



Penn Township church to conduct four-week lecture on gun rights

By [Chris Foreman](#)

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With gun control ranking as one of the most hotly debated topics in the nation, a local church is turning its attention to the history of the Second Amendment in a new program.

Starting Oct. 9, Ruth Anderson, co-owner of the Delmont Sport Shop, will lead a four-week lecture program at Living Word Congregational Church in Penn Township that she says will cover the significance of the amendment and why it should be protected.

Anderson, who is a minister at the church, said the program will be based on documents by the county's Founding Fathers, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Anderson and the church's senior pastor, Roy Aiken Jr. — both of whom are gun owners — say the church is offering an educational program that will counteract the “liberal media's” reporting on the gun debate.

Anderson said she thinks the country should do a better job of enforcing existing gun laws instead of creating new ones.

“I'm not expecting everybody to leave there in agreement with me, but I'm expecting them to leave it informed,” she said.

The program's emphasis on the Second Amendment differs from some religious organizations that have pushed for changing gun laws.

One week after a shooter killed 20 children and six adults at a Connecticut elementary school last December, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said guns were “too easily accessible.”

Meanwhile, East Liberty Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, like the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is a longtime supporter of gun-control legislation. East Liberty Presbyterian has held public forums on the harm caused by the failure to enforce gun laws and the need to restrict so-called assault-style weapons, the Rev. Randy Bush, senior pastor, said.

Bush declined to comment about another church's programming but called those in his congregation advocates for reducing gun violence.

“We've seen the toll that gun violence takes on families and neighborhoods, so we are outspoken on ways to mitigate what we see as a blight on our community,” he said.

At Living Word, Aiken said, the church — as an institution — hasn't adopted specific gun-ownership language as doctrine. But, Aiken said, he considers himself a “strict constructionist,” meaning that he interprets the Constitution as it was written.

The 40-year-old church, which was known as the Christian Fellowship Center until last year, allows its ministers to speak occasionally on topics that interest them. Last year, Aiken led a “Scripture-based, factual analysis of the Islamic faith” which, he said, showed Islam is an intolerant religion instead of peaceful one, as occasionally described in the media.

The church has a motto, Aiken said: “Don't leave your brain at the door.”

“We expect people to think for themselves, whether it's the pastor, whether it's the politicians; anybody that's sharing information with you, we think it's your responsibility to think for yourself,” Aiken said.

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Details

If you're going

Ruth Anderson, co-owner of Delmont Sport Shop, is giving a four-week lecture program on “Foundations of the Second Amendment” at Living Word Congregational Church, 2003 Ridge Road in Penn Township, on Wednesdays, starting Oct. 9.

Each lecture will start at 7 p.m. and last an hour.

For details, call 724-523-5421.