

WITNESS for JUSTICE

A weekly commentary from
the United Church of Christ

Issue #770 | January 4, 2016

Enough is enough

by Bentley de Bardelaben
Executive for Administration and Communications

The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger." At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him." - Luke 2:11-14

This is the time of year when many people are more likely to extend love, peace, and grace to others. In this "season of giving," we stand with and not against our brothers and sisters. It is a very special time, especially for the young or young at heart!

Unfortunately this is not the case for all. December 14, 2015, marked the third anniversary of the 20 innocent children and six staff who were slaughtered at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Horrifyingly, since that unimaginable day, there have been at least 555 children under 12 who have died from gunshots, intentionally and unintentionally. That is nearly one child killed by a gun every other day since Sandy Hook.

Well, enough is enough!! As Americans, are we going to continue to allow the ongoing slaughter of innocents? We have the power to demand better policies from our politicians. Technically, they are there to represent and serve the interests of "all" the people. Not merely the ones with the deepest pockets or loudest voices. (And certainly not just the ones given voice by the U.S. Supreme Court when it declared corporations were people in 2012.)

We have a civic responsibility to care for those in our communities who are most vulnerable. Certainly, we can all agree that children fall into that category. I recognize that discussing gun control does incite passion from all sides of the debate. Yes, there are important nuances to acknowledge when

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



discussing this subject, i.e. who is inflicting violence on whom, what type(s) of firearms are involved, and issues of mental health. Nevertheless, “kicking the proverbial can down the road” potentially allows for more innocent children to be harmed.

I began this piece invoking the spirit of the Christ child and the goodwill that befalls many of us at this time of year. What a different society we might have if we took seriously the message that “God was born in human form.” How can we fail to look into the face of a newborn babe and not smile in our hearts. Innately, we experience a deeply profound sense of joy and love while holding a babe in our arms.

Drawing upon our ideals as citizens of this great republic and as people of faith tasked with caring for the vulnerable, I believe we can and must do something about the frequent mass shootings occurring in the United States of North America. Time is of the essence! We can do it. However, we must possess the will to do it. It will not be easy. Still, let us pledge to work to end this mass carnage of children, and adults, in the New Year.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bentley de Bardelaben is Executive for Administration and Communications.

LEARN

ucc.org/justice

DONATE

bit.ly/jwmnin

ARCHIVE

WJ_f

bit.ly/witness4justice

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.