

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Faith Presbyterian and Wildflower Churches
Host Gun Violence Awareness Installation in Travis Heights**

AUSTIN—Wildflower Church and Faith Presbyterian Church, 1314 E Oltorf, have joined a coalition of congregations, universities, and local advocates to display [Vidas Robadas](#) installations across Texas. The installations honor and memorialize the 3,996 Texas residents who, on average, lose their lives to gun violence every year. Gun violence is the leading cause of non-accidental death in Travis County, according to a recent news release from the county judge. A total of 178 firearm-related deaths occurred in 2023, with 107 classified as suicides and 71 as homicides.

The two congregations, in partnership with Texas Impact, erected Vidas Robadas (Spanish for “Stolen Lives”) following their Sunday services on January 26. The outdoor installation features 100 T-shirts, each listing the name of a local person who has died by suicide or murder. Vidas Robadas will be on display on the church grounds until February 9. Members of the public are encouraged to visit the display, read the names of victims, and reflect on the cost of gun violence to our community. Texas Impact, which started the Vidas Robadas project, is an organization that equips people of faith with information and outreach tools to educate their communities. One of the goals of Vidas Robadas is to connect Texans across the state, so that they can band together to demand stricter gun legislation at the 2025 Texas Legislative Session in 2025.

“Last week we celebrated the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whom we lost to gun violence. And even long before his death, Mrs. Coretta

Scott King was a proponent of limiting gun and weapon access. The King Holiday is a reminder of just how impactful gun violence is, to a person, a family, a community, a nation, and our world. Our congregation's mission is to spread love, justice, and joy. When Texas UU Justice Ministry brought this project to our attention, we knew it was a conversation we didn't want to have alone," said Simone Monique Barnes, Wildflower Church's Director of Membership and Spiritual Life. "Vidas Robadas is a way to continue the work and legacy of The King Family, advocating for peace and nonviolence."

Having members of our congregations and neighbors in our surrounding community who have experienced gun violence firsthand, we feel it is critical to engage in this issue. And our church campus is located directly across the street from a public high school, which personalizes concerns about the impact that gun violence and school shootings have on students, parents, families, educators, and the communities that surround them. Vidas Robadas localizes and connects communities to the reality of gun violence, honoring gun violence victims and at the same time witnessing the need for change. Our faith traditions call on us to be stewards of peace and to care for the Beloved Community.

The Reverend Amy Myhand, pastor of Faith Presbyterian, said, "As followers of Christ, we are called to be peacemakers, to mourn with those who mourn, and to stand for justice. The Vidas Robadas project is a sacred act of remembrance and a prophetic call to action against the epidemic of gun violence that continues to steal precious lives. Every name we lift up represents a beloved child of God whose story must not be forgotten. As a community of faith, we commit to honoring their memories by working tirelessly for a world where peace prevails over violence, love triumphs over fear, and every life is valued as God intends."

After the installation at Wildflower and Faith, the shirts will be brought to the Texas Coalition for Gun Violence Prevention Advocacy Day held on Thursday, February 27th at the Texas Capitol. It will include a larger Vidas Robadas installation of shirts bearing the names of the victims of gun violence in Texas, a rally, and lunch and meetings with lawmakers. The community can sign up to receive updates, details, and more information. [HERE](#)

ABOUT THE CONGREGATIONS:

Faith Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is an inclusive and welcoming Christian community faithfully committed to ministries of compassion, diversity, equality and social justice. In 2024, recognizing that gun violence profoundly impacts the nation's children, the PC(USA) voted that every congregation take actions to promote gun safety.

<https://faithpresaustin.org>

Wildflower Church is a deliberately inclusive, lay-led, open-minded religious community in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, whose mission is growing spiritually together, spreading love, justice, and joy! Wildflower creates community by covenanting one to another, using our Covenant for Beloved Community, and uplifting our shared values of justice, equity, transformation, pluralism, interdependence, and generosity, with love at the center.

<https://wildflowerchurch.org>

The two congregations share a campus in the Travis Heights neighborhood in South Austin, located at 1314 E Oltorf Street, Austin TX 78704.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

Texas Impact is a religious grassroots network whose members include individuals, congregations, and governing bodies of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths. Texas Impact exists to advance state public policies that are consistent with the shared values of Texas faith communities. The non-profit works on a wide variety of public policy issues within the broadly held social concerns of mainstream religious traditions. Texas Impact uses a process of discernment on public policy issues like the processes used by many faith traditions, including Scripture, the wisdom of the faith traditions, current public policy information and data, and the experiential knowledge of people of faith to develop our positions and policy goals. <https://texasimpact.org/>

Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry (TXUUJM) is the UU state action network for Texas! It is a 501(c)(3c) member of the Coalition of UU State Action Networks (CUUSAN), representing about 40 UU congregations in Texas. Our motto is "Bending Texas Toward Justice TOGETHER." TXUUJM educates

and organizes Texas UUs, congregations, and partners to advocate effectively for UU principles in public policy and the public square. <https://txuujm.org/>

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