I saw a sweet video this week.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9N8OXkN0Rk

It starts with a little boy putting bottles of juice and cupcakes into his backpack. His mom asks where he is going. The boy replies, “I’m going to find God.”

The little boy makes his way to the park and takes a break, sitting on a bench to eat his cupcakes. A homeless woman sits on the bench next to him. When the little boy sees her, he offers her a cupcake. The two laugh, talk, eat and drink together. The little boy gives the woman a hug goodbye before heading home to dinner.

When he gets home, his mom asks, “So did you find him? Did you find God?” And the little boy responds, “God is a woman, Mom. And she has the most beautiful smile I’ve ever seen.”

The scene flashes to the park where the homeless woman meets a friend. Seeing her big smile, her friend asks her, “What are you so happy about?” The woman responds, “I just ate cupcakes with God. He’s much younger than I expected.”

“The then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'”

Isaiah 6:8
We are each recipients of grace. As Christ’s representatives, we are called to respond to violence and oppression with peace and justice:

• I was hungry and you gave me food to eat.
• I was thirsty and you gave me a drink.
• I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
• I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear.
• I was sick and you took care of me.
• I was in prison and you visited me.

On this Peace with Justice Sunday, we are reminded that when God’s children suffer injustice, Jesus suffers with them. On the other hand, when we build up peace with justice, we serve Christ. As disciples, we are compelled to respond to God’s mission, saying, in the words of Isaiah’s vision, “Here I am. Send me.”

In the Gospel reading we heard this morning, Jesus explains that the nations will be separated, not by geographic boundary, but by how we have cared for one another. It doesn’t matter where we live, our nationality or our ethnicity. It doesn’t matter what other people are doing or are not doing. God asks, “Are you building up peace with justice?”

The news is filled with examples of injustice and violence. Famine in parts of east Africa is compounded by political unrest. Local food pantries in the U.S. are intended to be a source for emergencies; yet, for many people, they have become part of necessary sustenance each month

I was hungry and you gave me food to eat.

Lead poisoned the drinking water in Flint, Michigan, and tests show that other cities in the U.S. are experiencing similar issues. In parts of the Appalachia region, it is not uncommon to see young children drinking soda out of baby bottles because it is cheaper than drinking water.

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.

The United Nations has declared that 15 days in solitary confinement is considered torture; yet, some states keep people isolated for years. A simple letter from a stranger can give hope to someone who is incarcerated, offering reassurance that someone on the outside knows of his or her existence.

I was in prison and you visited me.

Every person who goes to sleep hungry at night, every parent who loses a child to famine or disease, every neighbor who finds him or herself in line at a food pantry, every family who lacks access to clean drinking water or affordable health care, every beloved child of God who is in prison wondering if he or she is remembered …
Each of these people has a need that is holy. One of the beautiful aspects about the way Jesus tells the story of the sheep and the goats is that the ones who are like sheep do not even realize they have been serving Jesus. “Lord, when did we see you . . .?” the righteous ask. They aren’t responding to please Jesus. They respond, “Here I am. Send me,” because they are righteous. They are in right relationship with God and neighbor.

John Wesley commented that when people don’t have sympathy for the poor, often it is because they are not in relationship with them. He wrote, “Hence it is, that, according to the common observation, one part of the world does not know what the other suffers.”

In sharing, we practice building trust and building up the body of Christ. When see the Divine in others, we respond to our neighbors’ needs naturally, not as a burden, but because it is who we are as Christians. We move from a spirit of mission and charity and begin to confront systems that allow injustice to flourish. We become agents of peace with justice, turning over the structures that allow poverty, hunger, sickness and mass incarceration.

How we use our resources reflects our priorities:

- Are we building up food security, employment, living wages, health and wellness, abundance and compassion?
- Do our systems and policies, budgets and legislation look like punishment or like compassion?
- Do they reflect our United Methodist Social Principles?

**HERE I AM. SEND ME.**

When we experience our connectedness in the Divine, we realize that we cannot tolerate that sisters and brothers in our community or the world are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or lonely.

“And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Friends, this Divine reign of love has invaded the world in Jesus and by its very nature is infused with peace with justice. This Divine love lives and breathes in each of us and is meant to be shared in our words and our actions as we recognize and respond, “Here I am. Send me.”

Please stand and say with me “Our Social Creed.” (http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/our-social-creed)