



*Bishop Teresa Snorton, President
Mr. Abraham Wright, Vice President
The Reverend Hermann Weinlick Secretary
The Reverend Karen Georgia Thompson, Treasurer*

Churches Uniting in Christ

Churches Uniting in Christ's (CUIC) Gun Violence and Mass Shootings

As has happened too many times, the Body of Christ weeps over another evil act that has taken lives of 58 souls, as well as the life of the assailant in yet another mass shooting. This time, it was during an outdoor music festival attended by over 20,000 people in Las Vegas, Nevada. The impact is felt across our churches, schools, and workplaces. The shockwaves have been felt around the World, as the global community grieves the loss of so many lives.

To those lives lost, may God grant them eternal rest. To their families, we mourn with you and pray for your well-being. We also extend our compassion and prayers to the family of the assailant, for they are suffering too. We are deeply grateful for the police officers, first responders, medical care personnel, pastors and chaplains who are providing aid and assistance to victims and their families and friends.

Churches Uniting in Christ, in an unwavering, collective voice, call out to all our elected officials, once again, to enact sensible gun control laws in light of several high-profile shootings. During the eight-day period, beginning, on September 24, began with a church shooting at Burnette Church of Christ in Antioch, Tennessee and ended in two mass casualty shootings, the first in Lawrence, Kansas in which three people were killed and two injured and the horrific violence in Las Vegas which has left over 50 dead and hundreds injured. During this eight-day period over 62 people have been killed and well over 500 injured in eleven separate mass shootings (<http://www.gunviolencearchive.org/reports/mass-shooting>).

It is not enough to decry violence. The Church must take action, not only through its leadership, but at all levels, including the pulpits and the pews of our local congregations. That action must take several forms, including but not limited to, direct contact with elected officials, educating local communities and congregations on gun safety and gun control legislation, pastoral care for those who have been victimized by gun violence, and allaying the fears that such violence brings to our communities.

Previous mass shootings have resulted in talk about gun control legislation but have yielded little to nothing being done to keep guns out of the hands of those who turn to such acts as witnessed at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida and the Route 91 Music Festival in Las Vegas, Nevada. The eleven communions in a relationship through Churches Uniting in Christ represent approximately 20 million Christian congregants who can offer a voice loud enough for Congress, gun manufacturers, gun retailers, and gun owners to hear. That unified voice should be saying "Enough is enough."

We ask that the social justice arms of our eleven communions make resources available to the local churches to use in educating our pastors, staff, congregants, and communities about the sin of remaining silent in the face of the evil of gun violence. We ask that our middle judicatory leaders take up the issues of gun violence and gun



Bishop Teresa Snorton, President
Mr. Abraham Wright, Vice President
The Reverend Hermann Weinlick Secretary
The Reverend Karen Georgia Thompson, Treasurer

Churches Uniting in Christ

control in an effort to provide support, as well as a platform, to those in our communities speaking out on issues involving gun violence.

Additionally, one cannot separate the issue of gun violence from the issue of mental health care. The abysmal state of mental health care in this country has a direct correlation to gun violence. We must encourage those in our pews who recognize those around them who suffer mental health issues to seek mental health care. Additionally, we should not fear to recommend that family members remove access to weapons from those who suffer severe mental health issues. Where the laws of our country have failed the church must step in and encourage the followers of Christ to do what is right.

As we have stated before and reiterated today, we pledge our houses of worship as spaces in which comfort for the grieving and spiritual and moral support can be found where the rhetoric of hate has no place. We also recommit ourselves to ministries of reconciliation and justice in our city streets – for we believe that “God is in the midst of the city” (Psalm 46:5a).

May it be so.

Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton
President, CUIC

Mr. Vince Gonzales
Chair, Racial and Social
Justice Task Force

Rev. Michael R. Fisher, Jr.
Chair, Young Adult
Task Force

Mr. Abraham Wright
Vice President, CUIC

Rev. Hermann Weinlick
Secretary, CUIC

Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson
Treasurer, CUIC

Churches Uniting in Christ is a covenant relationship among eleven Christian communions that have pledged to live more closely together in expressing their unity in Christ and combating racism together. The member churches of CUIC include the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church, the International Council of Community Churches, the Moravian Church (Northern Province), the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ and The United Methodist Church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a partner in mission and dialogue. For more information, please visit our website at www.churchesunitinginchrist.org