

SAFER TOGETHER

Initiative Goals

Guiding Question – Can congregations, aided by synods, become bridging institutions that help the people and congregations of Region 3 participate in God's work of peacemaking by reducing violence, trauma, and other harms associated with gun misuse while creating shared understanding and action around matters that often divide people along ideological and political lines?

1. Build trust and understanding across differences.

Create space for people with different views and experiences around guns to listen to and learn from one another, exploring differences honestly and kindly.

2. Move beyond the usual gun rights/gun control debate.

Use the ELCA social message on gun-related violence and trauma to explore the broader idea of shared responsibility for reducing gun misuse and related harms.

3. Learn more about gun violence, trauma, and prevention.

Bring good research, lived experience, and our Lutheran social teaching into conversation with one another, while identifying questions and topics where we need further learning.

4. Help people think about their own vocations and responsibilities.

What can each of us do—as parents, pastors, gun owners, teachers, health-care workers, law enforcement, public officials, neighbors, citizens, and so forth—to reduce the risks and harms of gun misuse?

5. Encourage local conversations and action.

Each synod and community has a different context. The work should reflect those differences and help people identify actions appropriate to their own roles and communities rather than assuming one approach will fit everywhere.

6. Learn from one another across the region.

Create back-and-forth between the synods: local conversations informing the regional work, and regional learning helping to shape what happens locally, with the goal of sustaining the conversation beyond any one event.

7. Practice being church together as community of moral deliberation.

Model a way of engaging difficult and divisive questions as God's people—listening carefully, speaking honestly, discerning together, and seeking ways to build safer and more peaceful communities

