



Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

February 14, 2023

Dearest Siblings in Christ:

We are regularly confronted with news of the mass shooting of our children in schools and college campuses all over the country. Even so, we dare hope that we won't be the parents, the communities, the congregations, or the presbyteries that are touched by the tragedy of gun violence in our midst. But here we are. We are sick! We are angry! But mostly, we are heartbroken for the families whose children were shot and killed or injured during the mass shooting at Michigan State University.

Within the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, congregations, pastors, and families from our western-most to our eastern-most borders were directly impacted by this senseless violence. Our hearts go out to you. We hold you in deepest love and prayer.

We pray first for the families and loved ones who have lost their precious children. May God's Presence of comfort and strength abide with you as you walk through the coming days.

We pray for the children who were shot, some still struggling for their very lives. May God's Presence of healing strengthen your bodies; may God's Presence of wisdom surround your caregivers; may God's Presence of hope be your constant companion.

We pray for the children whose lives have been forever changed by the sound of gunshots, the sight of their dead or injured friends, and the fear of huddling in dark, locked rooms praying they would not be next. May God restore to you some sense of safety and well-being.

We pray for the parents and families living each day in fear when their children leave the house, knowing by experience that their children are not safe – not knowing if their children will return alive. May God give you patience and perseverance to live through those dreaded hours.

We pray for chaplains, pastors, and congregations who are working through their own losses and fears to provide pastoral care and support to their members and communities. We are here to offer strength, comfort, and support.

Please be assured that the prayers we offer are not idle prayers offered in passing platitudes. Our prayers are offered with a commitment and call to action to end gun violence in our schools and communities.

To all of us grieving so many losses - loss of life, loss of a sense of security, loss of peace - Scripture reminds us over and over again that God is with us. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). May God's strength and mercy sustain us all.

In the name of Christ, who offers peace beyond our understanding,

Rev. Fran. Lane-Lawrence
Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk

Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Associate Presbyter

Gun Violence Resources

PCUSA Gun Violence Policies, Studies, and Resources

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/gun-violence-resources/>

Wagner, Kimberly R., *Fractured Ground*. And <https://www.preachingandtrauma.com/>

PDA Planning and Training

Free Online Courses:

- **FEMA: Independent Study 360 - Planning for Mass Casualty Incidents: A Guide for Schools, Higher Education and Houses of Worship.** Provides leading practices and resources for preparing for and responding to mass casualty incidents. Also includes a Quick Reference Guide on Violence in Houses of Worship.
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-360>
- **FEMA: Independent Study 907 - Active Shooter - What You Can Do.** Provides non-law enforcement individuals with recommended actions should they be confronted with an active shooter situation. <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-907>
- **DHS Webpage: Active Shooter: How to Respond.** Provides fact sheets for private citizens, HR professionals, Active Shooter Workshop participants and First Responders. Also provides links to videos on Active Shooter planning. <https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>
- **Mitigating Attacks on Houses of Worship Security Guide:** A DHS Guidebook for both thinking about the security of Houses of Worship and achieving a security plan best suited to the unique circumstances of every community.
<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/mitigating-attacks-houses-worship-security-guide>
- **Armed Intruder Best Practices Video:** Church Mutual Insurance partnered with Alice Training Institute, experts in active shooter civilian response, to create a Best Practices Video and Armed Intruder Resources Kit. <https://www.churchmutual.com/6421/Armed-Intruder>
- **Houses of Worship Security Self-Assessment:** A CISA-developed baseline security self-assessment tool designed for persons with little to no security experience.
<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/houses-worship-security-self-assessment>