



Heeding God's Call

Inspiring Hope, Raising Voices, Taking Action to End Gun Violence

Statement on gun massacre in Tuscon, Arizona

January 10, 2011

Tucson Rampage

In the wake of the devastating shooting rampage of Saturday in Tucson, AZ, *Heeding God's Call*, the faith-based movement to prevent gun violence, expressed sadness at the predictable loss of life and damage to society, and called for citizens and the faith community to 'step up' and take the country from those who would use the deadly mix of guns and political extremism to endanger democracy and sell guns.

The Reverend James McIntire of Hope United Methodist Church in Havertown, PA and Chair of *Heeding God's Call's* Steering Committee, said: "We mourn for those needlessly lost, we pray for those wounded and recovering, we cry for the families whose lives have been changed forever. And, we call on all Americans and, especially, those of faith to see the frightening and dangerous conjunction of guns and political extremism to which this horrific event points so clearly and to commit to combating it."

Rabbi Linda Holzman of Mishkan Shalom Synagogue in Philadelphia said: "I call on all of my sisters and brothers of all faiths to take courage, get off your couches and out of your homes to bring this country to a place of safety and sanity where persons like the Tucson shooter cannot easily acquire guns and where there is no tolerance for those who would use the deadly mix of guns and extremism to seek power or disrupt our democracy. It is high time the faithful in this country said no to extremists and the gun industry and lobby. We can no longer allow their narrow single-mindedness and selfishness to dictate policies and laws."

The Reverend Isaac Miller (retired), former Rector of The Church of the Advocate in North Philadelphia, said: "The massacre in Tucson shows clearly that we live in dangerous times in this country. We have allowed a lobby whose main goal is to protect and encourage the sales and profits of the gun industry to dictate what is acceptable in law and practice – the result being that we tolerate incredible levels of gun violence. And, when extremists are encouraged to use guns by irresponsible politicians and the leaders of the gun lobby, we are shocked. No one should be, as extremists like Sarah Palin and NRA boss Wayne LaPierre have been using threatening words and images for years. Now our country is reaping what they and others have sown."

McIntire continued: "The faith community must act to combat the insidious initiatives and motives of those who would encourage gun violence by allowing the gun lobby to hold the field. I and many others of faith are eager to act to reduce the carnage. We seek to bring the faith-based and grassroots movement to prevent gun violence, *Heeding God's Call*, to our state and nation. *Heeding* has enjoyed success in Philadelphia in confronting the flow of guns to that city's streets. We believe *Heeding* can be a means for the faith community to take action to make all streets safer from gun violence.