

The Mustard Seed



Planting the things that make for peace.

April 2015

Prayer

Spirit of Justice and Kindness, when the world around us seems swirling out of control toward chaos and oppression, give us pause to take a deep breath and then rise like the breaking dawn to speak truth to power, nonviolence to empire, freedom to those who would bind, and raise our voice of love to those who would instill fear. One day, one day, love and justice will prevail, may it be soon!

(By Kent Little)

Faith as small as a mustard seed...

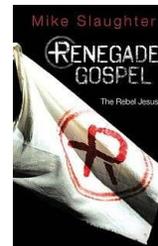
The disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. Jesus reminded them that an abundance of faith is not necessary: "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you" (Luke 17:6). So it's not about how much faith you have, but how much of what you have that you commit to action. The Resurrection defines the new possible – just as Jesus responded to the man who asked Jesus if he could help his son, "Everything is possible for one who believes" (Mark 9:23).

Resurrection faith begins with a renewed way of thinking. Before you can be raised to a new level of life, you have to die to old ways of thinking. You have to have new life pictures! This means releasing past assumptions, feelings, and practices. Resurrection thinking affects every area of our lives. From our relationships to the way we think about the stewardship of time and financial resources, we must die to old patterns of thinking and be raised to the new. What is the new reality? Things that are impossible for human beings are possible for God. Ask yourself: "What can God do through me if I am willing to risk acting on the mustard seed faith that I have?" The impossible is the new possible!

From Mike Slaughter (2014). Renegade Gospel. The Rebel Jesus. p. 123/124

Dear Great Plains Peace Advocates,

During Lent I read the above quoted book by Mike Slaughter. My hope and prayer is that we take whatever faith we have and use it to work for God's kin-dom, taking risks, trusting God to lead us where God needs us most.



I am hoping that each of you had a blessed Lenten season and a joyful Easter celebration. Let us take the resurrection joy with us in the coming weeks knowing that God brings hope over despair, joy over sorrow, love over hate. "The impossible is the new possible!"

This is the first issue of The Mustard Seed for 2015. It is coming out later than I had hoped. If you are subscribed to GPconnect you will see

that I publish articles in it from time to time. After the November issue of The Mustard Seed I received positive feed-back about starting up a *Great Plains Peace with Justice Ministries* facebook page which should happen no later than May. You will get notified when it does.

As always, feel free to send me feed-back or information about peace and justice related events that are happening in your congregations or communities.

Shalom – Salam – Paz – Peace,
Andrea

Shalom Sparks

(takes about 5 - 15 minutes to complete)

- Ten Micah Corps interns have been selected for this summer. Please pray for these young adults as they
 - grow in their spiritual walk with God
 - link their faith with social justice action
 - learn from social justice experts in Kansas, Nebraska and Washington, D.C.
 - strengthen their leadership skills, and
 - connect with Great Plains United Methodists across Nebraska and Kansas



Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.
Micah 6:8

- Talk with your pastor/ congregational leaders to make sure your congregation will celebrate these two upcoming Special Sundays.

Native American Ministries Sunday is celebrated on April 19, 2015.

Dr. Richard Twiss, a member of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, asks:

“Will we be allowed to develop new ways of doing church that honor God’s purposes for the creative expression of our cultures? Will new ministry partnerships and coalitions form? Will you help be a part of this wonderful process of reconciliation, restoration and release?” Say yes.

<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/native-american-ministries-sunday>



Peace with Justice Sunday is on May 31, 2015 (or can be celebrated on any other Sunday).



This special offering enables The United Methodist Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs. The offering benefits peace with justice ministries in our own conference and through the General Board of Church and Society.

<http://www.umcgiving.org/ministry-articles/peace-with-justice-sunday>

- Pray for the preparations being made for our **Annual Conference June 10 – 13th in Wichita**. Several resolutions focusing on peace and justice issues will be brought before and voted on by the delegates.

Peace Possibilities

(takes about 30 to 60 minutes to complete)

- ❖ **Celebrate Earth Day on April 22** and learn more about creation care and climate justice. Commit to one action to care better for God’s creation. Share with friends what you are doing.
<http://www.umccreationcare.org/>

- ❖ Helping without hurting - Get a group together to watch this video about building partnerships in our mission outreach work. It is referred to in the March/April 2015 issue of New World Outlook and is called: **The Movement: The Power of Partnership** (50 - 50 Partnerships) - How can we help without hurting? Building collaborative relationships. <https://vimeo.com/111007717>
- ❖ Check out and share bible studies, fact sheets and other resources about **gun violence prevention**. Resources can be found at: <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/gunviolenceprevention>

Vision Ventures

(takes a bit more energy and time!)

- It is not too late to register for one of the **“Healthy Families, Healthy Planet”** advocacy training events in our Conference. Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., at Woodlawn UMC, in Derby, Kansas, or Saturday, July 25, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., at South Gate UMW in Lincoln, Nebraska. <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/eventdetail/788000>



- If you live near one of the locations offering the screening of an **immigration documentary** in May, participate to learn more about the reality of our immigrant sisters and brothers. Screenings will be taking place in Gering, Omaha, and Lincoln, Neb. and Topeka, Leawood, Wichita and Dodge City in Kan. <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/newsdetail/947563>

United Methodist Women, National Justice For Our Neighbors and the

General Board of Church and Society are working together to support United Methodists in conferences across our nation who are taking action to advocate for an end to family detention. Mothers at the Karnes Detention Center in TX who just came off a hunger strike say: *“Our children are not eating well and every day they are losing weight. Their health is deteriorating.”*



Special events are planned for May 2nd at the new for-profit Dilley Detention Center in TX and across the nation. Consider organizing a prayer vigil and contacting legislators. More information will be available soon.

- Sign up for one of the **Mission U** seminars being offered in our Conference this summer and invite others to join you.

2015 Study Topics:

Spiritual Growth Study -- "Created for Happiness"

Geographic Study -- "Latin America"

Issues Study -- "The Church and People with Disabilities"

2015 Dates and Locations

Weekend: July 10-12, 2015 Downtown Ramada Inn, Topeka, KS

Weekday: July 19-23, 2015 Kansas Wesleyan, Salina, KS

Weekend: July 31-Aug 2, 2015 Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE

See more at: <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/MissionU>

**Feel free to contact me for more information.

<http://www.greatplainsumc.org/peacewithjustice>

The Mustard Seed newsletter is an electronic publication of Peace with Justice Ministries, Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Andrea Paret, amparet08@yahoo.com