

The Diocese of Missouri's Ministry of Gun Violence Prevention seeks to equip members of the Diocese to advocate policies that promote gun safety on the local and state level while offering opportunities for formation and education on the impact of gun violence on communities. The Ministry also invites members of the Diocese to gather in vigil to honor those who have been lost to gun violence as well as promote visibility through the yearly Wear Orange Sunday events.

In the past year, the Gun Violence Prevention Ministry has:

- Recruited members at 19 parishes to serve as representatives to the Gun Violence Prevention Mission Team
- Created a document outlining the roles and responsibilities of Parish Representatives
- Held monthly Zoom meetings of those parish reps to talk about action that needs to be taken in support of gun violence prevention
- Engaged members at 14 parishes to send letters to the Speaker of the Missouri House and President of the Missouri Senate regarding gun-safety legislation
- Coordinated with MOMS Demand Action on legislative activity and followed their lead on actions to be taken
- Used Voter Voice to create 5 action alerts on pressing legislative matters regarding gun violence prevention
- Organized a Holy Week call-in week to coincide with the statewide gun violence prevention lobby day (which occurred during Holy Week, limiting our availability for in-person attendance)
- Worked with parish representatives to share resources from the Vote Faithfully campaign with their churches.
- Organized a Diocesan-wide, "Wear Orange" Sunday, recognizing victims of gun violence, while providing promotional and liturgical materials to parishes.
- Brought the BeSMART presentation to 19 parishes in the Diocese, educating members in safe storage practices to protect children from guns.
- Brought the BeSMART table and materials to several community events around the Diocese, promoting the message of gun safety in a non-partisan capacity
- Held an Ecumenical Service of Lament at Trinity

The challenges of Gun Violence Prevention tend to be overcoming the idea that this is merely a political problem. While policy is certainly a part of what this ministry strives to change, we encourage every member of the Diocese to reflect upon what they were doing to "beat swords into plowshares" and promote Christ's message of non-violence. Prayer and education walk hand-in-hand with voting, especially in this election year.

In addition to repeating some of our more successful endeavors listed above, we have three additional goals to accomplish next year. In bold, you will find ways that YOU can HELP the Ministry of Gun Violence Prevention work toward a more peaceable kingdom in the Diocese of MO.

- Invite the Diocese to attend an Interfaith Service of Lament in early 2025 at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Creve Coeur. **Please be on the lookout for the date announcement and plan on attending this special service.**

- Present BeSMART at any parish that has yet to schedule a presentation, so every member of the Diocese is exposed to this life saving program. **Please let us know if your parish would like to host a presentation. And please attend the presentation when it's at your church!**
- Continue to have face-to-face meetings with lawmakers, where we can continue to promote common sense gun laws. **Please sign up for Voter Voice on the Diocesan website so you can reach out to your lawmakers in support of safe policies.**

If you are interested in serving as a Representative for your church as a GVP Parish Representative, or you would like to know more, please contact one of our Missioners:

The Rev. Meghan Ryan - Liturgy and Lament (meghan@saint-tims.org)
 Jeff Wunrow - Advocacy (jeff@jeffwunrow.com)
 Janet Hyde - Education, including BeSMART (jshyde@wisc.edu)

GVP Parish Representatives

Albert Morrow
 Angela Ferree
 Betty Bowersox
 Bill Wallace
 Diane Chalberg
 Donna Bernert
 Eleanor McCune
 Florrie Kohn
 Greg Barnett
 Lore Gross

Janet Hyde
 John Richards
 Lisann Backsmeyer
 Machel West
 Mimi Shipp
 Sally Boyd
 Sally Weaver
 Tony Simones
 Tricia Daughaday
 Pat O'Brien