

TEAM FIELD TRIP!

On October 28 we went on a field trip! To a Gun Show! One of our team is someone who does own guns. He offered to take us on a “guided tour”. Three of us were able to go on that day. Here are some responses:

As I waited for our tour to begin near the front door of the coliseum I watched a young man call out to all entering, "If you are carrying a hand gun, check it here."

I was uneasy as I expected to see Make America Great Again hats, I saw very few.

The show visitors looked like you and me.

The vendors were very polite.

The NRA booth was not flashy and did not stick out from the others. (Jim)

I was surprised at the price of the guns, that so much money is spent on them.

It was unsettling to see the advertising for silencers.

It was interesting to learn that part of the proceeds from the gun show we attended go to organizations that include the Boy Scouts of America and the National Rifle Association. (Jo)

I recognized that I had anxiety beforehand and recognized how strange that was. Would I feel anxious going to a giant flea market? or a giant record show? or whatever else? what was that all about? That phenomenon in itself is worth exploring, I think, because I think that it is related to how we (I) keep to my “own” group. As Richard said later on, “at some point you will be asked if you have ever been to a gun show....”, of course. (Sue)

In October the Executive Team approved our Ministry Team. The Gun Sense Ministry Team.

PREMISE

Our American society, including our state of Minnesota, suffers from a high level of gun violence tragedies. In Minnesota more than one person is killed by a gun and one person injured by a gun every day. 82% of the gun deaths in Minnesota are suicides, disproportionately among white rural and suburban communities. (www.protectminnesota.org/resources for a topical index of gun facts with citations.) The fact is that ALL Minnesotans are affected by the level of gun violence in the state as well as the nature of the gun rhetoric. A level of fear and anxiety around this issue has been increased in everyone in recent years.

Regardless of gun ownership, we believe that most people want to reduce gun violence. Many citizens of goodwill, Unity membership included, have been silent about their thoughts and feelings on the issue of gun violence, gun safety and gun policy. In the face of heated rhetoric many citizens become inarticulate. Polarization increases when there is an inability to articulate one's own views or a lack of understanding of the other side of an issue. We believe that there is a need for citizen dialogue on this issue. We believe that there is a need for citizens to involve themselves in creating policies aimed at mitigating the problems of gun violence, and the related fear and anxiety in Minnesota.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this ministry is to empower Unity-church Unitarian and its membership to be active citizens in this process of dialogue and creation of policy.

OUR PARTNER

Each ministry team at Unity Church is required to partner with an organization OUTSIDE of the church. Our partner is PROTECT MINNESOTA, the only independent state-focused organization working for reasonable gun safety policy solutions in Minnesota. We urge all of you to look at their website and to join the organization. We think that it is positive, focused and reliable.

Protect Minnesota has 2 events coming up that we want to call to your attention.

Gun Violence and what YOU can do about it!

Wellspring Wednesday

Unity Church

November 29

On December 14, the anniversary of the shooting at Sandy Hook:

NO MORE MOMENTS OF SILENCE—an evening of advocacy and inspiration. At Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, St. Paul. From 5-7, dinner and training (registration required...\$20) . From 7-8 an Interfaith Service of Dedication to all victims of gun violence (no registration...open to all). See the website protectminnesota.org.