

# The Mustard Seed



**Planting the things that make for peace.**

**January/February 2014**

**Dear Great Plains Peace Advocates,**

“Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and the effect of justice will be peace.” (Isaiah 32:16-17)

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of Justice.” Martin Luther King Jr.

Greetings to you from your **Great Plains Peace with Justice Coordinator**. You might wonder what responsibilities this position includes. Peace with Justice coordinators are assigned by every annual conference with the main task of linking the local churches in the annual conference with the Peace with Justice Ministry of the General Board of Church and Society. Through this ministry justice resources, interpretation and advocacy are made available.

This is the first issue of The Mustard Seed going out in our new conference. To help get the word out about this resource throughout the Great Plains Conference, I will publish it through GPConnect besides sending it to the existing mailing list. And I ask those of you who have been a part of the Mustard Seed Peace Advocates to share this resource with others and let me know if someone wants to get added to the mailing list (amparet08@yahoo.com). My hope is to have it published bi-monthly.

As United Methodist Peace Advocates we promise to pray, study and act for God’s shalom in our homes, communities and the world.

Shalom – Salaam – Paz – Peace,  
*Andrea*

## Shalom Sparks

(takes about 5 - 10 minutes to complete)

- Invitation to apply for this summer’s Micah Corps internship for up to 8 young adults in the Great Plains Conference. This is a ten week internship focused on deepening one’s walk with God, learning about linking faith with social justice and practicing leadership skills. Share the information with young people you know. Ask that this be included in your church newsletter and bulletins. [www.greatplainsumc.org/micahcorps](http://www.greatplainsumc.org/micahcorps).



- To help our connection and to make us stronger, please send me information about peace and justice related events and needs to include in future issues of The Mustard Seed.
- If you aren’t yet, please sign up to receive GPConnect each week. It helps us stay connected across the conference and be aware of what is happening and where our work as Peace Advocates might be needed. [gp-email.brtapp.com/subscribe](http://gp-email.brtapp.com/subscribe).

## Peace Possibilities

(takes about 30 to 60 minutes to complete)

- Bread for the World (an organization endorsed by UMCOR) is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's leaders

to end hunger at home and abroad. Order their free Lenten prayers booklet or download it at <http://www.bread.org/what-we-do/resources/newsletter/february-2013/lenten-prayers-for-hungry.html>  
Share it with your family, friends, Sunday School class etc. and use it during Lent.



- Buy fairly traded chocolate for Valentine's Day or other occasions through Equal Exchange (UMCOR endorsed). They have Organic Chocolate Hearts available. Invite others to join you in this.  
<http://equalexchange.coop/>

## Vision Ventures

(takes a bit more energy and time!)

### **\*Advocating in faith - Participate in one of two events**

Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>: **Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day "Working for Justice"** at Christ UMC in Lincoln, Neb. A variety of workshops will be offered including children's issues, human trafficking, environmental stewardship, alternative sentencing, immigration, poverty, and how best to advocate. Several students will be part of the leadership. The speaker for the closing address will be Emiliano Lerda, Executive Director of Justice For Our Neighbors-Nebraska, talking about "Sowing the Seeds of Justice."

<http://interchurchministries.org/legislateday.html>

Sunday and Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>: **Legislative Event for Advocacy in Faith (LEAF)** at First UMC in Topeka, Kan. which focuses on immigration this year. It will start with worship, a guest speaker and workshop Sunday evening. Monday morning begins with breakfast, followed by worship, guest speaker, legislative update, boxed lunch and the opportunity to attend two different workshops.

<https://sites.google.com/site/kecumw/ministries/annual-events>

### **\*How do we fulfill God's invitation for a grace filled life by loving God and our neighbors?**

Bulletin inserts available about United Methodist Social Principles

Controversy among United Methodists regarding same-sex marriages and offering Holy Communion via Internet have been in the news. As Peace Advocates we do not shy away from controversial issues but are willing to struggle with them and take action. The bulletin inserts available from the General Board of Church and Society can be helpful discussion tools for small study groups and Sunday school classes.

The Social Principles are a call to a "prayerful, studied dialogue of faith and practice," according to their Preface in the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*. They are an effort on the part of the General Conference "to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation as historically demonstrated in United Methodist traditions." Each Social Principle is grounded in scripture, tradition, experience and reason. But it is also stated, that "you may honestly hold deep convictions that you cannot reconcile with the Social Principles."

Spend time praying, studying, being in conversation with others. What am I called to do? What is each one of us called to do? Encourage others in your church to join you. Encourage your pastor to include inserts in worship bulletins from time to time. <http://umc-gbcs.org/faith-in-action/social-principles-bulletin-inserts1>

### **\*Peacemaking among the three Abrahamic faiths**

- Come to the XXVIII Peacemaking Workshop with Rev. Dr. John Philip Newell at First UMC in Lincoln, Neb. on March 30<sup>th</sup>. [www.firstumclincoln.org](http://www.firstumclincoln.org)

*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](mailto:amparet08@yahoo.com)