



The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York
The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe

March 3, 2018

Dear People of Central New York:

As Christians we have a responsibility to stand with those who feel most vulnerable, especially when those persons are our children and youth.

I invite you join me on Tuesday, March 20th at 8:00 p.m. for a Facebook Live conversation on gun violence issues (at facebook.com/bishopdede), and then to prayerfully consider joining with me on Saturday, March 24th to walk in peaceful protest of gun violence and support the young people of our country. There are marches planned in several cities of our diocese—and around the country—that day. As details are finalized, we will be posting meet-up arrangements for events in our region at cnyepiscopal.org/march-for-our-lives. I am also speaking to community leaders about a prayer vigil—and other ways to show our support to young people—and will keep you informed about these opportunities.

I support responsible gun ownership. When I was growing up, guns were part of my life. I hunted with my brothers, regularly shot skeet (well, to be honest regularly shot at skeet) and even mastered the tricky art of launching skeet with a hand-held trebuchet. “Responsible gun ownership” was not a term I knew because everyone I knew handled guns responsibly.

However, in recent years there has been a significant change in our national experience. It is clear that people disagree about the cause of the rise of mass shootings in America, but what is undeniable is that our children and youth feel unsafe at school. From Columbine to Sandy Hook to this most recent shooting in Parkland, Florida, our young people are afraid and their courage in standing up for safety in our society is both moral and admirable.

Furthermore, these issues of safety are present in our own towns and neighborhoods. Thursday in Central New York two schools went into a lockdown situation as a result of a perceived threat; at a third school police were called to an incident and a lockdown was considered. So while we need substantive ongoing conversation about gun violence in America, it must arise from our work and prayer.

In Matthew 19, Jesus commands his disciples, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them.” Children are sacred, beloved and cherished participants in building God’s kingdom and in this moment they are pointing the way. Regardless of political affiliation or opinion, I

urge you to come and walk with me in support of our young people. I pray they will never feel that they walk alone.

May the redeeming love of Jesus light our way.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DeDe Duncan-Probe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe
Bishop of Central New York