



“The church of Jesus Christ, in the power and unity of the Holy Spirit, is called to serve as an alternative community to an alienated and fractured world: a loving and peaceable international community of disciples transcending all governments, races and ideologies, reaching out to all “enemies,” ministering to all the victims of poverty and oppression.” This is from one of our United Methodist foundation documents, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, on page 82. Let this be an urgent reminder that this world is God’s creation, not subject to our indiscreet consumption, but a sacred gift to be received and nurtured with respect.

“There is no true security without peace and no true peace without justice.”

[What is peace?](#) It is more than the absence of war or the end of an ongoing war with military superiority. It is more than what the dictionary defines: the state of being calm or quiet. Peace that we believe God offers to us and invites us to make with one another is the wholeness and completeness of life which we live in harmony with others and God’s good creation and in union with Christ Our Peace.

Celebrating Peace with Justice Sunday on the first Sunday after Pentecost? It makes sense, as Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon put it, because “Pentecost brought peace.” They added to say that Pentecost did so, “not by healing differences through institutionalization of one language to replace the many. Instead a multilinguistic community was born to be for the world a witness to the peace instituted by the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Christians would be forced to learn the language of the stranger, Christ, because they also would be strangers to the world as a people of peace in a world of violence.” (*The Holy Spirit*, pp.34-35)

What would Jesus then say about the US that in the federal discretionary spending budget, [military spending outnumbers the sum of all non-military spendings](#)? Money on missiles and nukes are more easily funded than programs for the poor and hungry. “I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.” (Psalm 120:7) Isn’t this our experience in many places?

[Nearly 20,000 people died in the United States from gun violence last year](#) - more than any year in at least two decades. [Gun sales also jumped by 64% in 2020](#) with some 23 million guns sold in the United States. January 2021 was the third-highest one-month total of the gun sales on record. Living in such a world as this, let us be committed to God's vision: "In days to come... they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." (Micah 4:1a, 3b, also Isaiah 2:1a, 4b)

Your Gift Offers Peace.

While half of your Peace with Justice offering goes to the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) for grants to U.S. and international programs, the rest half supports local programs here in Wisconsin. To name a few, for the last three years, your gift made possible that United Methodists provided a ministry uniting Arizona border communities, a peace-building and conflict-prevention program to college students in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a micro-loan support to the unemployed in Buffalo, NY where a poverty rate is about 30% for them to make and sell reusable masks during the pandemic. Here in Wisconsin, as requested and then approved at the Conference Board of Church and Society, funding supports have been given to the Rising Sun Camp that provides a summer camp and an after-school program to children of an incarcerated parent, to a youth Mercy and Justice Seminar/Mission Trip in collaborations with United Methodist Women New York office and with the GBCS Seminar Program in Washington D.C., and to other non-United Methodist justice ministry groups such as Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice and Wisconsin Council of Churches.

An in-person workshop is being planned with the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) so that lay and clergy participants can learn theological foundations of peace and justice ministry, the GBCS's Advocacy Priorities, and faith-based grassroots organizing.

"Learn to do good. Seek justice: help the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17)"

Please lead your church to amplify our proclamation of Christ's peace through Peace with Justice Sunday celebration. Help our United Methodist siblings read again and live out our commitments as stated in [Charter for Racial Justice](#) (2016 Book of Resolution #3371) and [Speaking Out for Compassion](#) (2016 Book of Resolution #3422). As leaders of the church, we work together to empower people in Wisconsin and around the world to build the kingdom of peace that Jesus ushered in. Let us live God's kin-dom here this way by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for your leadership and commitment for peace with justice. In the midst of life in a conflicted world, may you have a time to renew your hearts and minds towards Christ's gift of peace.

If you have any questions or ideas to share, Rev. PyungAhn "Peace" Kim would love to talk to you about them. He is listed as the conference's Peace with Justice Coordinator. His email is pastorpeacekim@gmail.com. More stories of our United Methodist Peace with Justice ministry are found [here](#).