

March/April 2014

# The Mustard Seed



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

## Prayer for Lent

**Disturb us, O Lord,  
when we are too well-pleased with ourselves,  
when our dreams have come true because we  
dreamed too little  
because we sailed too close to the shore.**

**Disturb us, O Lord,  
when with the abundance of things we possess,  
we have lost our thirst for the water of life,  
when, having fallen in love with time,  
we have ceased to dream of eternity  
and in our efforts to build a new earth,  
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.**

**Stir us, O Lord,  
to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas  
where storms show Thy mastery,  
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.  
In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons of  
our hopes and invited the brave to follow.**



**Amen.**

*This prayer is attributed to Archbishop Desmond Tutu  
(adapted from an original prayer by Sir Francis Drake).*

**Dear Great Plains Peace Advocates,**

As we experience the Lenten season and reflect on Jesus' life, let us pray for wisdom and courage to speak out and act where we are called to do so.

Shalom – Salaam – Paz – Peace,  
*Andrea*

## Shalom Sparks

(takes about 5 - 10 minutes to complete)

- Write a thank you card or e-mail to someone who has spoken up for peace in your community, state or in our nation.
- Pray for the young adult interns being selected this spring for work this summer across our conference including the Micah Corps, camp counselors, Vacation Bible School interns, and interns at local churches.



- To help our connection and make us stronger, please send me information about peace and justice related events and needs to include in future issues of The Mustard Seed.

## Peace Possibilities

(takes about 30 to 60 minutes to complete)

**Following Jesus' call to be peacemakers  
(Matthew 5:9)**

Whether we live in a state that has or doesn't have a Stand Your Ground law, these laws contribute to creating a culture of fear across

our nation. In 25 states such a law makes it possible for citizens to shoot and kill others if they feel threatened instead of trying to retreat. Many communities do not feel safe anymore. Recently, such a law was used in a court case for a man who killed an unarmed teenager over loud rap music. Stand Your Ground laws meant that the killer could be declared innocent if he could prove that he felt threatened. The jury was unable to issue a verdict.

Missouri State Representative Randy Dunn recently talked about a 2013 study in which researchers analyzed more than 43,500 homicide cases by race in states with Stand Your Ground laws versus those without them. The study discovered that whites who killed people of color and then used the Stand Your Ground defense were 350 percent more likely to be found justified in the use of deadly force.

Notes: Currently Kansas has a Stand Your Ground Law, Nebraska doesn't.

- Sign a petition to state governors urging them to repeal these laws. <http://sojo.net/get-involved/action-alerts/stand-your-ground-laws-need-go>
- Study, pray and act in regard to the United Methodist Women Charter for Racial Justice with your friends or a group at your church.



<http://prod.umwomen.org:88/what-we-do/service-and-advocacy/mission-focus-issues/racial-justice/chapter>

- Encourage your church to participate in *Hands on the Great Plains* and include a justice/advocacy component looking at root causes of situations where help is needed.



Materials can be found at <http://handsonthegreatplains.org/resources/video-training-sessions/>

## Vision Ventures

(takes a bit more energy and time!)

- Get together with others to learn about and get involved in the Children's Defense Fund's campaign "Protect Children – Not Guns." <http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs-campaigns/protect-children-not-guns/#6>
- Make plans to celebrate Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Possible resources can be found at <http://www.earthday.org/>.



- Plan to attend Mission U. This 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). Mission U is for all, young and old, men and women. Bring a friend.

\*Weekday: July 21 – 24

Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, Kansas

\*Weekend: August 1 – 3

Holiday Inn, Kearney, Nebraska

\*Mini: November 7 – 8

Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas

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

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