

The General Board of Church and Society **2025 Year-End Report**

HOLY BOLDNESS

A FAITHFUL CALL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE



CHURCH & SOCIETY
The United Methodist Church

Living FAITH Seeking JUSTICE Pursuing PEACE

COVER PHOTO: In June 2025, United Methodists joined an interfaith protest at the steps of the Capitol Building's Senate Chambers, advocating for a fair and moral U.S. budget before the 2025 government shutdown. Church and Society's General Secretary Bishop Julius Trimble was one of the featured speakers.



LEFT: Bishop Trimble delivers a "moral budget" message from the steps of the U.S. Capitol building to a crowd of protesters, with onlooking U.S. Senators, including Senator Raphael Warnock, GA.

2025 Year-end Report Photo Credits: Joscie Cutchens and GBCS Staff

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GENERAL SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Friends,

2025 was a year of harsh realities with war and conflict, unprecedented attacks on American civil

liberties and freedoms from U.S. government policies, and significant challenges and harm from climate and creation care catastrophes, which in many cases were preventable.

Regardless of the strong political and social headwinds, the General Board of Church and Society steadily continued to drive results, equipping United Methodists and the faith community with leadership and resources to live faithfully, pursue peace and seek justice on many social witness issues.

Today, a HOLY BOLDNESS for social witness action and ministry are critical as ever. We believe the Love ethic of Jesus calls us to embrace what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to as the "Fierce Urgency of Now."

This GBCS 2025 Year-end Report provides evidence of a holy boldness and how we have built upon our significant legacy to speak up, speak out and take action for peace and justice on behalf of our United Methodist connection around the world.

This is a new season of United Methodism calling for more faithful stewardship and risk taking for the advancement of our mission to uphold and promote our United Methodist Social Principles for human well-being, justice, peace and the integrity of creation. As we have experienced, the work and witness activity that we are engaged, has worldwide implications.

Focusing on the Social Principles, all the progress in this GBCS report is based on sound public witness and advocacy, relevant social justice education and engagement, timely communications and uncompromising connectivity to the United Methodist Church.

In collaboration with committed Board members, a gifted GBCS staff, UMC agencies and conferences, social justice coalitions, interfaith partners, international civil society allies and United Nations non-government organizations, we have created strong networks, programs and communications to stand for peace and justice all over the world. There can be little progress or impact apart from partnership and collaboration.

Looking toward the future, I am excited about the impact of our work with all those who would pursue beloved community and refuse to push the mute button on our prophetic witness for faith, peace and justice.

Be encouraged,

Bishop Julius C. Trimble,

General Secretary, The General Board of Church and Society



Join us and become part of our growing network. To learn more about GBCS and sign up for our digital newsletter go to www.umcjustice.org

Bishop Trimble shared a prayer and prophetic message for the Creation Care Rally on the grounds of Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., September 2025.

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES: OUR GROUNDING AND OUR GUIDE

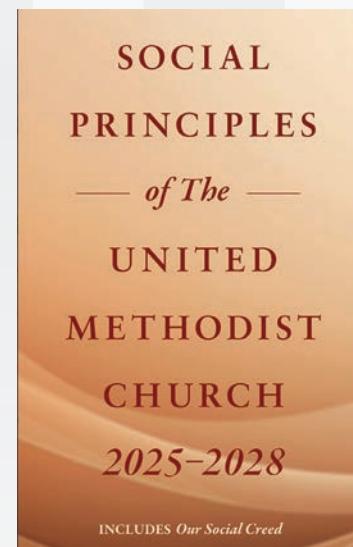
The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church provide the most recent stated convictions on issues of social concern promoted through the General Board of Church and Society.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Social Principles are channels of God's grace for Christian public witness. They ground and guide United Methodists to affect God's vision of love, mercy and justice in the world.

The Social Principles of 2025-2028 are available on the GBCS website translated into nine languages.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Partnered with Cokesbury to publish the official 2025-2028 Social Principles of The United Methodist Church book with study guide.
- Issued seven grant awards for 2026 contextualized Social Principles educational resources to be developed in Mozambique, Tanzania, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Uganda, and the Philippines.
- Updated all resources both online and print to reflect the 2025-2028 Social Principles.



The official 2025-2028 United Methodist Social Principles Book, with GBCS teaching resources, is available for purchase on the Cokesbury website.



Stand-alone version of the Social Principles and additional GBCS Social Principles resources are available on the GBCS website.

The 2025-2028 UMC Social Principles address social concerns reflecting the diverse contexts of the worldwide church. The Social Principles articulate our ethical aspirations for the common good in our public policies and personal commitments.

"The primary responsibility of the board is to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns," (2020/2024 Book of Discipline, ¶1004).



ADVOCATING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Church and Society offers bold, courageous leadership to affect social change for justice and peace around the world.

Both on Capitol Hill at the United Methodist Building and the United Nations headquarters in New York City, Church and Society stands as a testament and witness that no government can ignore the welfare of the people and not be called to a higher moral ground.

This year, with coalition partners, advocates and ecumenical leaders, Church and Society advocated for social change with those who experience exclusion, violence, and systemic harm.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted an exhibit honoring the history and realities of those fighting for workers' rights with the National Farmworkers' Ministry.
- Prayed for peace on the steps of the UM Building as we marked the *80th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. A nuclear abolition advocacy coalition has sprung up out of this year's calls for disarmament.
- Joined with our interfaith and ecumenical partners calling for a moral budget on the steps of the U.S. Capitol as a Pentecost witness.
- Hosted a high-level delegation from the DRC in Washington, D.C. to meet with officials for peace.
- The U.S. House of Representatives co-sponsored the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act as a direct result of our coalition's advocacy meetings.
- Gathered nearly 500 participants in-person and online for the 11th Annual Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs.
- Co-hosted *The Sand Creek Massacre: The Betrayal that Changed Cheyenne and Arapaho People Forever*, an exhibit developed by History Colorado together with the three Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, in partnership with GCORR.
- United Methodists sent over 58,000 messages to U.S. Congress representing all 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., a 134% increase over last year.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

Bishop Trimble and Ecumenical partners with U.S. Senators on the steps of the Capitol for the U.S. Federal Budget Protest.

Sand Creek Massacre on public display at the United Methodist Building.

GBCS Levi Bautista in the UN General Assembly before he offered Civil Society testimony.

Farmworkers Ministry exhibit honored at the United Methodist Building.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
*Hosted by Levi Bautista, GBCS
 Staff at UN Headquarters in
 New York for International
 Advocacy and Communications
 planning sessions, April 2025.*

*At the November 2025 United
 Nations COP30 in Brazil, GBCS
 delegation team observed and
 advocated for an ambitious
 international agreement to
 address climate change.*

REV. DR. LIBERATO BAUTISTA RECEIVES SPIRIT OF THE UNITED NATIONS AWARD

The Rev. Dr. Liberato “Levi” C. Bautista, Assistant General Secretary for United Nations and International Affairs at the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church, was honored with the 2025 Spirit of the United Nations Award in the Non-government Organization (NGO) category.

The award recognizes Bautista’s extraordinary leadership spanning 45 years in civil society, including 28 years representing The United Methodist Church at the United Nations.



“Programs like Medicaid and food assistance are overwhelmingly popular for a reason – because we want to make sure that our neighbors have what they need when they need it. Congress should be passing legislation to help hardworking communities to lower our costs, to invest in our schools, and to ensure children are taken care of.”

– Speech excerpt from Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards, Senior Executive Director for Advocacy, at the Interfaith Rally and Prayer Vigil for Health Justice, Washington, D.C.

EDUCATING FOR FAITHFUL ACTION IN LOVE

In the face of dominant narratives that contribute to unjust policy, Church and Society provides forums that lead to deeper understanding of how United Methodists of all ages can take action for justice and peace.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Africa University's Institute of Peace, Leadership, and Governance to provide active dialogue and programming on human rights, peace and conflict management, and democracy.
- Welcomed 314 seminar participants from 14 states to engage topics of social concern.
- Issued the Connecting Faith and Justice Youth Lectionary Curriculum, authored by over 41 contributors.
- Offered 3 Pages for Progress book study series and accompanying discussion guides focused on the Israel/Palestine conflict, hunger in America, and the Sand Creek Massacre. Over 100 participants took part in the Pages for Progress program.
- Co-hosted with GCORR, a panel of Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal representatives to share their perspectives on the Sand Creek Massacre, offered two webinars on the massacre, and hosted the Sand Creek Interagency Task Force at the United Methodist Building.
- Launched the 2025 Summer EYA program with 5 interns who worked with GBCS staff across departments to engage in theological reflection, spiritual growth, and faith-based social action.
- Issued 2 Bible studies on gun violence prevention and U.S. immigration.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

After a historic Memorandum of Understanding Agreement with Africa University's Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance in March 2025, (L) Bishop Julius C. Trimble, General Secretary, Church and Society, stood with (M) Rev. Dr. Peter Mageto, Vice Chancellor and Professor, Africa University, (R) Mr. James Salley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Development of Africa University and President/CEO Africa University Tennessee Inc.

Panel co-hosted by GBCS and GCORR at the United Methodist Building in November 2025, General Secretaries Bishop Trimble and Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo welcome a panel of Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal representatives to share their perspectives on the Sand Creek Massacre.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: 2025 GBCS Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Interns from left to right: Kudzaise Faith Tariro Muchanyerey, Africa University; Lucas Chung, Boston College; Odessey Heredia (Ethnic Young Adult Chaplain and Theology Intern), Yale University; Tafadzwa Chikawa, Africa University; and Jenna Hopgood, University of Michigan.

Tafadzwa Chikawa at home in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

A COMMENTARY

TAFADZWA CHIKAWA, 2025 EYA INTERN

My time at the General Board of Church and Society as an Ethnic Young Adult Intern has been both transformative and deeply affirming of my calling to faith-based social justice work. Over the past weeks, I've had the privilege of engaging global issues through the lens of faith, advocacy, communications and justice. Whether through theological reflection, policy engagement, or community dialogue, I was continually challenged to think critically and compassionately about the role of the Church in the world.

We live in a time where injustice is not rare; it is everywhere. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, people are suffering due to war and exploitation. In Palestine, the cries for justice and dignity continue as lives are lost and communities are torn apart. At the U.S. border, refugees and immigrants face violence, rejection, and systems that rob them of their humanity. Communities of color around the world still face the deep, lingering harm of racism in healthcare, education, housing, and poverty. And climate change is displacing the very communities who contributed least to the problem, but suffer the most from its effects.

In light of all this, it's easy to feel small. But through this internship, I've come to understand that small doesn't mean powerless.

This summer, I've grown in ways that have deeply transformed me.

Thanks to all my fellow interns and the GBCS staff, who were so helpful, engaging and supportive.

I am also so thankful to my supervisor Jeffrey Corey in Communications. I learned how to tell and write compelling stories that deliver facts and influence social action and change. The communications mentoring experience was eye-opening and extremely rewarding as I got to write stories on social justice issues within my country of Zimbabwe.

Going forward, I intend to bring what I've learned back to my community and my church. I want to create more spaces where young people can talk openly about faith and justice, where we can wrestle with hard truths together and still choose hope.

This internship has reminded me that faith must move us to act. It has equipped me both with practical tools and spiritual grounding to return to my own community—especially in Zimbabwe—with a renewed sense of purpose. I am more convinced than ever that the Church must be a voice for the voiceless, a shelter for the weary, and a catalyst for systems that reflect God's justice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - Tafadzwa Chikawa, is a 2025 graduate of Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe (June 2025) earning a Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Social Work.

Growing up in Mutare, he learned early on the value of community. At Hartzell High School, Tafadzwa served as Vice President of the Leo Club, leading donation drives for orphanages and senior homes. Through his involvement with King David United Methodist Church in the Zimbabwe East Annual Conference, he held various leadership roles in the United Methodist Youth Fellowship, including Secretary and Vice President.

EQUIPPING NETWORKS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Guided by the Social Principles, Church and Society supports diverse, equitable justice teams to lead, organize, and support justice and peace efforts.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Strengthened partnership with the Philippines Regional Conference Board of Church and Society through a Co-programming Agreement to provide mutual support, solidarity, and shared programming.
- Convened an Advisory Team for Justice and Peace for a three-day retreat on Capitol Hill developing frameworks to equip annual conferences for grassroots engagement, legislative advocacy, and movement-building aligned with the denomination's Social Principles.

- Co-hosted a national organizing training in partnership with Mission Network Organization, United Women in Faith, and Eastern Pennsylvania and Baltimore/Washington Conferences.
- Provided information on the Solidarity with the Stranger webinar, to support immigration and migration ministries.
- 200 participants attended a Grace Over Greed Update webinar to examine issue priorities through the lens of the federal budget.
- Awarded grant monies to 40 ministries across the connection for peace and justice.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: *The Rev. Allison Mark; Bishop Julius C. Trimble; Bishop Israel M. Paintin; and Pastor Thaad Kolin Samson, hold the signed agreement in October 2025 for a Church and Society Co-programming effort with the Philippines Regional Conference Board of Church and Society.*

The Church and Society Advisory Team for Justice and Peace stood for a photo in front of The United Methodist Building after a three-day retreat in October 2025, developing frameworks to equip annual conferences for grassroots engagement based on UMC Social Principles.

A COMMENTARY

REV. RYAN K. GEPhARDT

The General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church helps United Methodists, like myself, live out the calling of Jesus Christ. From communications resources, advocacy to seminars to training to partnerships; GBCS has provided me with the tools I need to effectively serve my conference and my church in the pursuit of living out the Gospel.

As disciples, we are called to be Christians who live out their faith in the process of moving on to perfection in love.

Sanctifying grace calls us to seek justice for our neighbors. GBCS is a sanctifying grace sharing organization. It seeks to help people live out the prophet Micah's call "to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8, NRSV).



– Rev. Ryan K. Gephardt, Local Church pastor, Peace with Justice Coordinator for the Susquehanna Conference of The United Methodist Church



Multiple UMC agency and annual conference participants respond during a national Church and Society November 2025 Faith-based Community Organizing training, in partnership with Mission Network Organization, United Women in Faith, and Eastern Pennsylvania and Baltimore Washington Conferences.

solidarity WITH THE sojourner

Understanding U.S. Immigration
and Our Call to Respond

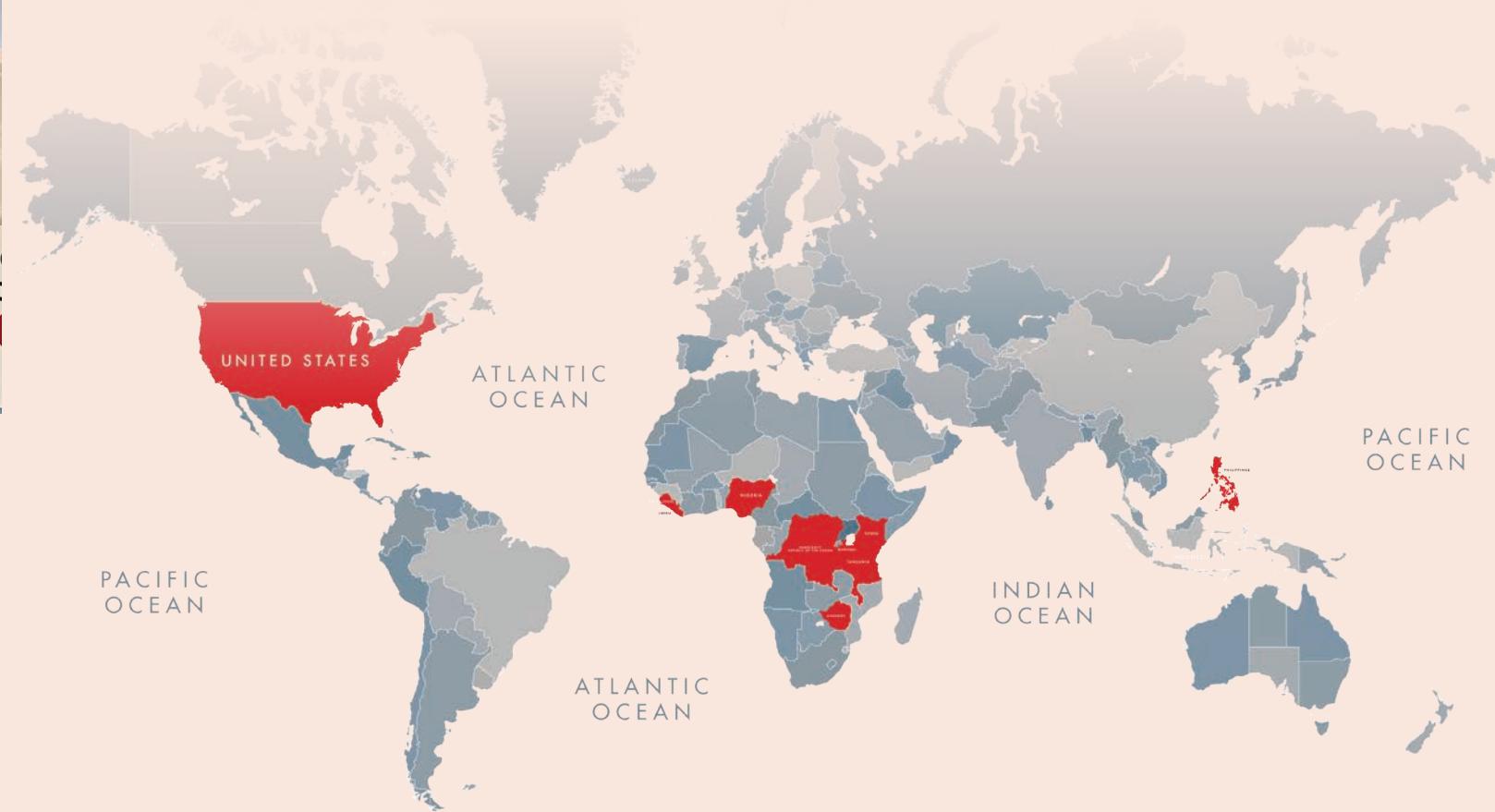


#BeUMC



To address the issue of immigration deportations, a co-sponsored Immigration Solidarity Educational Webinar was held in February 2025, in collaboration with UMC Agencies and coalition partners.

2025 GBCS GRANTEES BY COUNTRY



Burundi

Tanzania

Kenya

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Zimbabwe

Liberia

Nigeria

Sierra Leone

United States

Philippines

GBCS GRANT AWARDS

Church and Society awards grants to United Methodist congregations and groups related to The United Methodist Church through the Ethnic Local Church, Human Relations Day, and Peace with Justice programs.

The GBCS Grant Process for 2026 will be announced in July 2026.

Questions? Contact us by email: grants@umcjustice.org

A REFLECTION

REV. ALLISON MARK, PRESIDENT, GBCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"All year, I have been amazed with the GBCS staff, who under the leadership of Bishop Trimble have worked tirelessly alongside networks of United Methodists and partners to champion peace and justice. This same energy has fueled the work of the Board as we have been visioning together for the future of GBCS. In addition, at our in-person Spring Board meeting in Los Angeles, we offered acts of solidarity and witness with those impacted by the devastating wildfires in Altadena, California, while at our fall meeting, we mourned the passing of our beloved board member and executive officer Helen Ryde, and welcomed new members from across the connection.

This is a time in which the mission and ministries of GBCS are a critical witness of the United Methodist Church. I am confident that the work of Church and Society will continue to be a prophetic voice for the flourishing of all of God's people and creation."

- Rev. Allison Mark, Board President



TOP TO BOTTOM:

Rev. Allison Mark

At March 2025 Board Meeting, GBCS Board members and Staff discuss strategic plans and development for 2026.



Hosted by Bishop Julius C. Trimble, the Justice Takes Courage podcast brings together United Methodists and interfaith partners to share ideas and perspectives that drive faith-based advocacy and legislative action.

Visit the GBCS homepage to listen. Also available on many major podcast services.



GBCS Board of Directors and Staff group photo during the Spring meeting at the Faith United Methodist Church in Torrance, California, March 2025.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Raúl Alegría

Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference

Rev. Dr. Sharon Austin

Florida Annual Conference

Dr. Martha Banks

East Ohio Annual Conference

Rev. Joel Bengbeng

Northwest Philippines Annual Conference

Mr. Frederick Brewington

New York Annual Conference

Rev. Duane Carlisle

Indiana Annual Conference

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Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Baltimore-Washington/Peninsula-Delaware Episcopal Area

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Holston Annual Conference

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Angola West Annual Conference

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Mountain Sky Annual Conference

Ms. Faith Otana

Uganda-Sudan-South Sudan Annual Conference

Rev. Lyssette Perez

Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

Dr. Mittie Quinn

Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference

Rev. Smart Kelson Senesie

Sierra Leone Annual Conference

Rev. Megan Shitama Weston

Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference

Rev. Tilmann Sticher

Germany South Annual Conference

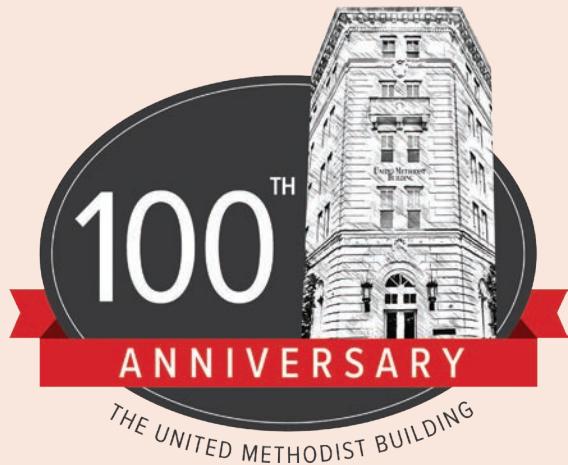
Rev. Sarah Tiainen

Finland Swedish Provisional Annual Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST BUILDING

The United Methodist Building, a United Methodist Historic Landmark and GBCS headquarters, has stood as a witness to holy boldness for justice and peace on Capitol Hill for over 100 years.

Request an in-person tour of the building or experience the online tour by visiting the GBCS website at umcjustice.org



SUPPORT GBCS

Donate at www.umcjustice.org/donate.

Celebrate Human Relations Day and Peace with Justice Sunday.



Human Relations Day, typically celebrated the Sunday closest to MLK JR. Holiday, calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with one another. 10% of the proceeds go to GBCS to provide grants that promote ministries for restorative justice and youth outreach.

Peace with Justice Sunday is a Special Sunday that is traditionally observed the Sunday following Pentecost. 50% of the funds go to your local annual conference peace and justice ministries and 50% goes to GBCS to support national and international programs and grants for peace and justice ministries.

CONNECT WITH US

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