

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Gun Violence Prevention in the Time of Covid-19

Sue Conner  
Gun Sense Ministry Team

With the virus and its impact needing to be a primary focus, we don't expect to see action on Minnesota gun violence prevention bills this session

We would, however, like to call attention to the major increase in gun and ammunition purchases during this time of pandemic. This increase is seen all over the country and it began immediately with the first mention of the virus and its implications. There are many articles about this phenomenon available online. This piece in the *Star Tribune* is worth particular mention: "[COVID-19's spread fuels record run on guns in Minnesota.](#)" The Trace, a gun violence prevention news resource, has many articles and links on the issue as well. You can subscribe to their publications at [www.thetrace.org](http://www.thetrace.org).

This strong societal (at least for many members of our society) urge (need?) for tools of violence and aggression, is, we think, rooted in fear and anxiety.

As we work to create gun violence prevention policies we need to also work to mitigate fear and calm anxiety in our society. How do we do that?



## Update from the Obama School Ministry Team

Nancy Heege, Obama School Ministry Team

Cub Foods gift cards, contributed by many at Unity Church, are being distributed to families from Barack and Michelle Obama School who are in need of food and other essentials.



Distance learning at the school began April 6, and will continue through the end of the school year, with teachers and the principal finding new ways to reach the scholars and their families.

Thinking ahead: Members and friends of Unity Church have a unique opportunity to make a positive difference in our community. The children and staff of Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School need our help and support. As a classroom volunteer, you can make a difference in two ways: creating a positive relationship with a child helps build the child's confidence and feelings of self-worth, and tutoring helps build the child's academic achievement. In addition, there are other ways to be involved. The teachers and children are enthusiastic about our volunteers and we'd like you to consider joining us.

Here's how to get started in May, for beginning volunteer work in September. Email Karen Abraham at [karen2bavol@gmail.com](mailto:karen2bavol@gmail.com) to request the application forms. She will send three things: a volunteer form to state your preferences; a Saint Paul Schools volunteer background investigation form, giving your permission for the school to do a background check; and instructions on how to return the forms. Forms that are returned by early May will be processed by the school district this summer; forms returned after mid-May may be delayed depending on the school's ability to process them. Note: each volunteer will be asked to pay the \$12 fee for the background check this year.

Shopping at Kowalski's on Grand Avenue is another easy way to support the school. Each time you shop, please put your grocery receipts in the Obama School donation box located at the checkout area. The school will get a quarterly check based on the number of receipts in the box.

If you have questions about the work of this group or wish to get involved, please contact Nancy Heege at [nancyheege@cs.com](mailto:nancyheege@cs.com).

## Generosity Ministry: Nominate the Plate

Each Sunday, seventy percent of our offering is given to community non-profits whose values we share and mission we support.

So how, you might ask, are those organizations chosen? By YOU! As a Unity Church member, you can nominate any organization that you believe would benefit from a no-strings attached donation (typically around \$1,200.)

It's easy! Just fill out the online nomination form at [www.unityunitarian.org/generosity-ministry.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/generosity-ministry.html). Tell us why your nominee is so wonderful, and how they will use a contribution.

All nominations are considered! However, the team places a special emphasis on smaller non-profits whose annual budget is \$500,000 or less, where \$1,200 will make a substantial difference.