

**Draft of a Social Message on Gun-Related Violence and Trauma**  
Final Survey Responses  
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## Overview

The Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) is currently drafting a social message on gun-related violence and trauma. As part of the process, ELCA members and leaders were invited to read the draft and provide feedback through an online survey. Participants also had the option to print the survey and send their responses via mail. The draft and survey were posted in October 2023 and responses were collected through February 2, 2024.

## Survey Results

The social statement draft is divided into three parts, and the survey asked participants to answer questions about each part. There were also several demographic questions at the end of the survey. A total of 254 participants completed the survey. (See Appendix A for a complete set of frequencies.) A large number of the participants indicated they were not ELCA members (21), so the results for both the total sample and for ELCA members only will be presented.

The first question asked about the introduction. Using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not at all” and 5 = “very,” participants were asked to rate how well the purpose of the social message was conveyed. Over half of the participants felt the purpose was conveyed “well” or “very well” (ratings of 4 or 5) (54%), with an average rating of 3.58 (ELCA, 3.66). All of the average ratings were significantly<sup>1</sup> higher for participants identifying as ELCA members compared to non-ELCA participants, except for two questions in Part Two which are indicated below.

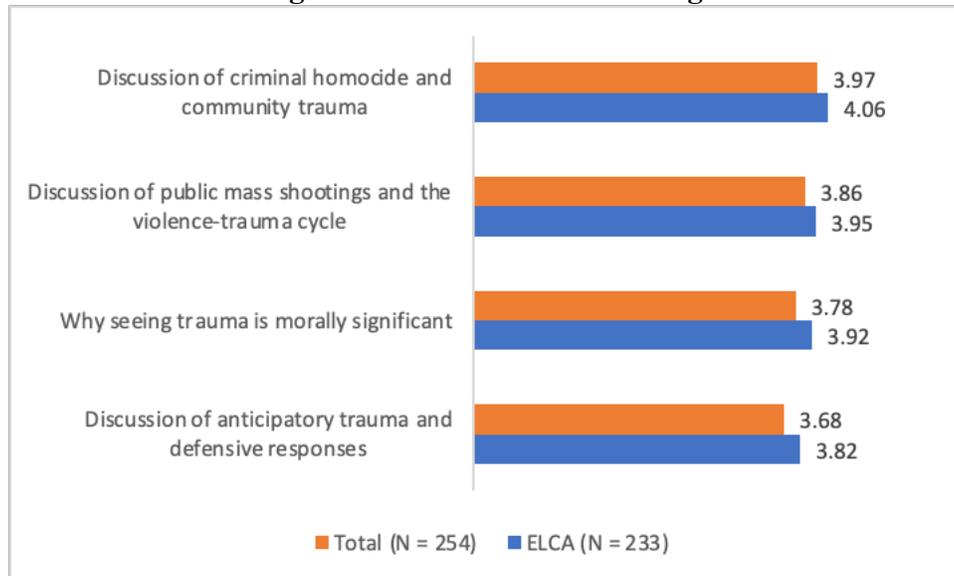
### *Part One Responses: Seeing Trauma in Insecurity, Despair, and Mayhem*

In response to Part One, participants were asked to rate the importance of the discussion of criminal homicide and community trauma. Using the same five-point rating scale, about 70 percent of the participants felt it was “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.97 (ELCA, 4.06). (See Figure 1.) Participants were also asked to rate the significance of public mass shootings and the violence-trauma cycle. About two-thirds of the participants felt it was “significant” or “very significant” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.86 (ELCA, 3.95). When asked to rate how well the section addressed why seeing trauma is morally significant, about two-thirds of the participants felt it was addressed “well” or “very well” (ratings of 4 or 5) (65%), with an average rating of 3.78 (ELCA, 3.92). When asked to rate the importance of the discussion of anticipatory trauma and defensive responses, about 60 percent of the participants rated it “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.68 (ELCA, 3.82).

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<sup>1</sup> All reported differences are significant at the .05 level.

**Figure 1: Part One Mean Ratings**



Each section had two open-ended questions where participants had the option to type in their own comments. Responses to the open-ended questions were coded to find common themes. (See Appendix B for a complete list of comments.)

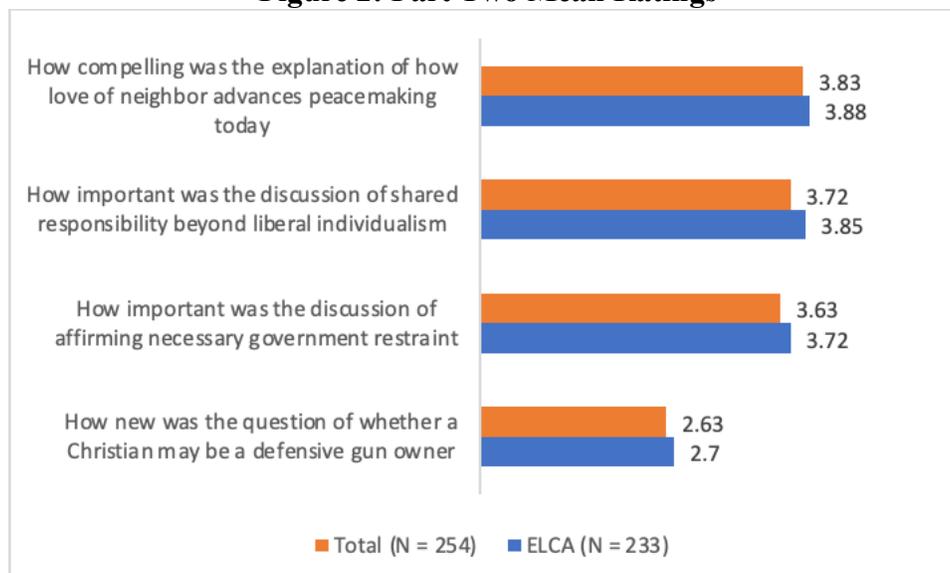
The first open-ended question asked participants if there was one idea they would add to the section. A total of 39 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was adding “more about mental health assessment and treatment” (28%). A few participants suggested “lines 169-184, add emphasis on the impact of firearm-involved suicide on men, as well as white and Native communities” (10%). Others felt “the draft should address all violence” (8%).

The second open-ended question asked participants if there was one idea they thought should be deleted from the section. A total of 23 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was “all of it should be deleted” (44%). A couple participants suggested “gun violence’ should be changed to all violence” (9%).

### Part Two Responses: Countering Violence and Trauma as God's Resolve for Peace

In Part Two, participants were asked to rate how compelling the explanation was of how love of neighbor advances peacemaking today, using the same five-point rating scale described above. About 60 percent of the participants rated it as “compelling” or “very compelling” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.83 (ELCA, 3.88; not a significant difference). (See Figure 2.) When participants were asked to rate the importance of the discussion of shared responsibility beyond liberal individualism, about 62 percent rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.72 (ELCA, 3.85). Participants were also asked to rate the importance of the discussion of affirming necessary government restraint. About 60 percent of the participants rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.63 (ELCA, 3.72). Finally, participants rated how new the question was of whether a Christian may be a defensive gun owner. About half felt it was “not new” or “not at all new” (ratings of 1 or 2) (49%), with an average rating of 2.63 (ELCA, 2.70; not a significant difference).

**Figure 2: Part Two Mean Ratings**



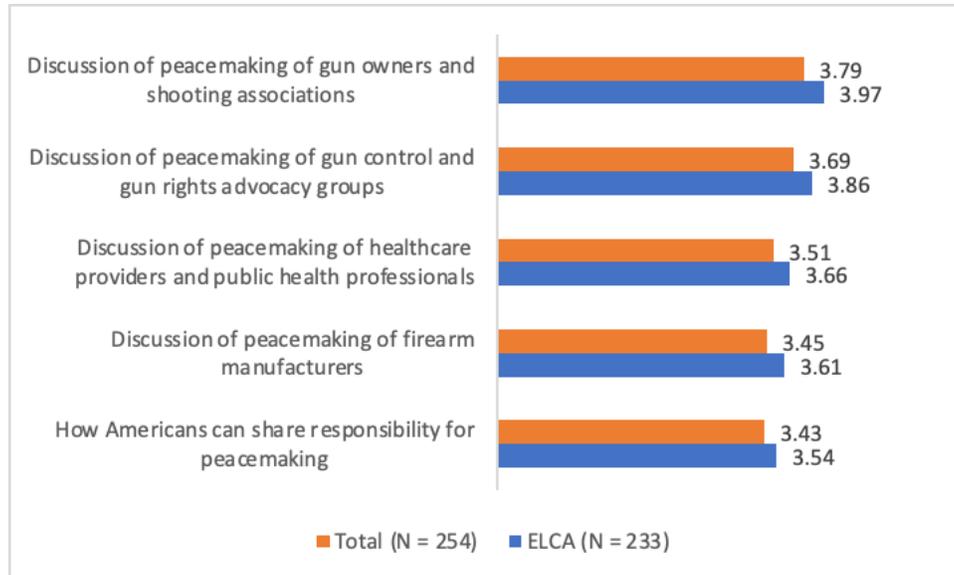
For the first open-ended question in Part Two, participants were asked if there was one idea they would add to the section. A total of 35 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, several participants felt “we should be addressing the needs of people in poor areas as poverty is more of an indicator than gun ownership” (11%). Others felt “responsibility” should be added to the draft (11%). Several participants suggested that “you need a more diverse group of writers” and “the draft is too one-sided” (11%). A few participants felt “in lines 293-303, there needs to be commentary on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment” (11%).

The second open-ended question asked if there was one idea participants thought should be deleted from the section. There were a total of 17 comments coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was that “all of it” should be deleted (35%). A few participants felt “a Christian being a gun owner shouldn’t be a question” (18%).

### Part Three Responses: Toward Shared Responsibility for What Makes Peace

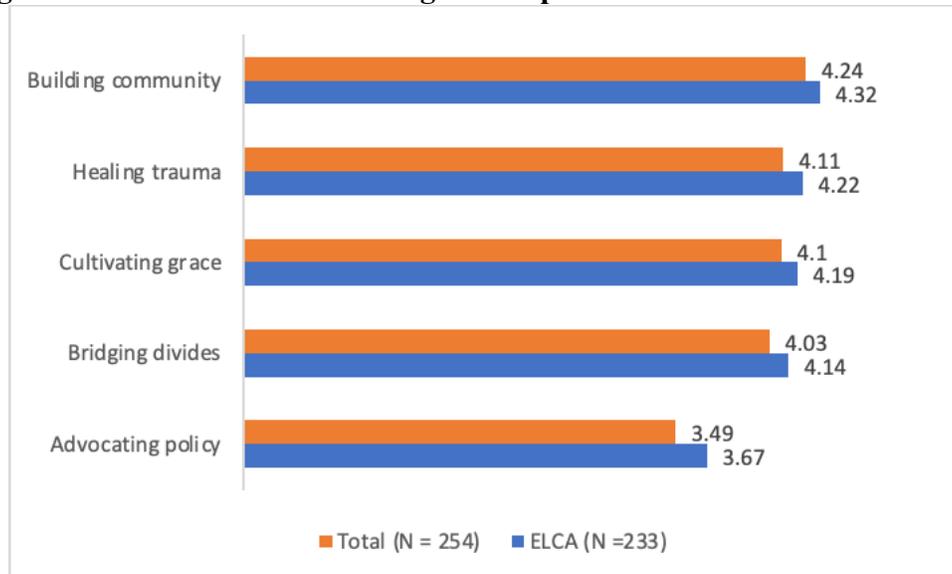
In Part Three, participants rated the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of gun owners and shooting associations, using the same five-point rating scale described above. About 62 percent of the participants rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.79 (ELCA, 3.97). (See Figure 3.) When asked to rate the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of gun control and gun rights advocacy groups, about 60 percent of the participants rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.69 (ELCA, 3.86). Participants were also asked to rate the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of healthcare providers and public health professionals. Over half of the participants rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5) (57%), with an average rating of 3.51 (ELCA, 3.66). When asked to rate the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of firearm manufacturers, over half of the participants rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5) (55%), with an average rating of 3.45 (ELCA, 3.61). Finally, participants were asked how persuasive they found the explanation of how Americans can share responsibility for peacemaking. About half of the participants rated it as “persuasive” or “very persuasive” (ratings of 4 or 5) (52%), for an average rating of 3.43 (ELCA, 3.54).

**Figure 3: Part Three Mean Ratings of Peacemaking Discussion**



The second rating scale question in Part Three asked participants to rate the importance of the discussion of the distinctive responsibilities of faith communities in peacemaking in several areas. The highest mean ratings were found for “building community,” with 73 percent of participants rating this area as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.24 (ELCA, 4.32). (See Figure 4.) Ratings were high for “healing trauma,” with 73 percent of participants rating this area as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.11 (ELCA, 4.22). “Cultivating grace” also received high ratings, with 70 percent of participants rating this as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.10 (ELCA, 4.19). Slightly lower ratings were found for “bridging divides,” with 68 percent of participants rating this area as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.03 (ELCA, 4.14). Finally, the lowest ratings were found for “advocating policy,” with 57 percent of participants rating this as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 3.49 (ELCA, 3.67).

**Figure 4: Part Three Mean Ratings of Responsibilities of Faith Communities**



Similar to previous sections, the first open-ended question asked if there was one idea participants would add to the section. A total of 32 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was “in line 644, would like to see the addition of suggestions for congregational level activities” (19%). A few participants felt the section “needs stronger advocacy for gun control and banning assault weapons” (13%). Others said “this document does not talk about the victims of gun violence and the sins of those who commit gun violence” (13%).

When asked if there was one idea they think should be deleted from this section, there were a total of 20 comments coded. Of those comments, the most common response was “all of it” (30%). A few participants suggested deleting “everything about the AR-15, other guns are just as deadly” (25%), while others felt “this is a political document trying to function as church doctrine” (10%).

#### Overall Questions about the Draft

The last section asked participants to rate how helpful they found the draft in thinking about gun-related violence and trauma from a faith perspective and about what we can do to address the issue, using the same five-point rating scale described above. About half of the participants rated the draft as “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5) (48%), with an average rating of 3.29 (ELCA, 3.43).

Two open-ended questions asked for overall comments about the draft as a whole. First, participants were asked to list the top two or three most important takeaways from the entire draft. A total of 115 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was “taking the middle ground between both poles” (24%). On the other hand, many participants felt that “most of your sources are 'left-leaning,' and should be more balanced” (13%). Several participants listed “shared responsibility” as an important takeaway (11%). Some participants said “the church is trying to influence law rather than trying to influence a more Christian model of behavior” (6%), and others felt “it's a waste of time” (5%). Finally, a few participants felt there was “no mention of mental health as a major contributing factor in suicide and shootings” (5%), while others said the draft had “too much jargon” and was “too long” (5%).

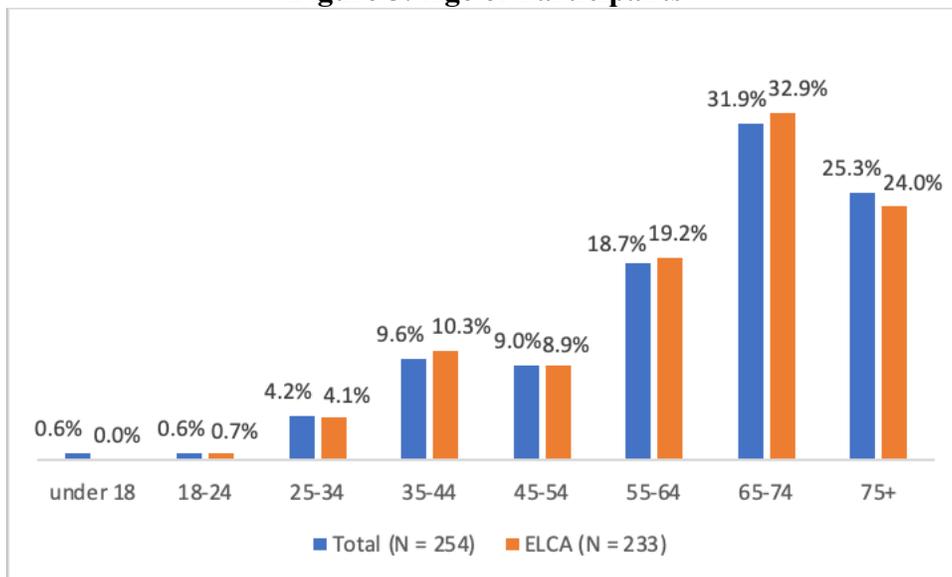
The final open-ended question asked participants to list one thing they can do to be a peacemaker that they did not consider before reading the draft. A total of 72 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was “try to build bridges better and listen to opposing views” (53%). Several participants listed “more advocacy on my part” (17%), as well as “work to restore morality and bring Christ back into our culture” (7%). Some participants listed “encourage my community to move beyond solely individual or solely governmental understandings of who's responsible for safety and peacemaking” (6%). Finally, a few participants listed “teach the social message” (4%).

Demographic Questions

The survey concluded with several demographic questions to give us a picture of who participated in the survey. When asked how they identify, slightly over half of the participants chose “man” (54%), with about 39 percent choosing “woman.” About one percent of participants chose “non-binary,” and seven percent preferred not to answer.

When asked their age, the large majority were 55 years or older (76%). (See Figure 5.) One participant was under 18 (1%), one was 18 to 24 years old (1%), four percent were 25 to 34 years old, ten percent were 35 to 44 years old, and nine percent were 45 to 54 years old.

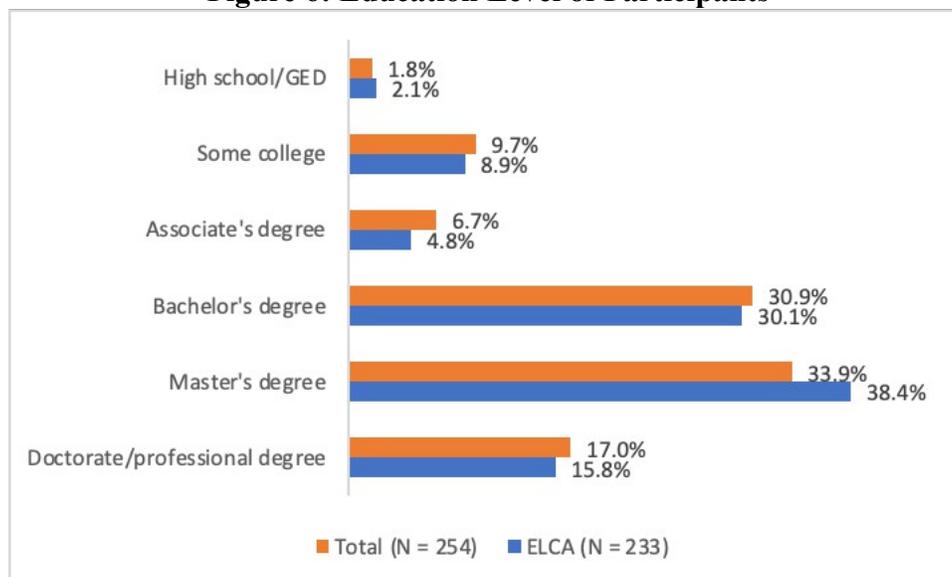
**Figure 5: Age of Participants**



As for race or ethnicity, the large majority identified as White (82%). About eight percent of participants identified as “other,” with four percent choosing “multiracial.” Five participants identified as African American/Black (3%), three participants identified as Latino/Hispanic (2%), one participant identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (1%), and one participant identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (1%).

We next asked participants to indicate their highest level of academic achievement. The large majority of participants had a Bachelor's degree or higher (82%). (See Figure 6.) About two percent of the participants had a high school diploma or GED. About ten percent of the participants chose “some college,” while about seven percent had an Associate's degree.

**Figure 6: Education Level of Participants**



Finally, we asked if participants were rostered leaders or lay people. Most of the participants were lay members and/or participants in a congregation of the ELCA (39%). About 13 percent were Ministers of Word and Sacrament, with about one percent Ministers of Word and Service. About 12 percent of the participants chose “other,” and most listed that they were Christian, from another denomination, or had left the ELCA. About 34 percent of the participants did not respond to this question.

For all the demographic questions, the results were very similar for the total sample and ELCA members only. (See Appendix A for a complete list of frequencies.)

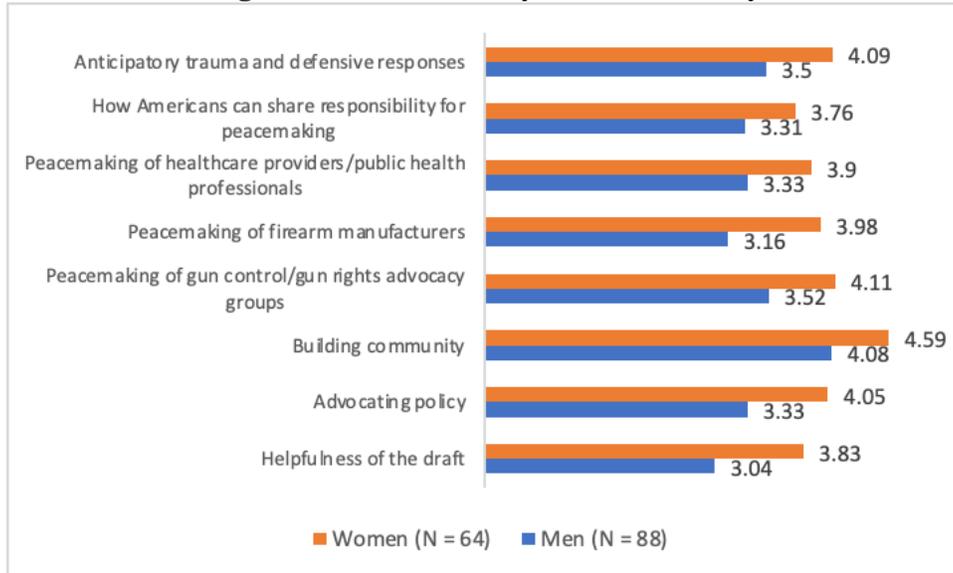
*Differences by Gender Identity, Age and Roster Status*

We examined the rating scale questions and compared the responses of women and men to look for significant differences. Due to the small number of participants who identified as “non-binary,” those responses were not included in this analysis. In addition, a large number of participants (102) did not answer the question, so they were also not included in this analysis. For those who identified their gender, there were significant differences for several of the questions. (See Figure 7.) Interestingly, women gave higher ratings compared to men for all of the questions that had significant differences.

Women rated as more important the discussion of anticipatory trauma and defensive responses, as well as how persuasive they found the explanation of how Americans can share responsibility for peacemaking. In addition, women gave higher ratings for the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of healthcare providers and public health professionals, firearm manufacturers, and gun control and gun rights advocacy groups. Women also rated as more important the discussion of the

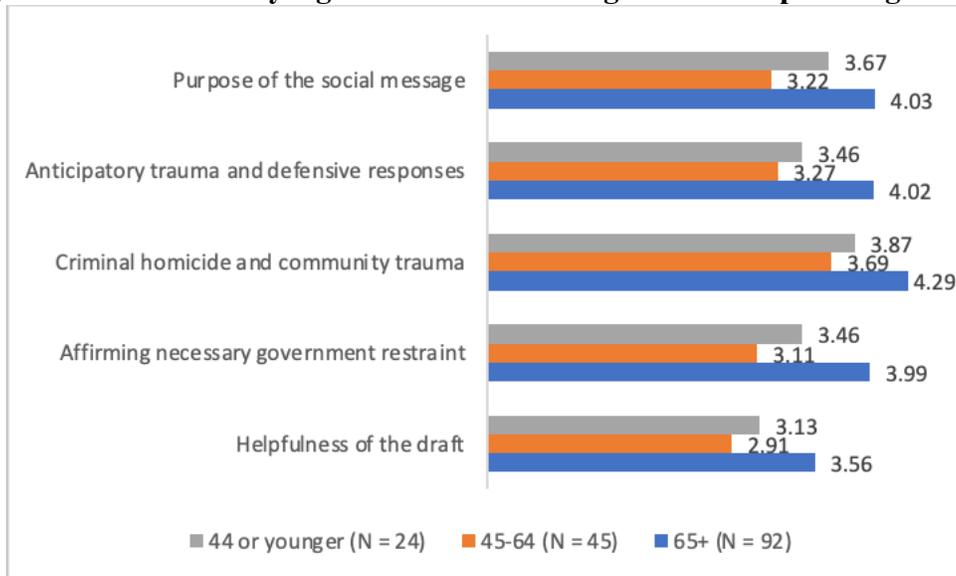
responsibilities of faith communities in peacemaking on building community and advocating policy. Finally, women felt the draft was more helpful overall compared to men.

**Figure 7: Differences by Gender Identity**



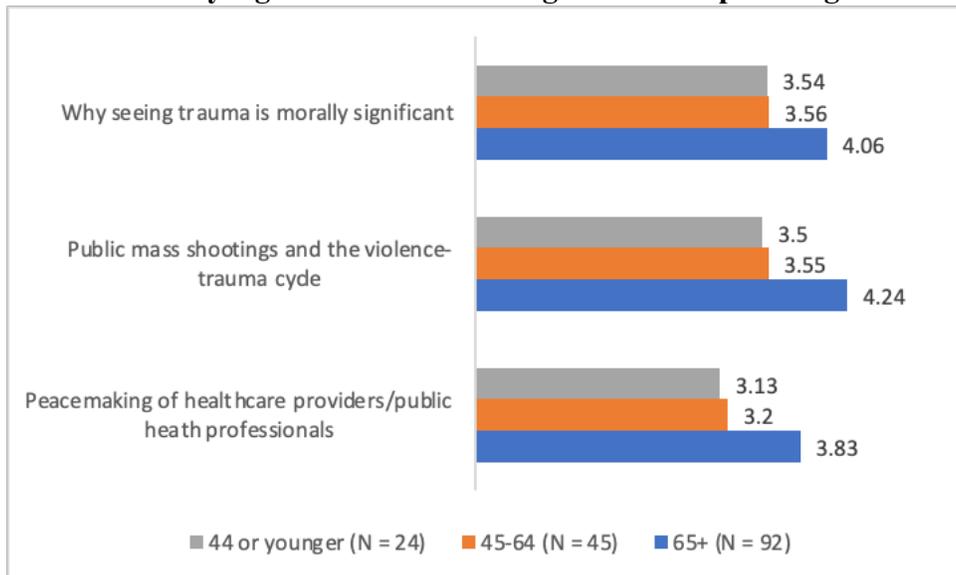
Next, we compared age groups to look for possible differences. Three age categories were created: 44 or younger, 45 to 64, and 65 or older. Similar to gender identity, many of the participants (93) did not answer this question. For those who indicated their age, there were several significant differences found. Older participants (65 or older) had the highest average ratings, while the middle age group (45 to 64) had the lowest average ratings. (See Figure 8.) Older participants gave higher ratings for how well the purpose of the social message was conveyed, as well as the importance of the discussion of anticipatory trauma and defensive responses. Participants aged 65 or older also gave higher ratings for the importance of the discussion of criminal homicide and community trauma, and the discussion of affirming necessary government restraint. Older participants also felt the draft was more helpful overall compared to younger participants.

**Figure 8: Differences by Age with Lowest Ratings for Participants Aged 45-64**



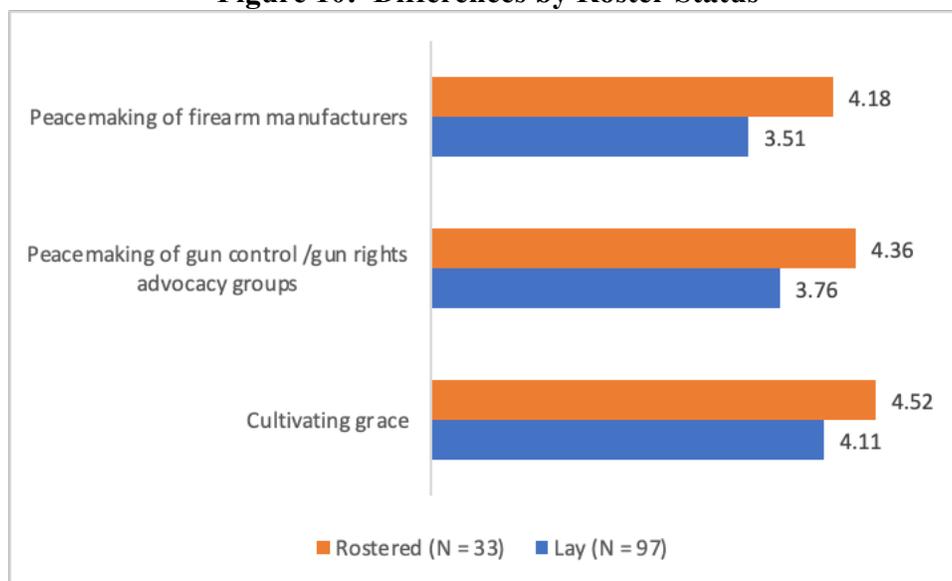
For three of the survey questions, the youngest group of participants (44 or younger) had the lowest average ratings, while the oldest participants (65 or older) continued to have the highest average ratings (See Figure 9.) Older participants gave higher ratings for why seeing trauma is morally significant, as well as the significance of the discussion of public mass shootings and the violence-trauma cycle. Participants aged 65 or older also gave higher ratings for the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of healthcare providers and public health professionals. However, very slight differences were found between the two younger age groups for these questions.

**Figure 9: Differences by Age with Lowest Ratings for Participants Aged 44 or Younger**



We also looked at the roster status of participants to compare responses. Rostered ministers included both Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service. Similar to gender and age, a large number of participants (124) did not answer this question. For those who indicated their roster status, there were three questions where rostered ministers gave higher ratings than lay participants. (See Figure 11.) Rostered ministers found the discussion of both the peacemaking of firearm manufacturers and of gun control and gun rights advocacy groups to be more important. In addition, rostered ministers gave higher ratings for the importance of the discussion of peacemaking in faith communities through cultivating grace.

**Figure 10: Differences by Roster Status**



Summary and Conclusions

Overall, the responses to the draft of the social message on gun-related violence and trauma were positive. All of the rating scale means were 3.29 or above on a five-point scale. When participants were asked to rate how helpful they found the draft in thinking about gun-related violence and trauma from a faith perspective and what we can do to address the issue, the average rating was 3.29 out of 5. ELCA members gave higher ratings for all of the questions except two compared to non-ELCA participants.

Comments to the open-ended questions were a bit more varied, with some participants feeling the church should not be involved in politics and constitutional rights. On the other hand, other participants felt that gun safety is an important issue and the ELCA should do more to advocate for gun control.

There were several common themes found throughout the comments to different sections of the draft. First, many participants commented that the draft was one-sided, and would have liked to see more balance from opposing views. Several people felt there should be more about mental health in the draft, and it should address all forms of violence, not just gun-related violence. Many participants would have liked suggestions of more specific activities they could do at the congregational level. Overall, the main takeaways from the draft were taking the middle ground, building bridges and shared responsibility. Several participants said they would like to be more personally involved in advocacy to be peacemakers in their communities.

The demographic characteristics of the participants were very similar to the overall characteristics of ELCA members. About three-fourths of the participants were 55 or older, and 82 percent identified as White. Most participants were highly educated, with 82 percent earning a Bachelor's degree or higher. About 40 percent of the participants were lay members of an ELCA congregation. The participants represented 132 different zip codes, concentrated mostly in the upper midwest and northeast of the United States. (See Appendix C for map.)

There were many differences by gender identity, with women giving higher ratings than men. In addition, older participants gave higher ratings than younger participants for several questions. We also found a few differences by roster status, with rostered ministers giving higher ratings than lay participants.

**Appendix A**  
 Frequencies: Research Survey  
 Draft of a Social Message on Gun-related Violence and Trauma  
 Final Report (Total, N = 254)<sup>2</sup> (ELCA, N = 233)<sup>3</sup>

Preface: Making Peace Amidst Gun-related Violence and Trauma

1. In the introductory paragraphs, how well is the purpose of this social message, regarding gun-related violence and trauma, conveyed?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
9.2%	10.0	23.1	23.5	30.3	4.0	3.58
(7.8)	(9.1)	(23.0)	(24.3)	(31.7)	(3.9)	(3.66)

Part One: Seeing Trauma in Insecurity, Despair, and Mayhem

2. In Part One, how well did the section address why seeing trauma is morally significant?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
8.3	6.3	17.7	31.3	33.9	2.6	3.78
(6.4)	(4.7)	(15.8)	(33.9)	(36.3)	(2.9)	(3.92)

3. How important do you think is the discussion of anticipatory trauma and defensive responses?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
13.6	11.0	14.1	14.7	45.5	1.0	3.68
(10.6)	(11.2)	(12.4)	(16.5)	(48.2)	(1.2)	(3.82)

4. How would you rate the importance of the discussion of criminal homicide and community trauma?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
7.4	7.4	14.3	21.2	48.7	1.1	3.97
(6.0)	(6.5)	(13.7)	(22.0)	(50.6)	(1.2)	(4.06)

5. How significant is the discussion of public mass shootings and the violence-trauma cycle?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
8.5	10.6	13.3	19.7	46.3	1.6	3.86
(6.6)	(11.4)	(11.4)	(21.0)	(48.5)	(1.2)	(3.95)

6. *(Optional)* Is there one idea you think should be added to this section? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

7. *(Optional)* Is there one idea you think should be deleted from this section? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

<sup>2</sup> All numbers are shown as percentages unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers shown in parentheses are for ELCA members only.

Part Two: Countering Violence and Trauma as God's Resolve for Peace

8. In Part Two, how compelling for you is the explanation of how love of neighbor advances peacemaking today?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
5.0	5.6	27.4	23.5	36.9	1.7	3.83
(4.4)	(5.1)	(25.3)	(25.9)	(37.3)	(1.9)	(3.88)

9. How important is the discussion of shared responsibility beyond liberal individualism?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
14.1	13.0	10.2	10.7	50.8	1.1	3.72
(9.6)	(14.7)	(9.6)	(11.5)	(53.2)	(1.3)	(3.85)

10. How new for you was the question of whether a Christian may be a defensive gun owner?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
36.5	12.9	19.7	10.7	19.1	1.1	2.63
(32.5)	(14.0)	(22.3)	(10.8)	(19.1)	(1.3)	(2.70)

11. How would you rate the importance of the discussion of affirming necessary government restraint?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
15.2	9.6	14.6	17.4	42.1	1.1	3.63
(12.7)	(9.6)	(14.0)	(18.5)	(43.9)	(1.3)	(3.72)

12. *(Optional)* Is there one idea you think should be added to this section? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

13. *(Optional)* Is there one idea you think should be deleted from this section? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

Part Three: Toward Shared Responsibility for What Makes Peace

14. In Part Three, how persuasive did you find the explanation of how Americans can share responsibility for peacemaking?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
8.6	16.0	22.9	26.9	24.6	1.1	3.43
(7.1)	(14.9)	(20.8)	(29.9)	(26.6)	(0.6)	(3.54)

15. How would you rate the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of healthcare providers and public health professionals?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
14.8	13.1	13.1	21.0	35.8	2.3	3.51
(12.3)	(11.6)	(12.3)	(22.6)	(38.7)	(2.6)	(3.66)

16. How important is the discussion of peacemaking of gun owners and shooting associations?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
14.9	6.9	15.5	8.6	53.4	0.6	3.79
(11.8)	(5.9)	(14.4)	(9.2)	(58.2)	(0.7)	(3.97)

17. How would you rate the importance of the discussion of peacemaking of firearm manufacturers?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
22.2	11.4	10.8	9.1	45.5	1.1	3.45
(18.7)	(10.3)	(10.3)	(10.3)	(49.0)	(1.3)	(3.61)

18. How important is the discussion of peacemaking of gun control and gun rights advocacy groups?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
15.9	9.7	14.2	9.7	50.0	0.6	3.69
(11.6)	(9.7)	(13.5)	(11.0)	(53.5)	(0.6)	(3.86)

19. How important do you find the discussion of the distinctive responsibilities of faith communities in peacemaking on:

a. Bridging divides

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
5.9	5.3	18.9	17.8	50.3	1.8	4.03
(3.4)	(5.4)	(18.2)	(17.6)	(53.4)	(2.0)	(4.14)

b. Cultivating grace

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
4.7	4.1	18.9	18.3	51.5	2.4	4.10
(2.0)	(4.1)	(20.3)	(18.2)	(52.7)	(2.7)	(4.19)

c. Building community

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
3.0	3.6	18.7	14.5	58.4	1.8	4.24
(1.4)	(3.4)	(17.9)	(14.5)	(60.7)	(2.1)	(4.32)

d. Advocating policy

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
20.4	10.8	10.8	13.8	43.1	1.2	3.49
(16.4)	(10.3)	(10.3)	(14.4)	(47.3)	(1.4)	(3.67)

e. Healing trauma

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
4.3	5.5	15.9	22.6	50.6	1.2	4.11
(2.8)	(4.9)	(14.0)	(23.1)	(53.8)	(1.4)	(4.22)

20. *(Optional)* Is there one idea you think should be added to this section? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

21. *(Optional)* Is there one idea you think should be deleted from this section? (Please reference a line number for each suggestion.) (See Appendix B for comments.)

## Overall Questions about the Draft

22. How helpful did you find the draft in thinking about gun-related violence and trauma from a faith perspective and about what we can do to address the issue?

<b>1-not at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3-somewhat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5-very</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Mean</b>
18.0	13.4	18.0	19.2	29.1	2.3	3.29
(14.4)	(11.8)	(20.3)	(20.3)	(31.4)	(2.0)	(3.43)

23. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from the entire draft for you? (See Appendix B for comments.)

24. What is one thing you can do to be a peacemaker that you did not consider before reading the draft? (See Appendix B for comments.)

## Questions about You

25. Gender:

- 38.5 Woman (42.6)
- 53.8 Man (51.4)
- 0.6 Non-binary (0.7)
- 7.1 Prefer not to answer (5.4)

26. Age:

- 0.6 under 18 (0.0)
- 0.6 18-24 (0.7)
- 4.2 25-34 (4.1)
- 9.6 35-44 (10.3)
- 9.0 45-54 (8.9)
- 18.7 55-64 (19.2)
- 31.9 65-74 (32.9)
- 25.3 75 or older (24.0)

27. Race/Ethnicity:

- 3.0 African American/Black (2.8)
- 0.0 African National/African Caribbean (0.0)
- 0.6 American Indian/Alaska Native (0.7)
- 0.0 Arab/Middle Eastern (0.0)
- 0.6 Asian/Pacific Islander (0.7)
- 1.8 Latino/Hispanic (2.1)
- 3.6 Multiracial (3.4)
- 81.9 White (84.8)
- 8.4 Other (5.5)

28. What is your zip code? (See Appendix C for zip code map.)

29. Highest level of academic achievement:

- 0.0 Less than high school (0.0)
- 1.8 High school or GED (2.1)
- 9.7 Some college (8.9)
- 6.7 Associate's degree (4.8)
- 30.9 Bachelor's degree (30.1)
- 33.9 Master's degree (38.4)
- 17.0 Doctorate or professional degree (15.8)

30. Are you:

- 13.4 A Minister of Word and Sacrament (14.6)
- 0.8 A Minister of Word and Service (0.9)
- 39.4 A lay member and/or participant of a congregation in the ELCA (47.2)
- 12.2 Other (0.0)
- 34.3 No response (37.3)

**Appendix B**  
 Frequencies: Comments  
 Draft of a Social Message on Gun-related Violence and Trauma  
 Final Report (Total, N = 254) (ELCA, N = 233)

Part One: Making Peace Amidst Gun-related Violence and Trauma

6. Is there one idea you think should be added to this section?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 39)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 33)</b>
More about mental health assessment and treatment	28.2% (11) <sup>4</sup>	27.3% (9)
Line 169-184, add emphasis on the impact of firearm-involved suicide on men, as well as white and Native communities	10.3% (4)	12.1% (4)
Should address all violence	7.7% (3)	9.1% (3)
Too academic, simplify	5.1% (2)	6.1% (2)
Line 77, gun violence is an affront to God	5.1% (2)	6.1% (2)
Citizens who carry concealed stop many crimes without firing a shot and save lives	5.1% (2)	6.1% (2)
Include 2 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment/gun supporters in writing the draft	5.1% (2)	6.1% (2)
White supremacy and Christian nationalism	5.1% (2)	6.1% (2)
Responsibility, less criminal forgiveness	5.1% (2)	3.0% (1)
Emphasis on not pushing fear	5.1% (2)	3.0% (1)
Line 22, website needs to be checked, conflicting data	2.6% (1)	3.0% (1)
Line 213, community leaders need to work with police for assurance that radical persons are not police officers	2.6% (1)	3.0% (1)
The gun debate is a matter of life and death	2.6% (1)	3.0% (1)
Work on peace in the urban environment	2.6% (1)	3.0% (1)
Re-orient the whole message around the elimination of private ownership of guns	2.6% (1)	3.0% (1)
Self-defense of worshipers at meetings	2.6% (1)	0% (0)
One must be cautious when quoting single Bible verses	2.6% (1)	0% (0)

<sup>4</sup> Numbers shown in parentheses represent the number of people who wrote each comment.

7. Is there one idea you think should be deleted from this section?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 23)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 15)</b>
All of it	43.5% (10)	26.7% (4)
“Gun violence” should be changed to all violence	8.7% (2)	13.3% (2)
Line 4, “This church has condemned gun violence that seeks to advance racism, white supremacy, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and heterosexism.”	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Line 88, “cultural norms” is unclear	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
The premise that the majority of gun owners are “defensive” gun owners	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Red flag laws	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Lines 21-22 and 28-29, stop dividing people into categories	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Line 226, incorrect and one-sided	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Line 220-237, the word “public,” just say mass shootings	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
AR-15 portion	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Defensive gun owners is unclear, change to “people who own guns for self-defense”	4.3% (1)	6.7% (1)
Trauma is a natural part of God's world	4.3% (1)	0% (0)
More discussion needed on the safe use of firearms	4.3% (1)	0% (0)

Part Two: Countering Violence and Trauma as God's Resolve for Peace

12. Is there one idea you think should be added to this section?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 35)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 29)</b>
You need a more diverse group of writers, too one-sided	11.4% (4)	13.8% (4)
We should be addressing the needs of people in poor areas as poverty is more of an indicator than gun ownership.	11.4% (4)	10.3% (3)
Responsibility	11.4% (4)	10.3% (3)
Line 293-303, needs to be commentary on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment	11.4% (4)	10.3% (3)
Line 455, distrust of politicians should be addressed	5.7% (2)	6.9% (2)
I want a clear statement that a Christian has a right to defend himself or herself	5.7% (2)	6.9% (2)
Criminals do not abide by governmental restraint	5.7% (2)	3.4% (1)
Line 516, what about ghost guns and gun shows?	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Line 593, how will we address the Christian nationalists and their views on gun controls?	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 35)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 29)</b>
Banning assault weapons for the general public	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
The government's (and the church's) number one priority should be to protect life	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Line 320, must include a discussion of the “moral discernment” needed to be able to protect others from violence	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
I don't believe God approves of the use of guns for “self-defense”	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Line 273, the idea of building a just peace could anchor this section	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Have a focus on how we help those who have been harmed by gun violence	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Offer alternative solutions	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
You must acknowledge the root cause of the fear	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Add the story of the apostle who tries to defend Jesus with a sword, and is rebuked by “those who live by the sword will die by the sword.”	2.9% (1)	3.4% (1)
Your God-given individual rights are not up for negotiation	2.9% (1)	0% (0)
Address mental health, not gun violence	2.9% (1)	0% (0)

13. Is there one idea you think should be deleted from this section?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 17)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 12)</b>
All of it	35.3% (6)	25.0% (3)
Christian being a defensive gun owner shouldn't be a question	17.6% (3)	25.0% (3)
Line 341, “violent governmental restraint” needs more clarity	5.9% (1)	8.3% (1)
Claiming that the media helps perpetuate gun violence	5.9% (1)	8.3% (1)
Lines 323-4, corrupt police is an incredibly minor factor in gun violence	5.9% (1)	8.3% (1)
Line 241, it's not clear how the Matthew 5:38-9 verse jives with the idea of “just peace”	5.9% (1)	8.3% (1)
Remove the section “shared responsibility beyond liberal individualism”	5.9% (1)	8.3% (1)
Document needs to address violence of all types	5.9% (1)	8.3% (1)
Allowing government to have any say in a rightful and personal decision to own a gun	5.9% (1)	0% (0)
The use of the word trauma is a promotion of fear	5.9% (1)	0% (0)

Part Three: Toward Shared Responsibility for What Makes Peace

20. Is there one idea you think should be added to this section?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 32)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 24)</b>
Line 644, would like to see the addition of suggestions for congregational level activities	18.8% (6)	20.8% (5)
It needs stronger advocacy for gun control and banning assault weapons	12.5% (4)	16.7% (4)
This document does not talk about the victims of gun violence and the sins of those who commit gun violence	12.5% (4)	16.7% (4)
Where is anything about the Gospel of Jesus Christ	6.3% (2)	8.3% (2)
Need to address the root causes of American societal fear	6.3% (2)	8.3% (2)
Church should not make policy but cultivate community outreach	6.3% (2)	4.2% (1)
Line 569, don't give up on policy, include examples like the carseat for successful regulations	6.3% (2)	4.2% (1)
We need to stop talking about guns and talk about people and who owns what firearms	6.3% (2)	4.2% (1)
Line 374, The ELCA calls upon the film and entertainment industry to not use gun violence as a form of entertainment, to not glorify, romanticize or dehumanize gun violence or in any way depict it as righteous, good or acceptable	3.1% (1)	4.2% (1)
Line 630, should mention advocacy for extreme risk protection orders (red flag laws)	3.1% (1)	4.2% (1)
The need for us as a community of faith to live above and beyond what is required by secular law	3.1% (1)	4.2% (1)
Line 358, add an opening section about individual citizens and neighborhood organizations, noticing trauma and loving those going through rough times	3.1% (1)	4.2% (1)
The only group of individuals that should have a voice in political matters are U.S. Citizens, not residents	3.1% (1)	0% (0)
Parenting	3.1% (1)	0% (0)
Reconcile your “divinely inspired” insights with the U.S. Constitution, the Bible's teaching of God's people and others, and fundamental “natural law” as it is understood by every culture	3.1% (1)	0% (0)
It should all be about mental health	3.1% (1)	0% (0)

21. Is there one idea you think should be deleted from this section?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 20)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 16)</b>
All of it	30.0% (6)	18.8% (3)
Everything about the AR-15, other guns are just as deadly	25.0% (5)	31.3% (5)
This is a political document trying to function as church doctrine	10.0% (2)	12.5% (2)
There is a large sector of the population, especially gun owners, manufacturers and clubs that have no interest in being peacemakers	5.0% (1)	6.3% (1)
Lines 502-4, reflects a gross misunderstanding of the cases that have been files against the industry	5.0% (1)	6.3% (1)
Remove the "...within a diverse, interdependent, and fragile society"	5.0% (1)	6.3% (1)
Remove lines 400-2 that begins with "However, this church..." We should be recognizing and thanking those in law enforcement	5.0% (1)	6.3% (1)
Line 626, if you want to build bridges and work with the gun community, you need to stop advocating to ban handguns and semi-automatic rifles	5.0% (1)	6.3% (1)
Line 420, "These inequalities lead to..." needs to be unpacked and made clearer	5.0% (1)	6.3% (1)
Lines 500-508, that is just wrong	5.0% (1)	0% (0)

Overall Questions about the Draft

23. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from the entire draft for you?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 115)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 101)</b>
Taking the middle ground between both poles	24.3% (28)	26.7% (27)
Most of your sources are "left-leaning," should be more balanced	13.0% (15)	10.9% (11)
Shared responsibility	11.3% (13)	12.9% (13)
The church is trying to influence law rather than trying to influence a more Christian model of behavior	6.1% (7)	5.0% (5)
Too much jargon, too long	5.2% (6)	5.9% (6)
It's a waste of time	5.2% (6)	5.0% (5)
No mention of mental health as a major contributing factor in suicide and shootings	5.2% (6)	5.0% (5)
How the ELCA is facing this issue	4.3% (5)	5.0% (5)

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 115)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 101)</b>
Anticipatory trauma	3.5% (4)	4.0% (4)
Continue to advocate gun control	3.5% (4)	4.0% (4)
“Love your neighbor” in regards to gun safety	3.5% (4)	4.0% (4)
Role of social disparities in contributing to gun violence	2.6% (3)	3.0% (3)
Too little discussion of the criminal aspect of this issue	2.6% (3)	2.0% (2)
Need to have serious discussions with those in the church who want to have a passive position	1.7% (2)	2.0% (2)
Discussion of whether assault weapons should be legal	1.7% (2)	2.0% (2)
Number of suicides/murders	1.7% (2)	1.0% (1)
Family values, having a father in the home, stopping the promotions of abortions	1.7% (2)	0% (0)
The church is unwilling to stand up for the right to life	0.9% (1)	1.0% (1)
Relationship of gun related violence with survivors of war or combat veterans who have been traumatized	0.9% (1)	1.0% (1)
The police have no obligation to protect you	0.9% (1)	0% (0)

24. What is one thing you can do to be a peacemaker that you did not consider before reading the draft?

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Total (n = 72)</b>	<b>ELCA (n = 69)</b>
Try to build bridges better, listen to opposing views	52.8% (38)	55.1% (38)
More advocacy on my part	16.7% (12)	15.9% (11)
Work to restore morality and bring Christ back into our culture	6.9% (5)	5.8% (4)
Encourage my community to move beyond solely individual or solely governmental understandings of who's responsible for safety and peacemaking	5.6% (4)	5.8% (4)
Teach the social message	4.2% (3)	4.3% (3)
Being honest about mental health	2.8% (2)	2.9% (2)
Document needs to be distilled into a one-pager so people will read it	2.8% (2)	2.9% (2)
Holding the media and thought leaders responsible	2.8% (2)	2.9% (2)
My only concern is for the safety of myself and my family	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)
Focus on what the members of the church need	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)
Recognize all forms of violence	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)
Parenting, responsibility, love they neighbor	1.4% (1)	0% (0)

## Appendix C Map of Participants' Zip Codes

