Enough – Rev. Lauren R. Stanley, Courtesy of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Staunton, VA (2012) ([link](#))

- Prayers & Readings
 - Prayer Against Gun Violence, courtesy of US Conference of Catholic Bishops ([link](#))
 - A Prayer for Relief from Gun Violence, courtesy of the Dorcas Chapter of the Daughters of the King, St. Luke's Episcopal Church ([link](#))
 - A Lament for a Culture of Gun Violence – Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld, Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, courtesy of the Franciscan Action Network (2018) ([link](#))
 - Prayer Service for Gun Violence Prevention, courtesy of the Franciscan Action Network ([link](#))
 - “For Too Long” – Rev. Jan Nunley, St. Peters Episcopal Church ([link](#))
- Hymns
 - A short list of Presbyterian hymns can be found here ([link](#)). If you would like to download more hymns, see here ([link](#))
- Other Resources
 - Liturgical resources – Bishops Against Gun Violence ([link](#))
 - Gun violence prevention resources – Presbyterian Church USA ([link](#))
 - Preventing gun violence – Mennonite Central Committee ([link](#))
 - Gun violence prevention resources – NC Council of Churches ([link](#))
 - God Not Guns worship guide – Brady Campaign ([link](#))
 - What your church can do about gun violence – Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America ([link](#))
- Judaism
 - Sermons
 - The Massacre Generation – Rabbi Seth M. Limmer (2019), courtesy of the Chicago Sinai Congregation ([link](#))
 - An Armed Amalek: Why We Must Not Stand Idly By – Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk (2012), Courtesy of Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple, OH ([link](#))
 - Yes, This Is A Sermon on Gun Control – Rabbi Audrey R. Korotkin (2012) ([link](#))
 - Prayers
 - Mourner's Kaddish ([link](#))
 - Echoes Prayer ([link](#))
 - Gun Shabbat Prayer, courtesy of Temple Micah in Washington, DC ([link](#))
 - A Time of Anxiety ([link](#))
 - A Prayer for Prayer ([link](#))
 - We Cannot Pray To You ([link](#))
 - Introductory Prayer ([link](#))
 - A Song for Courage ([link](#))
 - Bless Me with Courage ([link](#))
 - A Time of Disappointment ([link](#))
 - When Burdens are Too Heavy ([link](#))
 - Help Me, O God, In My Time of Need ([link](#))
 - When I am Lost ([link](#))
 - God, Make Me Brave for Life ([link](#))
 - Prayer for a Loss ([link](#))
 - Healing ([link](#))
 - Other resources
 - Shavuot Gun Violence Prevention Text Study, courtesy of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism ([link](#))
- Islam

- Prayers
 - Collection of Islamic Prayers for Peace ([link](#))
 - Prayers for Peace ([link](#))
- Unitarian Universalist
 - Sermons
 - Post-Las Vegas Sermon – Rev. David Miller (2018), courtesy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, Virginia ([link](#))
 - Politics of the Broken-Hearted – Rev. Dr. J. Carl Gregg (2012), courtesy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick, Maryland ([link](#))
 - Preventing Gun Violence – Rev. Dr. J. Carl Gregg (2013), courtesy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick, Maryland ([link](#))
- Buddhism
 - Prayers for peace ([link](#))
 - Gun Violence: It's Time For Us to Speak Out – Venerable Losang Samten (2013) ([link](#))

Other actions and event ideas

If you do lift up the issue of gun violence prevention in your house of worship, we hope that you consider urging members of your congregation to take action. Below you'll find a handful of sample actions that you can ask members of your house of worship to take.

- Postcard campaign
 - Have your house of worship write postcards asking their members of Congress to take action on this issue. Sample language can be found below
- Write an op-ed or LTE
 - A great way to draw attention to an issue is writing about it for your local media outlets. Be sure to mention your member of Congress by name – many Congressional offices pay attention when their names are mentioned in local media outlets
- Voter registration drive
 - Organizers of the National Vigil are asking anyone who hosts a local vigil to include a voter registration drive at their service. Check your local rules and regulations about how to set this up.
- Hold a separate event other than a local vigil. Some ideas include:
 - Shoes we can never fill – provide a visual of empty shoes or clothes on a clothesline outside of your place of worship and invite the media
 - Points of Light – light tealight candles depicting the number of people who have been lost to gun violence since Newtown or light candles representing the number of local gun violence victims.
 - Fasting for Action – have a continuous 2,000 hour fast (12 weeks) where people commit to fasting for one day outside their elected officials' office for gun violence victims.
 - Acts of Kindness – perform a specific number of acts of kindness to honor the number lost to gun violence in your community since Newtown.

Helpful language & messaging

If you plan on reaching out to members of Congress (either directly through writing or calling, or indirectly via an event or the media), feel free to use the below resources to inform your language and messaging.

- Background checks
 - If you are lobbying or visiting the office of your member of Congress, feel free to use this leave-behind: ([link](#))
 - If you'd like to write a letter or postcard to your member of Congress, feel free to use this as a template: ([link](#))
 - If you would like to include a bulletin during your congregation's service, you can use this as a template: ([link](#))

- Extreme Risk Protection Orders
 - If you are lobbying or visiting the office of your member of Congress, feel free to use this leave-behind: ([link](#))
 - If you'd like to write a letter or postcard to your member of Congress, feel free to use this as a template: ([link](#))