



STATEMENT ON GUN VIOLENCE FOLLOWING THE SCHOOL SHOOTING IN UVALDE, TEXAS

May 24, 2022

Today our nation watched in horror as yet another mass shooting claimed the lives of 21 souls. Tragically, 18 of those killed are elementary school students. Our hearts are broken for the lives lost as we stand alongside the grieving.

This massacre follows recent mass shootings in Milwaukie, Buffalo, Palo Alto, Dallas, Laguna Woods Chicago, and more (44 in May alone). Why is there is a mass shooting nearly every day in this county? We ask this as echoes of the Psalmist ring in our heads, "How long, O Lord?"

The United States of America stands alone when it comes to gun violence. These types of shootings simply do not happen in other countries, let alone with such frequency. Since 2009, a gun has been fired on school grounds in the United States 288 times. The next closest country is Mexico with eight.

Something is wrong in our country; most anyone can recognize it. Yet we live in a country where elected officials refuse to take even modest steps to protect the vulnerable. How many more children must die before these elected officials take urgent action? We implore them to do so now. Their "thoughts and prayers" ring ever so hollow and reinforce their cowardice.

Because the all too predictable pattern of outrage and shock has become not only tedious but morally inadequate, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon invites immediate action by supporting the work of Lift Every Voice Oregon (LEVO). Through LEVO, people of faith and good will can pursue with expediency IP17–Reduction of Gun Violence Act.

IP17 is a ballot initiative petition that will reduce gun violence by making gun owners more accountable and ammunition less lethal. IP17 needs signatures by the end of June to qualify for the ballot. Sign the petition at lifteveryvoiceoregon.com.

At least for Oregon, we can make a difference. May we turn our sorrow into hope and actions that will assure the day when gun violence is no longer an everyday occurrence.