

# Suicide Prevention Week - September 8-14, 2019

On behalf of the *St. Clair County Suicide Prevention Alliance* and its members we are asking churches and places of worship of all denominations throughout the Illinois/St. Louis Metropolitan area to join us in “Save A Life” Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. We are asking that places of worship continue to be part of the solution in saving lives.

How can you or your place of worship participate? There are several ways: start by making those in your congregation and community know that you are part of the solution. Let them know that on Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, your place of worship will be recognizing the issue of mental health and suicide prevention as part of National Suicide Prevention Week. Here are several additional ways: provide a special alter call, pray with those in need, deliver a special message, hand out resources and materials to those in need and their families, offer recognition to those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

**Did you know:** Suicide claims approximately 1 million lives a year worldwide, and approximately 43,000 in the US (Center for Disease Control). According to Mental Health America Illinois (2015), 1,000 Illinoisans and Missourians die by suicide yearly. A recent study examining suicide rates from 1999-2014 showed a dramatic, 24% increase in suicide rates, with a significant increase in adolescent females, young adults, and middle-aged individuals (Center for Disease Control & Prevention, 2016).

There are many reasons for suffering (i.e., relationship issues, health issues, mental health problems, financial decline, lack or loss of social support, lost job, loss of faith or hope). We also know that many people carry heavy burdens and only want a place to lay them down, even if only briefly. Without a place to lay down burdens, some will become consumed and overburdened. Some will have nowhere to turn or no one to turn to. Some will see no way out.

We ask you to join us in participating in some way on Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup> 2019 in recognizing National Suicide Prevention Week (September 8-14, 2019).

For further questions or information, contact St. Clair County Suicide Prevention Alliance member and Suicidology Researcher for the Illinois Department of Public Health - Dr. Olivia Johnson at 618-791-9146 or by email: [johnsonolivia@sbcglobal.net](mailto:johnsonolivia@sbcglobal.net)