Dear Great Plains Peace Advocates,

Several new Peace Advocates have joined us during the past weeks, signing up through e-mail (after an article in GPconnect), at the Peace with Justice Ministries booth at Annual Conference or at other gatherings. Thank you! Please share any stories you might have of what is happening in your local church for peace with justice and with suggestions for future Mustard Seeds. Together we can strengthen our work towards God’s shalom.

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

If your church or a group within the church is excited about starting a justice project, there are small Social Justice Seed Money grants available through the Great Plains Mercy and Justice Team. To access the flyer go to the article in GPconnect on 6/25/14: http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/170304#toc22

In this issue of The Mustard Seed I will use a different format than in the past issues to share about the four issue areas the Micah Corps interns are involved in.

Shalom – Salaam – Paz – Peace, Andrea

A Prayer That Justice Will Reign

O Lord, deliver us

From making people feel unwelcome within our church walls or denomination,

O Lord, deliver us.

From discriminating in thought, word, or deed against people who think, look, or act differently than we do,

O Lord, deliver us.

From overlooking the immigrant in our midst, and from failing to recognize how our broken immigration system harms our brothers and sisters,

O Lord, deliver us.

From lust of money, power, and material objects,

O Lord, deliver us.

From idolizing weapons and wars, which kill innocent lives,

O Lord, deliver us.

From abusing Mother Earth by leaking toxins into and extracting natural resources from Her,

O Lord, deliver us.

Holy God, we pray that justice will reign over injustice all over the world. We pray that we might be vessels of Your peace, so that all people may know that You are love.

Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of Your Spirit to give ourselves for others.

In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

By Elizabeth Murray, June 13, 2014
Peace Possibilities

What does the Lord require, but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

The Micah Corps internship has three major goals:

- To deepen one's spiritual walk with God by exploring different prayer practices
- To sharpen leadership skills
- To learn about God's call for social justice and take action

Several of you have been following along what our nine Micah Corps interns are doing this summer. And some of you have met them when they visited your church and worshiped with you or at other occasions. Here is how you can connect with them:

Facebook.com/MicahCorps
Twitter:@MicahCorps
blog: MicahCorps.wordpress.com

Being Stewards of God’s Wonderful Creation

We have had many disasters including tornados, flooding and fires in the Great Plains Conference in the recent past. It is heartwarming and gives hope to see the outpouring of support for those impacted by these disasters. And this needs to continue. But we are also asked to look at the underlying reasons for changes in weather patterns and climate.

and Carter are focusing on environmental stewardship this summer.

“Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.”

Deut. 30:19

God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. (Social Principles, ¶ 160)

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

- Visit the website for God’s Renewed Creation, the document by the Council of Bishops – hopeandaction.org
- Visit the UMW website on environmental justice - http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/environment

On both sites you will find useful information about using a carbon footprint calculator with your church group or local church among many other ideas for action.

Jesus said: “Let the children come to me!”

So many of our children in the Great Plains Conference and worldwide live in poverty. Kaity and Navya have been working with Voices For Children in Nebraska as well as researching poverty issues in Kansas.

“God remembers those who suffer and does not forget their cry.”

Psalm 9:12

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

- Participate in Bread For The World’s Offering of Letters this summer or fall, advocating for hunger relief legislation. www.bread.org
➢ Check out some of the interactive games on Bread For The World’s website like “Feeding a Family” game.
➢ Invite friends or a Sunday School group to watch the documentary “The Dark Side of Chocolate” (available on YouTube) focusing on child trafficking and our responsibility in it as consumers.

“Love your neighbor as yourself!” – Who is our neighbor?

Immigration is in the news almost daily. Thousands of children are risking their lives trying to reach the United States to escape gang violence and abject poverty. And many people here are scared that our resources will run out and our own children be lacking. What are we called to do? God wants abundant life for all of God’s children.

Gloria, Ella, and Hannah are focusing on immigration issues this summer. They have invited numerous people across the Great Plains Conference to contact our congressional delegates advocating for compassionate immigration reform.

“Love the immigrant for you were immigrants in the land of Egypt.” Deut. 10:19

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS
➢ Familiarize yourself with the Resolution “Compassionate Immigration Reform” that was passed at the Great Plains Annual Conference and take action – (the link can be found at: http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/170304#toc24).
➢ Prayerfully consider becoming a part of the Great Plains Immigration Rapid Response Team (ask me for more information).

➢ Invite a speaker or show a documentary about immigration issues and engage in learning, discussion, action (contact me for resources).

Peace and Non-violence

Rachel and Mary Rachael have engaged in issues of non-violent conflict resolution, gun violence and peace-making.

“When Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword back into its place.’” Matt. 26:52

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS
➢ Familiarize yourself with the Resolution “Christians Respond to Gun Violence” which was passed at the Great Plains Annual Conference and take some of the encouraged actions. (see attachment)
➢ Invite others to engage in a three session Bible Study by Rev. Bill Mefford from the General Board of Church and Society called “Kingdom Dreams – Violent Realities” (see attachment, soon also available on the greatplainsumc.org website)
➢ Invite others to watch “Little Town of Bethlehem” together and learn more about the situation in Palestine and Israel. The documentary tells of the efforts of a Christian, a Muslim, and a Jew in Palestine and Israel who are trying to reduce violence and promote dialogue between the groups.

For upcoming opportunities for peace with justice engagement, please read on page 4!

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
Upcoming Opportunities for Peace and Justice Engagement

1. Plan to attend Mission U!
Did you know that Navya and Kaity will be teaching the youth and the children study? Bring your children and grandchildren. Mission U is for all, young and old, men and women. It is a wonderful opportunity to study, learn, and take action. Study topics this year are “How is it With Your Soul?” (Spiritual Growth), “The Roma of Europe” (Geographic), and “The Church & People with Disabilities” (Issue).

*Weekday: July 21 – 24  
Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, Kansas  
*Weekend: August 1 – 3  
Holiday Inn, Kearney, Nebraska  
Application deadline for the above is 7-10-14! 
*Mini: November 7 – 8  
Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas

2. Love in Action
Great Plains Reconciling Ministries Network  
August 1 and 2 at College Hill UMC in Wichita, Kansas - A reconciling event for the people of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church - Working together for full inclusion of all of God’s children regardless of sexual orientation. For more information, contact Brian Sutton at above listed church or go to the Great Plains Reconciling Ministries facebook page.

3. Join the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund at Countdown to Zero: Just Save One...an equipping conference on HIV and AIDS

   September 11-13, 2014 in Denver, Colorado.  
   For more information, go to  
   http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Programs/Global-Health/HIV/AIDS/AIDS

4. Walking with Palestinian Christians
   “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Matthew 5:9

Join United Methodist and Palestinian Christian leaders on Thursday and Friday, August 7-8, 2014 for Walking with Palestinian Christians...for holy justice and peace, co-sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church.

Carol Garwood and Andrea Paret will attend and plan to bring back ideas for action in our local churches and throughout the Great Plains Conference. Two more scholarships are available. Contact Andrea for more information.

Please keep the participants in these events in your prayers!