

# STANDING OUR HOLY GROUND

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

## Study Guide

### What Churches Can Do to Address Gun Violence - Active & Creative Strategies

#### Timestamps

##### Opening Remarks

[1:16](#) - Common Understandings

##### Panelist Presentations

0:52 - Margery Rossi, pastor & chair of Presbyterian Peace Fellowship's [Gun Violence Prevention Working Group](#)

[4:29](#) - Bryan Miller, Director, [Heeding God's Call Against Gun Violence](#)

[15:25](#) - Roy Howard, pastor, Bethesda, Maryland

[25:02](#) - Cornelius Scott, Executive Director, [Family Survivor Network](#)

##### Q&A

[40:20](#) – Did the efforts of Roy Howard's congregation in response to the Sandy Hook shooting make a difference? If so, how?

[41:50](#) – How should a congregation identify and engage organizations/partners already engaged in gun violence prevention work? How does a congregation identify the gifts of its members to best be able to raise its voice amidst the larger gun violence prevention picture?

#### Helpful References

[Jesus and the Disinherited by Howard Thurman](#)

[Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#)

[Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Gun Violence Prevention Toolkit](#)

[Gun Violence Prevention overture for 224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly \(2020\)](#)

[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. Roy Howard emphasizes the role of a congregation's leadership team in getting the congregation involved in gun violence prevention work. Does your congregation have support at the leadership level for such work? Why or why not? If not, is it because of division and people not wanting "to bring something that's difficult to talk about into their lives?"
2. Roy Howard states, "*It's crucial to have a congregation-wide sense of mission about this work, a missional sense of calling about it because without that it's very easy to get stuck and find yourself in constant division.*" Has your congregation considered gun violence prevention as mission work or with a missional sense of calling? Does viewing this work as "mission work" change how you perceive and address the issue?
3. One challenge the panelists discuss is measuring the "effectiveness" of gun violence prevention efforts. They note that getting people to change how they vote is not the only definition of success. There is value in the process itself as well. For example, Roy Howard stated that for his congregation, the process of learning, organizing, and enacting such efforts changed how his congregation thinks about gun violence. Bryan Miller noted that because of the educational and awareness work of Heeding God's Call and their partners, practically everyone in Philadelphia is now aware of the illegal gun market. Bearing these perspectives in mind, what would be the definition of effectiveness or success for your congregation's efforts? How could such success be outlined in your goals?
4. Corneilius Scott emphasized a "from-the-ground-up" approach to addressing gun violence. His solutions focused on understanding the trauma and social-emotional circumstances each individual and community faces and providing anger management and conflict resolution training at a young age and in college. If everyone received anger management and conflict resolution training, how do you think it would affect decision-making in a tense situation? What types of policies would our leaders promote if they received this training early in their lives? How can your congregation help administer or support such training?
5. Margery Rossi states that gun violence prevention work "*is not something that you need to be an expert about. If you have a compassionate heart, if you feel there is something wrong with having 40,000 people a year die by guns, that is enough to give you a platform to do something about it.*" After hearing from Margery and the other panelists, what do you think are ways your congregation can take action to prevent gun violence? Would you start by creating a plan and getting the session on board, or would you conduct a discernment process to identify your congregation's calling?

