

*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Micah 6:8b

# September

Stewards of Justice and Peace:

## Restoring God's Intended Shalom



“If you want peace, work for justice.” With those words, Pope Paul VI activated his generation. The General Synod, in its 1985 Just Peace Church Pronouncement, defined “just peace” as the interrelation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence. It called the church to a vision of shalom rooted in peace with justice.

What is shalom? Typically we think of peace. But it also includes prosperity, welfare, health, well-being. The best single word is wholeness. To have shalom, persons will have health, dignity, self-respect, constructive human relationships, and resources to be productive, contributing members of the community who achieve a basic level of economic security. What can have shalom? Individuals, relationships, families, communities, villages, towns and cities, nations, the creation. Shalom is measured by what happens to each and every member of society, especially those without power.<sup>1</sup>

There are many ways to work for justice. Some are called as activists, engaging in public witness, policy advocacy, and grassroots empowerment; some as teachers or preachers, doing issue education, theological reflection and discernment; others to ministries of direct service and presence. We give to the Neighbors in Need special mission offering. All are working to build a more just, compassionate, peaceful world – to restore God's intended shalom.

**As centers of hope and transformation, local churches will engage in building a strong faith-based movement for peace and justice.**

**SUGGESTED LEADERS/PARTNERS:**

Stewardship, Social Action/Mission, Christian Education and Youth ministries.

**IDEAS FOR LEADERS:**

(Resource Websites and links: [www.ucc.org/stewardship](http://www.ucc.org/stewardship), [www.ucc.org/justice](http://www.ucc.org/justice), [www.uccvitality.org/resources](http://www.uccvitality.org/resources))

- **Continue the sermon** series with “Stewards of Shalom.”
- **Promote** the Neighbors in Need special mission offering (see [www.ucc.org/nin](http://www.ucc.org/nin)).
- **Engage your community** in spiritual practices of justice, testimony, prophetic witness, and reconciliation through:
  - A “Spiritual Practice Sampler” (see January).
  - Sunday school classes, study groups or a retreat.
  - Practices for teens – the “Justice” chapter in *Way to Live* or do *A Fast That Lasts* retreat.
- **Engage in Bible study** and reflection using [www.ucc.org/justice/biblestudy](http://www.ucc.org/justice/biblestudy) *Imagine Another World is Possible, In Response to the Call of Christ*, or *Overcoming Violence*.
- **Form a social action group** and/or invite members to get active (see [www.ucc.org/justice](http://www.ucc.org/justice) links):
  - Join the Justice and Peace Action Network (JPANet).
  - Engage in faith-based organizing with ecumenical partners.
  - Visit the UCC Take Action Center.
- **Invite participation** in Child Sponsorship, Global Volunteer Service, People to People Pilgrimage and local outreach efforts.

***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."***

MARGARET MEAD

***"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."***

MAHATMA GANDHI