

# STANDING OUR HOLY GROUND

A YEAR-LONG LOOK AT **GUN VIOLENCE** & WHAT THE FAITH COMMUNITY CAN DO ABOUT IT

## Study Guide

**One Step at a Time: The Trauma Recovery and Rebuilding Process in the Wake of Gun Violence**

### Timestamps

#### **Opening Remarks**

[1:06](#) - Common Understandings

#### **Panelist Presentations**

[3:41](#) – Cece Armstrong, Pastor, Charleston, South Carolina

[13:32](#) – Jim Kirk, Associate for Disaster Response (U.S.), [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#)

[29:38](#) - Bruce Wismer, Pastor, Sarasota, FL

[43:52](#) - Kathy Riley, Associate for Emotional and Spiritual Care, [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#)

#### **Q&A**

[50:10](#) – Is it possible for a community that has experienced gun violence to experience re-traumatization? What causes this? Is the cycle of trauma different for communities experiencing gun violence for the first time compared to communities that regularly experience it?

[53:59](#) – How long does Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) stay present through a trauma? Does PDA come back to assist a community even long after an incident of gun violence?

[59:53](#) – How does the work of Sandy Hook Promise intersect with churches trying to prevent gun violence?

### **Helpful References**

[Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Trauma Pastoral Care Series \(Training Videos\)](#)

[Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#)

[Presbyterian Peace Fellowship](#)

[Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters: A Guide for Pastors and Congregations after Violence and Trauma](#)  
[Standing Our Holy Ground Webinar Series](#)



## General Questions

1. How did this webinar engage your **mind**? What thoughts came to mind as you heard from the panelists?
2. How did this webinar engage your **heart**? What emotions and feelings did you experience while hearing from the panelists?
3. How did this webinar speak to your **soul**? What spiritual wonderings emerged while listening to the panelists?

## Guided Questions

1. CeCe Armstrong describes the importance of recognizing that God called her to a role in the aftermath of the shooting at Emmanuel AME Church, reflecting on the story in Mark 2: 1-4. What role is God calling you to play in addressing gun violence and/or trauma? Using the roles described in Mark, are you called to be an intervener, a strategist, a carpenter, or a supporter?
2. Are leaders in your congregation equipped to offer spiritual and emotional care for human-caused disasters such as gun violence? If so, what kinds of lessons have they learned about walking alongside people in their trauma journey? If not, why isn't the leadership equipped to offer this type of care?
3. In describing the phases of human-caused disaster response, Bruce Wismer notes that people's journey with trauma is not a "fixed" path. People can be in one phase one day and in another phase the next. What kinds of challenges does this pose for pastoral/community leaders and disaster responders in trying to accompany people in their journey with trauma after incidents of gun violence?
4. Jim Kirk describes how human-caused disasters, such as a mass shooting, affect everyone across the country, particularly due to media exposure. CeCe Armstrong stated "*the biggest danger is not to address it*" or to just gloss over it. When such events occur, does your congregational leadership give voice to it or mention it in sermons and church gatherings? How do they empower you to use your gifts to take action?
5. The panelists describe the need to remember incidents of gun violence, such as mass shootings. However, for people who were involved in these events, remembering is like "re-opening a wound." How do you think we can hold ourselves accountable to remember such events, while also respecting victims and survivors so they are not re-traumatized?
6. Jim Kirk and Kathy Riley state that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) does not simply "show up" to help after an incident of gun violence. They look to be invited in by the local mid-council or Presbytery and to have a specific role that PDA can play in the trauma recovery process, often to "*provide care for the caregivers, help the helpers and support the local leaders.*" Why do you think it is important to have an invitation? Have you seen instances where organizations just show up after a disaster, without proper invitation and consultation with the local leaders?

