

FPC Gun Safety Workgroup of the Social Witness Ministry  
Proposed Mission/Vision Statement  
Approved by the Social Witness Ministry on August 1, 2024  
Blessed by Session on August 27, 2024

## Background

In 2010, The Presbyterian Church (USA) adopted *“Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call.”* Since that time, the epidemic of gun violence has continued unabated and, in fact, has intensified and worsened. The 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 2022 declared that it is time for the PC (USA) to reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to be an active and prophetic leader in the national movement to end gun violence. Then in 2024, the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly **“Called upon every congregation in the PC(USA) to take some specific action of love and responsibility for children as part of the movement to prevent gun violence, understanding that taking any action collectively as a church is a witness of what it means to be united in Christ.”**

Reference: <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001228>

**Note:** The PC (USA) and the FPC workgroup have noted that this is not an “anti-gun” action, but a call for a Christ-like response to the epidemic of gun violence throughout our nation.

In accordance with this call from PC(USA), the FPC Gun Safety Workgroup proposes the following:

## Vision Statement

With the help of God, and in response to Micah 6:8, we envision a society where responsible gun ownership and comprehensive safety measures lead to a significant reduction in gun-related incidents. Our goal is to cultivate an informed and engaged community that prioritizes safety and respect for firearms. By fostering partnerships and advocating for effective policies, we strive to create a future where every individual can live in a safe and secure environment, free from the threat of gun violence. Through our efforts, we aim to inspire lasting change and build a legacy of safety for generations to come.

## Mission Statement

In response to the PC (USA)’s Call to Action, our mission is to promote responsible gun ownership, enhance public safety, and prevent gun violence, especially towards children, through education, advocacy, and community engagement. We are committed to fostering a culture of safety and respect for firearms, ensuring that all individuals understand and follow best practices for gun storage and usage. By working collaboratively with policymakers, educators, law enforcement, and the community, we

aim to create a safer environment for everyone. Our goal is to save lives and reduce the impact of gun violence through proactive measures and informed dialogue.

Here is a link to **Overture** DOE -03 from the Presbytery of Chicago, which passed unanimously in July, 2024.

<https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001228>.

### **The General Assembly's Action Suggestions and Options for Congregations:**

**(Note:** The FPC Gun Safety Workgroup is planning several educational programs for our congregation in the year ahead in response to these suggested actions.)

**1. Actively support and pray for the emotional, spiritual and mental health needs of children** as they grow up in an era of school lockdowns, active shooter drills and near-daily news of gun violence.

**2. Promote Secure Gun Storage** - Churches of the PC(USA) can share information about the Be SMART for Kids campaign, which provides strategies and resources to protect children from unintentional firearm injury and death. Congregations are gifted at sharing safety information in their communities, which can include life-saving information on the importance of secure gun storage in every home where there is a gun. Congregations can offer free or low cost gun locks to church members, neighbors and others, and encourage schools to send secure gun storage information home in backpacks for parents.

**3. Encourage Parents and Caregivers to Take Gun Safety Action** - Embolden parents and caretakers to always ask if there is a gun in a home and how it is stored before sending children to play in other homes. Churches can provide parents and caretakers with guidance on how to talk to children and adolescents about what to do if they discover unsecured guns and what to do if they know of a gun that has been brought to school, church or another gathering.

**4. End Gun Marketing to Children** - Congregations can monitor and advocate with their retail stores to stop the "normalization" of firearms that happens in the mind of a child when guns are advertised to appeal directly to children and displayed in stores where children may see them. This includes the need for retailers to refrain from including toy guns in Easter baskets, Christmas displays and other ways that train children to acclimate to the presence of guns, such as the promotion of the youth- sized JR-15.

**5. Promote Gun Security Technology** - Learn about and advocate for wide-spread use of existing technology that allows a gun to be fired only by the owner, preventing unintentional shootings, deterring gun theft and preventing youth and child suicide. Promote the use of biometric locks for secure gun storage, limiting access to the gun owner.

**6. Act for Change** - Demonstrate to children that adults will act to protect them from gun violence: Participate in efforts such as Be SMART for Kids, Guns to Gardens, Violence Interruption Programs; support youth-led gun violence prevention organizations, and gun violence survivors and their families; engage in advocacy with elected officials for gun-sense regulation such as comprehensive background checks, a ban on the future sale of semiautomatic assault weapons and raising the age for gun purchases to 21 or older. Where appropriate, involve children, teens and youth in these efforts.

**7. Vote** - As citizens, parents and grandparents, prayerfully prioritize the lives of America's children in determining how to cast our individual votes in local, state and national elections.

### **FPC Social Witness Ministry**

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