

Statement of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church

Camp Allen, Texas

March 7, 2018

1 “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you
2 life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your
3 descendants may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:19)

4
5 At this critical moment young people of the United States are inviting us to turn away from the
6 nightmare of gun violence to the dream of choosing life. The young people of Parkland, Florida
7 are calling for elected officials to:

- 8 • ban the sale of assault weapons
- 9 • prohibit the sale of high capacity magazines
- 10 • close loopholes in background checks¹

11 Others are seeking to:

- 12 • ban the sale of bump stocks
- 13 • raise the age to 21 years to purchase firearms
- 14 • challenge the National Rifle Association to support safe gun legislation.

15
16 We, the bishops of The Episcopal Church, wholeheartedly support and join with the youth in
17 this call to action.

18
19 At the same time, we acknowledge that black and brown youth have continuously challenged
20 the United States to address the gun violence that they and their communities are
21 experiencing. We repent that, as bishops, we have failed to heed their call.

22
23 As bishops we commit to following the youth of the United States in their prophetic leadership.
24 To that end we will observe a day of Lament and Action on March 14th, one month to the day
25 after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.² We pledge ourselves, and we
26 invite our dioceses, to participate in the “March for our Lives” on March 24 in Washington DC
27 and in cities and towns across the United States. We recognize the urgency of this moment and
28 we recommit to working for safe gun legislation as our church has called for in multiple General
29 Convention resolutions.³ In addition, we pledge ourselves to bring the values of the gospel to
30 bear on a society that increasingly glorifies violence and trivializes the sacredness of every
31 human life.

32
33 We will walk with the youth of the United States today and into the future in choosing life.

¹ <https://marchforourlivespetition.com>

² Bishops United Against Gun Violence: <http://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org>

³ https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_topic_search.pl?topic=Gun+Control