

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON  
GUN SAFETY STATEMENT  
Approved October 7, 2018

In Response To School and Community Violence

Grace Lutheran Church, Port Townsend, Washington, is a community of Christians dedicated to following Jesus' teaching and example. We are horrified by firearms used to murder our children and other innocent people. In a document responding to community violence in 1994, the Church Council of the ELCA states, "In the face of violence, God's resolve for peace in human communities is unshakable. Deliberate acts to harm or kill innocent people violate God's intention for human community. God's commandment is, 'You shall not murder,' (Ex.20:13). In proclaiming God's law, we declare that people are accountable before God and the community to honor and respect the life God has given." Further, a social statement made by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, entitled, "For peace in God's World" (1995), offered concrete implementation actions "To call upon members and leaders of this church to support our youth in their struggle to define their identity and vocation as present and future peacemakers." These messages are as relevant today as when they were adopted in 1994 and 1995.

We believe this calls us to advocate for the life and safety of all God's people, even in the face of complex political issues, for silence – a failure to speak out – can be seen as acceptance of our current horrors. We seek in this Statement to reject that silence and to affirm the right to life for our children.

Given the above understandings, Grace Lutheran Church commits to promote policies, practices, and laws that:

1. Allow the sale of firearms only to individuals over the age of 21.
2. Ban civilian sales of assault-type weapons, high capacity magazines, armor piercing ammunition, bump stocks, and other modifications that increase the rate and volume of fire.
3. Provide background checks for all firearm purchases, waiting periods and requirements for mandatory gun safety training.

The pastor and Synod Assembly representatives shall present these issues and concerns in the form of resolutions and memorials at the Synod Assembly.