

# GAMBLING

### What does the Bible say?

God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them. **(Genesis 1:27a)**

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you. **(Hebrews 13:5)**

But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. **(1 Timothy 6:9-10)**

I came that you might have life and have it abundantly. **(John 10:10)**



### What does The United Methodist Church say?

Gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, economic, and spiritual life, destructive of good government and good stewardship. As an act of faith and concern, Christians should abstain from gambling and should strive to minister to those victimized by the practice. Where gambling has become addictive, the Church will encourage such individuals to receive therapeutic assistance so that the individual's energies may be redirected into positive and constructive ends. **(United Methodist Social Principles, ¶163.G)**

The Church acknowledges the dichotomy that can occur when opposing gambling while supporting American Indian tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Therefore, the Church's role is to create sacred space to allow for dialogue and education that will promote a holistic understanding of the American Indians' historic quest for survival. **(United Methodist Social Principles, ¶163.G)**

The Church's prophetic call is to promote standards of justice and advocacy that would make it unnecessary and undesirable to resort to commercial gambling—including public lotteries, casinos, raffles, Internet gambling, gambling with an emerging wireless technology and other games of chance, as a recreation, as an escape, or as a means of producing public revenue or funds for support of charities or government. **(United Methodist Social Principles, ¶163.G)**



**CHURCH & SOCIETY**

The United Methodist Church

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

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### What do the facts say?

- Studies show that a person is twice as likely to have a gambling addiction if he or she lives within 50 miles of a casino.<sup>1</sup>
- “Players” with household incomes under \$10,000 bet nearly three times as much on lotteries as those with incomes over \$50,000.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2022, per capita spending on state lotteries was \$316.47, but a lottery ticket buyer is 5 times more likely to be eaten by a shark than to win the lottery.<sup>3</sup> Gambling disorder involves repeated, problem gambling behavior.<sup>4</sup> Sports betting leads to problem gambling at a rate twice that of other gambling. In 2018 the Supreme Court struck down a federal law that limited sports betting primarily to Nevada. 45% of sports betting is now online putting easy access to gambling in the hand of anyone with a smartphone.
- Casinos target seniors by marketing special deals during the day that include fixed schedule transportation. Seniors who gamble are often on a fixed income and are particularly vulnerable to dipping into their retirement to play.
- Due to the virtual nature of online gambling, it is hard for players to verify the authenticity of sites they are using.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup>National Opinion Research Council, <sup>2</sup>Natl. Gambling Impact Study Report, <sup>3</sup>US. Census Bureau, <sup>4</sup>American Psychiatric Association, <sup>5</sup>Gainsbury, S., Park, J., Suhonen, N. Consumer attitudes towards internet gambling: perceptions of responsible gaming policies, consumer protection, and regulation of online gambling sites. Computers in Human Behavior.

### What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

**Remind** your state and federal legislators that gambling is contrary to good governance. It preys upon those who can least afford to lose money. Our goal of being good stewards of what belongs to God should lead us to make decisions that do not promote inequity and addiction. This should be particularly true as inequity and addiction disproportionately affects the poor, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations who are enticed to gamble what they cannot afford out of a desire to be lifted out of poverty or to alleviate loneliness.

**Learn** more about how gambling affects your state and its spending decisions. Visit [www.stoppredatorygambling.org](http://www.stoppredatorygambling.org) for the latest information on gambling prevention advocacy activities.

**Acknowledge** that the world and everything in it belongs to God and make decisions regarding the resources you control accordingly.



**For more information contact:**  
[advocacy@umcjustice.org](mailto:advocacy@umcjustice.org)

[www.umcjustice.org](http://www.umcjustice.org)

**General Board of Church and Society**

100 Maryland Ave, NE Washington, DC 20002

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