

The following resolution was approved by the delegates at a plenary of the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, held in Indianapolis June 30-July 4, 2023.

**AFFIRMING GUNS TO GARDENS AND OTHER GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION MINISTRIES**

**A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** there is an absence of federal action on gun control and safety; and

**WHEREAS** we are called to co-create with the Holy Spirit the kingdom of God in this world – a kingdom of peace and justice and care; and

**WHEREAS** there is an opportunity for individual congregations, associations and conferences to provide practical, pastoral and prophetic ministry related to preventing gun violence;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares the time has come for us all – individuals, congregations, associations, and conferences– to actively promote peace and engage in efforts to end gun violence;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ implores all United Church of Christ individuals, congregations, associations and conferences to pray for peace and for an end to these horrific acts of violence, and to let our prayers move us to meaningful action;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we give thanks, pray for, and commend the congregations and organizations that have participated in gun violence prevention programs such as the Guns to Gardens project as a way to responsibly dispose of unwanted firearms;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on individuals, congregations, associations, and conferences in the United Church of Christ to learn about the Guns to Gardens project and prayerfully consider if it is a ministry to which they are called as part of our witness to prevent gun violence, save lives, and provide healing for a nation traumatized by violence;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on congregations, associations, and conferences in the United Church of Christ to prayerfully consider joining the Guns to Gardens movement,<sup>1</sup> and to host safe surrender events for unwanted guns to be dismantled according to rules of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on congregations, associations, and conferences in the United Church of Christ to prayerfully consider hosting events to give away gun safes and/or locks to promote safe storage of firearms to prevent unauthorized use and accidental use; and

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**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ asks Justice and Local Church Ministries to compile and share materials from existing gun violence prevention ministries to assist UCC congregations with guidance in offering gun violence prevention ministries.

**FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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<sup>1</sup> The copyright for “Guns to Gardens” is held by New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence. They have given free use of this title to Congregations and other church bodies. The founding organization for the Guns to Gardens movement is Rawtools, a ministry based in Colorado and led by Michael Martin, a former Mennonite pastor-turned-blacksmith. RAWtools provides logistical support and safe training on how to use a chop saw. Their national network of blacksmiths forges leftover gun parts into garden tools. Website – Rawtools.org

For further information about Guns to Gardens: Watch the UCC Thursdays for the Soul Video - Shared Learning from Gun Violence Ministries - <https://youtu.be/Nmklnzilc4k>