

What does the Bible say?

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? **(Micah 6:8)**

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. **(Isaiah 1:17)**

Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. **(Amos 5:24)**

Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. **(Hebrews 13:3)**



What does the United Methodist Church say?

A justice system that reflects God's desires for the world is one that is healing and restorative. Those who have been victimized by crime and the communities in which they reside need healing. Healing can come as safety and security are restored and the broken bonds of mutuality and share existence are mended. **(Book of Resolutions, #4150, Humanizing Criminal Justice)**

We believe that offenders must be held accountable for criminal actions, particularly those that result in a loss of life or livelihood, so we support measures to prevent, or eliminate crimes, and set apart dangerous offenders. While insisting on accountability, we are also committed to fair and proportional sentencing and to humane treatment of those who are imprisoned. **(Paragraph 163, Political Community, Section E)**



CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES

What do the facts say?

- The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with over 1.9 million people in prisons and jails. (Prison Policy Initiative, 2023)
- Black Americans represent 13% of the U.S. population but 33% of the prison population. (NAACP, 2023)
- Nearly 80% of people in jail have not been convicted—they are awaiting trial, often because they cannot afford bail. (Prison Policy Initiative, 2022)
- 95% of incarcerated individuals will eventually return to their communities, yet access to reentry programs and support remains limited. (Bureau of Justice Statistics)
- Children with incarcerated parents are more likely to experience poverty, trauma, and educational challenges. (Annie E. Casey Foundation)



What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

- **Join** or organize a prison ministry or reentry support group through your local church.
- **Advocate** for legislation that promotes restorative justice, ends cash bail, and reduces racial disparities in sentencing.
- **Learn more** and **get involved** with the General Board of Church and Society and its criminal justice advocacy efforts.
- **Support** local and national organizations working on criminal justice reform and prisoner reentry.



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