Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

The gospel is a message of redemption but also of peace and freedom. As Christians, we are called to spread peace, do good and stand for justice.

Take a look at the scriptures:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21)

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Not much has changed when it comes to peace and justice from the culture and context of those Scriptures to today. We still need to work to encourage peace and seek justice. As United Methodists, Peace with Justice Sunday is one way we are working together to seek justice.

While we recognize that no nation or culture is absolutely just, we believe that we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as peacemakers. It is necessary to work together to resolve conflict peacefully because it is in that resolution where work such as eliminating poverty, caring for orphans, and kickstarting health initiatives can be successful.

So what does being a peacemaker, peacekeeper or peacebuilder look like?

Peacemaking is defined as the process of creating a settlement between differing parties. If you have children, we are sure that you have played the role of peacemaker many, many, many times. Even if you don’t have children, perhaps this is a role that has been played by you or a friend to help settle a dispute.

Peacekeeping is keeping people from attacking one another by creating a buffer of neutrality between them. On a global scale, we’ve seen the UN or neutral nations act as peacekeepers. At a local level, this could mean involving a mediator to help.

Peacebuilding is a process that establishes peace through resolution, institution building or at the political level with the goal of preventing recurring violence.

Like any good lesson, it is never enough just to learn it. We must now act on what we know.

Peace with Justice Sunday is based on these ideas that the way to stand for justice is to simultaneously create pathways for peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is a day to take action by funding peace with justice programs in our communities.
One such program we want to highlight is the Peace with Justice Network. This network provides resources and legislative actions to support peacemaking and peacebuilding. Learn more by visiting their website: https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/peace-with-justice.