

GUN-SENSE: FOR THE COMMON GOOD

MISSION/VISION STATEMENT:

St. Margaret of Scotland (SMOS) has formed Gun Sense: For the Common Good - with a vision to form a coalition of faith-based organizations joining together with the mission to reduce gun violence and the subsequent destruction of human life in the City of St. Louis. Formed under the SMOS Living Justice Ministry, the goal is to create a united voice by partnering with fellow Archdiocesan parishes, other religious congregations, and faith-based organizations, local government and social service agencies to raise awareness of gun-violence as a public-health crisis and replace the cycle of violence with a culture of care and safety in our neighborhoods.

CHARTER:

In 2020, nearly 90% of the 262 homicides in the City of St. Louis were committed with a gun and the homicide rate was 16 times higher than the national average. Just a year later, St. Louis City saw a 25% decrease in homicides and shootings because of programs such as *Cure Violence* and *Cops and Clinicians*. In 2022, a decrease continues but gun-related violence cannot be allowed to become normalized as the City records 87 shootings of children (under 17 years of age) with 22 of those resulting in death as of October 1, 2022. (Data published September 2022)

Violence in our city devastates the lives of families, friends, neighbors, and impacts those of us who have no personal connection with the victims. No one is left untouched because all of us are brothers and sisters.

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish seeks to collaborate with faith based communities and other local groups to be a beacon of hope and change by by:

1. **CONFRONTING** the issue of violence and the destruction of human life in the City of St. Louis by working cooperatively with other organizations and entities to reduce gun-violence and promote safety;

2. **PARTNERING** with state and local governments, the City's criminal justice, social and service systems, as well as the Archdiocese of St. Louis' initiatives to ensure that reducing gun violence and promoting safety remains a top priority;
3. **TRANSFORMING** our neighborhoods, our city and our state by applying a spiritual lens to both the problems and solutions as we seek to replace the cycle of violence with a culture of care;

Together, we will design, prioritize and initiate action steps to actively engage the community:

1. **COLLABORATE** with other local parishes, church denominations and faith-based groups to add their voices to ours in an effort to reduce gun-violence and promote safety;
2. **EDUCATE** ourselves on the root causes that contribute to crime and violence and to work to reduce those causes;
3. **IDENTIFY** organizations, whose focus is to reduce violence, and determine how our faith-based groups can support their activity;
4. **ADVOCATE** for change so that the delivery of human services will be more equitable;
5. **ACT** as we focus our energies on tangible and attainable goals such as, but not limited to: distributing gun locks; fostering the use of signage throughout our neighborhoods and our city; educating others on the threats to safety; promoting gun-violence as a public-health crisis rather than a political issue; working to ensure that gun ownership requirements include not only registration but also training; and, urging gun manufacturers to make use of current technology and biometrics to promote and ensure safety.

EXHIBIT A: POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Archdiocese of St. Louis
- Moms Demand Action
- Parishes