

DEATH PENALTY

What does the Bible say?

Thou shalt not kill. **(Exodus 20:13)**

Say to them, “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.”
(Ezekiel 33:11)

You have heard that it was said, “Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.” But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also...You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
(Matthew 5:38-39, 43-44)

Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.
(John 8:3-11)

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. **(John 10:10)**



What does The United Methodist Church say?

We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore, and transform all human beings. The United Methodist Church is deeply concerned about crime throughout the world and the value of any life taken by murder or homicide. We believe all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore, we must see all human life as significant and valuable. When governments implement the death penalty (capital punishment), then the life of the convicted person is devalued and all possibility of change in that person's life ends... [The] gift of reconciliation [that comes through Jesus] is offered to all individuals without exception and gives all life new dignity and sacredness. For this reason, we oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes. **(Social Principles, ¶164.G)**

See also **Resolution #5037 “Texas Death Penalty”** in the 2016 Book of Resolutions. Adopted in 2008 upon the meeting of the General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, this Resolution identifies the particular injustice of the death penalty in Texas, which is marked by racism, official misconduct, the execution of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and more. It should be noted that, while Texas is an egregious example, these issues are not unique to Texas.



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

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

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What do the facts say?

- 140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice, including nearly all of Europe, Central and South America, and numerous countries in Africa.¹
- China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the United States are among the 10 countries that annually execute the most people.²
- Since the death penalty was reinstated in the U.S. in 1976, 1,437 people as of October 2016 have been executed.³
- Support for the death penalty is the lowest it has been in over four decades: less than half of all Americans favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Botched executions, exorbitant costs, continuing discoveries of innocence on death row, and changes in public opinion are contributing factors.⁴
- Since 1973, over 150 people have been released from death row in the U.S. with evidence of their innocence—an average of 3 people a year from 1973-1999, and 5 people a year from 2000-2011.⁵
- States that practice the death penalty have higher murder rates than states that do not. From 1990-2014, states that had capital punishment had an average of a 30% higher murder rate than states which did not have capital punishment.⁶



1, 2: Amnesty International, 3, 5, 6: Death Penalty Information Center, 4: Pew Research Center

What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

Join United Methodists Against the Death Penalty which connects United Methodists working for abolition and coordinates state groups working for abolition. Visit action.umc-gbcs.org/joinnetworks to join our network.

Join People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, a leading organization mobilizing people of faith throughout the United States to abolish the death penalty. Find state-specific resources, and more at www.pfadp.org.

If you reside in the U.S., **tell** your State Representative and Senator that the death penalty does not work in restoring victims or protecting society.



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