



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# The United Church of Christ calls for faith over firearms, joins youth of the nation demanding gun control reform

**CLEVELAND (March 21, 2018)** — The United Church of Christ, standing with the youth of America gathering this Saturday in Washington, D.C., and in cities across the country for the MARCH FOR OUR LIVES, is urging all faith communities calling for gun violence prevention to make their support visible, through the message of 'Faith over Firearms'.

The progressive Protestant denomination, which has long advocated for sensible, responsible policies to end gun violence, has released a digital graphics bundle free for use, so UCC congregations and organizations, and other like-minded faith communities can publicly proclaim their faith call for gun reform legislation.

The UCC has historically called for an end to gun violence in America. As recently as the 2017 UCC General Synod, led by the voices of the youth of Chicago, the denomination's governing body passed a resolution recognizing gun violence as a public health emergency.

The United Church of Christ is planning a major presence at the March for Our Lives rally in Washington, D.C., on March 24, with hundreds of UCC members planning to advocate for change as one united church. The group will be assembling at the Methodist Building, where the UCC Washington Office is housed. UCC clergy and congregants will also be advocating for stronger gun safety measures at the hundreds of sister marches around the country.

The denomination is joining young advocates nationwide to press Congress to pass stricter gun laws to ban assault weapons, require universal background checks before gun sales, and allow courts to disarm people who display warning signs of violent behavior.

"The activism that is happening around gun violence prevention is advocacy at its most powerful," Sandy Sorensen, director of the UCC Washington, D.C. office. "Communities impacted by gun violence — students, parents, teachers, faith leaders, health care workers — are telling their story and speaking truth to power wherever it resides. History tells us that the work of justice takes persistence and resilience. There will be setbacks — but faith, passion, vision, energy moving in and through communities creates change. It gives me great hope."

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**About the United Church of Christ** The United Church of Christ is a mainline Protestant denomination comprised of nearly 900,000 members and 5,000 congregations nationwide. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American.

The UCC and its members are tireless advocates for social issues such as immigration reform, racial equality, LGBT rights, marriage equality, environmental protection and economic justice.