

ECONOMIC, HEALTH, AND GENDER JUSTICE

What does the Bible say?

Motherhood is sacred. Therefore, making motherhood safe is a moral imperative. Women who are called to be mothers undertake a sacred responsibility to carry life and bring that new life into the world. We acknowledge the pain and suffering of women forced to be mothers through rape, child marriage, or lack of access to unwanted pregnancy services and products, and of those who have suffered miscarriages. As a family of God, we support women and families in all situations. Mothers are important figures in our biblical tradition. Women like Eve, Hagar, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary the mother of Jesus are remembered for their role as bearers of new life. But within the sacred texts, there are also stories of maternal tragedy and loss. Both Rachel (**Genesis 35:16-20**) and the wife of Phinehas (**1 Samuel 4:19-20**) died after prolonged and difficult labors. Tragically, this is still happening today.



In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples that he came to bring abundant life to his followers (**John 10:10**). God's desire is that every mother, every child, and every family not only survives, but thrives. Tragically, survival is often a daily struggle for those who lack access to basic services and care. God calls us to respond to the suffering in the world, to love our neighbors throughout the world. (**Leviticus 19:18**)

What does the United Methodist Church say?

As a church, we support other measures and initiatives to improve human health, including investments in preventative care, good nutrition, continuing research in infectious disease prevention and treatment, pre- and postnatal health, and substance abuse treatment on demand. We commend churches that are involved in community-based health-care ministries (**The Political Community, Basic Rights and Freedoms, A. Health Care**)



Tragically, with regard to maternal care, survival is often a daily struggle for women who lack access to basic services that they need. God calls us to respond to the suffering around us, to love our neighbors throughout the world. As followers of Christ, we are members of the same body. We must care for everyone—especially women who are already navigating systems of oppression and often risking their lives during and following pregnancy and birth. (**2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #4204, Maternal Health: The Church's Role**)

Maternal mortality is a moral tragedy and the church must address the health, economic, and cultural barriers that contribute to maternal deaths. (**2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #4204, Maternal Health: The Church's Role**)

Women are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families and communities. They deserve access to services and care that empower their personal and economic decision-making and development. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women's well-being. (**2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #4204, Maternal Health: The Church's Role**)

We call upon all United Methodists to address the root causes of maternal deaths in local contexts, which could include addressing access to health services, racism, or child marriage (**2020/2024 Book of Resolutions, #4204, Maternal Health: The Church's Role**)

MATERNAL HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

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

MATERNAL HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING

What do the facts say?

- 808 women die every day and 2.4 million newborns die annually from complications during pregnancy or childbirth. (UNFPA)
- Ninety-four percent of the estimated 295,000 annual maternal deaths occur in low-resource settings where women lack access to adequate medical services (UNFPA/WHO)
- Currently, 225 million women would like to delay or prevent a pregnancy but lack access to family planning services that would facilitate them to do so. (WHO)
- If all the unmet need for family planning was met, maternal deaths would drop by third, and 600,000 fewer children would lose their mothers each year. (UNFPA)
- In the United States, Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women. (CDC)



What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

- **Support** United Methodist projects around the world working on maternal health and family planning.
- **Advocate** for policies aimed at addressing racial disparities and increasing funding for family planning and reproductive health in your communities.
- **Partner** with local health initiatives that expand access to information and services for women's health. Ask how you can join with these organizations to ensure women and men in your community have access to the services they need to lead healthy lives.
- **Promote** healthy masculinity and engage men to actively participate in comprehensive family planning. It is not a women's problem; it affects us all, and men should be part of the solution.



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