**Elements for a Possible September 18, 2022 Sermon for a Service of Lament, Repentance, & Action against Gun Violence**

Ideas by Dr. Amanda Udis-Kessler, July 28, 2022

Sample title: Guns or God? It’s Our Choice

Lectionary selections for September 18, 2022: Jeremiah 8:18-9:1, Psalm 79:1-3, and Luke 16:13

Sermon structure:

* Begin with a personal story or something recent in the news, something to grab the congregation and raise interest and passions
* Turn to the story of Jeremiah and the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple/the Exile of the Israelite leadership; discuss the Jeremiah reading and the first part of Psalm 79, which is about the same event
* Consider the violence against and suffering of the Israelites
* Focus on Jeremiah 8:19, which indicates that God has allowed the Babylonians to conquer the Israelites because of their idolatry
* Consider idolatry as the process of putting one’s trust in something that has no salvific power
* Consider the first three verses of Psalm 79: idolatry leads to death
* Spend some time on the lamenting aspect of the Jeremiah and Psalm 79 readings
* Turn to Luke 16:13 and discuss how this applies to guns as well as wealth: we cannot serve God and guns
* Tie Luke 16:13 back to the Jeremiah and Psalm 79 materials, and tie all three to our current idolatry of guns
* Consider repentance – what would it look like in this context?
* Consider action against gun violence: how can it be informed by these scriptural materials?
* Return to the initial personal story or news item to bring the sermon to a close
* End with a closing like the following: “The shots echo from Boston to Uvalde. The warnings arise from Jeremiah to Jesus. Guns or God? It’s our choice.”