

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Pastoral Resources - United States of America

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. *Hebrews 2:14-16*



Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing, and does not give him his wages. *Jeremiah 22:13*

Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all who are left desolate. Open your mouth, judge righteously; maintain the rights of the poor and needy. *Proverbs 31:8-9*

WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

The 2008 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ¶161 states that United Methodists “deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. To lose freedom and be sold by someone else for sexual purposes is a form of slavery, and we denounce such business and support the abused and their right to freedom. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible.



Today’s child, in too many parts of the world... is often being denied a childhood itself by being forced into labor under abusive and destructive condition. Many millions of children around the world labor in work that is coerced, forced, bonded, enslaved or otherwise unfair in wages, injurious to health and safety, and/ or obstructive of educational or moral development.

2012 Book of Resolutions, #3083 “Eradicating Abusive Child Labor”

WHAT DOES TRAFFICKING LOOK LIKE IN THE US?

Who is vulnerable? Any person who has been victim of violence and abuse, those who are financially insecure, runaway and homeless youth, temporary visa holders and undocumented foreign nationals.¹ Sex trafficking occurs on the internet, through escort services, street prostitution, commercial fronts, residential brothels, stripping and pornography.²



Labor trafficking is created by the **demand** for goods and services at a low cost on the individual level, for low cost of labor in the household with domestic workers, and low labor cost of small business and corporations.³

¹ <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/resources/human-trafficking-101>

² Ibid.


³ Ibid.

Labor trafficking occurs in agriculture, domestic work, construction, begging, nail salons, spas, hotels, restaurants, fisheries, traveling sales crew and in drug trafficking.⁴

- Customers fuel the commercial sex industry. In the US, 1 out of every 5 to 6 adult males admit to purchasing sex.⁵
- Victims of sex trafficking often share risk factors, including: child sex abuse, parental neglect, parental drug use, emotional and/or physical abuse by a family member, and poverty.⁶
- Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline, has reported more than 4,000 labor trafficking cases inside the United States.⁷
- In a study from San Diego State University, 31% of undocumented, Spanish-speaking migrant workers interviewed in San Diego County had experienced labor trafficking.⁸
- Victims of labor trafficking have been found among the nation's migrant and seasonal farmworkers, including adults and children who harvest crops and raise animals.⁹

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

Be a gathering place that casts a vision of hope

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- Nurture all people celebrating their sacred worth and restoring dignity.
 - Create a place of belonging for children and youth so they know unconditional love and know they are cared for. Children deserve safe and respectful relationships and communities.
 - Children's ministries should help develop a positive self-esteem for children. One resource for this is the [Teaching Sacred Worth Book Initiative](#).¹⁰
 - Preach and teach of a world free of violence.
 - Interrupt gender based discrimination and sexual objectification where you see it.
 - Create space for intergenerational discussions of: identity, sexuality, sexual identity, sexism, sex and healthy relationships.

Educate

- Become informed about the many layers of injustice that create the vulnerabilities that allow the exploitation of people.
- Learn more about [what trafficking looks like in your community](#).¹¹
- Take the [slavery footprint quiz](#) to find out how much you benefit from slave labor.¹² Act to decrease your footprint.
- Learn the signs of human trafficking and report to The Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888.
- Value and encourage youth and young adults to seek healthy relationships built on respect.
- Teach and model [healthy masculinity](#).¹³ Encourage men to see their role in ending gender and sexually based violence.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/resources/human-trafficking-101>

⁶ <https://www.unicefusa.org/sites/default/files/Toolkit.pdf>

⁷ <https://polarisproject.org/labor-trafficking>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ 2014 Trafficking Report

¹⁰ <http://umc-gbcs.org/sacred-worth-books>


¹¹ https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/Human%20Trafficking%20in%20Your%20Community_1.pdf

¹² http://slaveryfootprint.org/#where_do_you_live

¹³ <http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Healthy-Masculinity-Action-Project/>

- Educate clergy, lay leaders, children and families, teachers, health care providers, outreach workers about fraudulent promises of traffickers and the resulting exploitation and abuse;
- Use [resources from the Human Trafficking Resource Center](#) in bible studies and church education.¹⁴
- Host community events that educate about the reality of human trafficking; invite other churches, organizations that work with survivors, and law enforcement to collaborate and create awareness together.
- Connect with organizations and agencies that are a part of the anti-trafficking task force.
- Be aware of the organizations in your area that work to gain freedom for those who are trafficked, and the organizations that work with survivors. Encourage your community to support their efforts. Click [here to find organizations](#) in your area.¹⁵
- Build relationships with emergency care, social services providers and shelters.
- Host community events to educate about the reality of human trafficking. Events could include a walk for freedom, hosting a screening of a film on trafficking, or be around a big sporting event.

Work to end trafficking

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- Address vulnerabilities that allow for trafficking to continue such as poverty, sexual and gender based violence, and media images, attitudes and beliefs that cause internalized oppression.
 - Advocate that the US sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Visit the UNICEF website to know more.¹⁶
 - Lobby the US government to continue funding initiatives and research centered on human trafficking.
 - Choose to [buy products that are fair trade and ethically sourced](#).¹⁷
 - Join with others [to petition your favorite companies](#) to demand slave free products.¹⁸
 - **Get connected.** The General Board of Church and Society can support your efforts. Contact Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy, sburton@umcjustice.org

¹⁴ <https://polarisproject.org/resources/outreach-and-awareness-materials>

¹⁵ <http://globalmodernslavery.org/>

¹⁶ unicefusa.org/advocate

¹⁷ <https://madeinafreeworld.com/members>

¹⁸ <http://chainstorereaction.com>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Pastoral Resources for Action – US General

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The frequency and acceptance of domestic violence within our communities is sometimes overlooked. Yet it weighs down, isolates, creates pain, seems endless, and limits vision, making life unbearable for the survivor of the abuse. Luke 11:46 tells of loading people with burdens that are hard to bear, grievous and undesirable by others; yet no one is willing to lift a finger to help them. Such is domestic violence.

In Luke 13: 10-17, Jesus encounters the woman who had been bent over for eighteen years, unable to stand straight. She was so overcome with the burdens that she could only see the ground, she saw feet rather than faces, was alone, helpless and appearing to be worthless. That is what the burden of domestic abuse does, as it grips, immobilizes, and keeps victims oppressed. It is the role of the church to intervene and stop the abuse.

Jesus calls, not waiting to be asked, a gracious initiative that would change her life. He gives a kind yet powerful touch, speaks to her situation, brings freedom and courageously goes against cultural norms. God was glorified, and a woman and daughter who was bound for a long time was set free.

Everyone did not celebrate. Jesus shamed those gathered because their excuses for keeping her a victim were not acceptable. Something wonderful had happened – that which bound the woman had been broken. Christ touched one who was doubled over in pain and enabled her to walk upright again. May we go and do likewise and remove the burdens of violence, and abused suffered by so many, allowing freedom and glorifying God.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

We recognize that family violence and abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical, sexual—are detrimental to the covenant of the human community. We encourage the Church to provide a safe environment, counsel and support for the victim. While we deplore the action of the abuser, we affirm that person to be in need of God’s redeeming love.”

161.G Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church affirms the sacredness of all persons and their right to safety, nurture and care. It names domestic violence and sexual abuse as sins and pledges to work for their eradication. The church commits itself to listen to the stories of battered spouses, rape victims, abused children, adult survivors of child sexual abuse, and all others who are violated and victimized. The church further commits itself to provide leadership in responding with justice and compassion to the presence of domestic violence and sexual abuse among its membership and within the community at large.

2012 Book of Resolutions, #3423, “Violence against Women and Children”

WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one person to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner or family member. Abusive behavior can be physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual.¹

On average close to 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During a year, this adds up to more than 10 million women and men.²

Nearly 1 in 10 women has been raped by an intimate partner which includes completed forced penetration, attempted forced penetration, or alcohol/drug facilitated completed penetration.³

In the US Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime.⁴

Women with a household income less than \$50,000 USD have a significantly higher prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence.⁵

The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$8.3 billion per year.⁶

27% of women and 12% of men have experienced physical violence, contact sexual violence, or stalking of an intimate partner and reported significant short term and long term impacts, such as post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and injury.⁷

- **Language barriers** keep survivors of abuse from being able to navigate services.⁸ Advocates often lack the appropriate language skills, vocabulary, and cultural understanding to know how to address the sexual violence with their client.⁹ Meet with advocates and support services to discuss culture and vocabulary around sex can help to decrease these barriers.
- **Not wanting to report.** Abuse can go unreported. Many survivors do not feel comfortable reporting their abuse to law enforcement. Silence creates a culture of blaming the person who has been abused for the abuse.
- **Inequality.** Domestic violence is a clear indication that there is inequality in the relationship which can result in an environment of fear and victimization. Therefore we must continue to address beliefs, attitudes and messages that are deeply embedded in our social structures and that create a culture that condones sexual violence and intimate partner violence.¹⁰

¹ http://nkaceda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Brochure_ENG_KAN-WIN.pdf

² <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics>

³ <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/infographic.html>

⁴ <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics>

⁵ <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/infographic.html>

⁶ <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics>

⁷ <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/infographic.html>

⁸ Korean-American Coalition Created to Address Domestic Violence on National Level. Retrieved November 17, 2015, from <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/korean-ameriacn-coalition-created-address-domestic-violence-national-level-n448086>

⁹ <http://www.api-gbv.org/files/SexualViolence.HowtoInclude-APIIDV-2009.pdf>

¹⁰ Adaptation from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

Be a place of healing

- Be a safe and confidential space for survivors as they engage in the process of healing.¹¹
- Preach and teach biblical messages that emphasize the sacredness of women and children. Honoring the dignity and worth of every person.
- Boldly speak against violence of all forms in our communities. Silence allows for abuse to be accepted as a social norm.
- Reach out confidently to those families where abuse is suspected.
- Affirm survivors for their courage and strength to seek support.¹²
- Encourage the family to be involved and support the survivor and abuser.
- Know the social services providers and shelters in your area. Build relationships with caregivers so that you trust referring community members.¹³

Take steps

- Create intergenerational spaces to confront gender roles and negative aspects of those roles that can lead to gender based violence.
- Model relationships of mutuality and respect.
- Emphasize the need for families to embody care, respect and be a supportive environment where disputes are resolved non-violently.
- Encourage men to see their role in ending domestic violence. Work to shape positive identities for boys and positive masculinity.¹⁴
- Mobilize cultural change and transformation n by emphasizing individual and community accountability, and by establishing new social norms.
- Create holistic comprehensive community solutions that include men. Holistic comprehensive care is important as women build trust with their care provider.
- Train service providers to see individual survivor in light of their socio-cultural reality and consider their vulnerabilities.¹⁵
- Train law enforcement on domestic violence and cross cultural competence.

Ask for more

- Lobby to have the US government spend more to provide resources and support survivors of domestic violence. Services should be multilingual, holistic, comprehensive, and culturally specific to navigate the barriers that prevent the abused from seeking care.
- Work for immigration reform so that women can speak up and seek assistance from first responders.
- For more information, please email **Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy**, sburton@umcjustice.org

¹¹ <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/training/events/70112000001ANuQAAW>

¹² <http://www.api-gbv.org/organizing/prevention-organizing.php>

¹³ See National Center for Domestic and Sexual Violence <http://ncdsv.org/> as a resource

¹⁴ Principles of Healthy Masculinity, <http://www.maleallies.org/principles-of-healthy-masculinity>

¹⁵ <http://www.api-gbv.org/files/SexualViolence.HowtoInclude-APIIDV-2009.pdf>

FAMILY PLANNING

Pastoral Resources for Action – US General

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly. *John 10:10*

Motherhood

Scripture reiterates the sacredness and significance of motherhood. God honors Eve, Hannah, and Elizabeth, whose roles as mothers are essential to our faith. Similarly, we also have stories of the sorrow and grief of maternal mortality, as seen in the lives of Rachel (*Genesis 35:16-20*) and Eli's daughter-in-law (*1 Samuel 4:19-20*).



Sadly, maternal and infant mortality are common tragedies for many women and families in developing countries. As frequently as once every 2 minutes, a woman dies while giving birth or in the days right after birth. Such tragedies can be prevented through interventions such as family planning, good prenatal and post-natal care, and skilled birth attendants.

Jesus' call to abundant life demands that his example, hearing the cries of those who bear great sorrow, cannot be ignored. Despite social isolation and rejection, the woman who is bleeding placed her faith in Jesus and reached out to touch his garments in order to be healed. Jesus' acceptance of her (*Matthew 9:20-22*) revealed his compassion, his acknowledgment of her suffering, and his boldness to challenge the status quo and intervene for her to have life in all its abundance.

The church is called to do the same.

WHAT IS FAMILY PLANNING?

Family planning matters, despite barriers of culture, misinformation, and gender inequalities. Since the formation of the Millennium Development Goals in 1990, the global community, through the United Nations, has proven that the decrease in maternal mortality is attributed to effective family planning made accessible in spite of economics or other hindrances.

Family planning:

- Enables spacing and timing of children so that a woman's body recovers, enhancing a healthier pregnancy
- Is a key factor for reducing infant and maternal mortality
- Promotes a clear understanding of sexual and reproductive health
- Prevents sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Gives tools to make the decisions that prevent unplanned pregnancies and the spread of HIV/AIDS, and reduces abortions
- Contributes to the wellbeing of women and girls increasing their opportunities for education, economic growth and contributions to the church and the nation.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

Women, who are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families and communities, deserve access to services and care that empower their personal decision-making. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women's health and well-being.



2012 Book of Resolution, #3203, "Maternal Health: The Church's Role"

We affirm the right of men and women to have access to comprehensive reproductive health/family planning information and services which will serve as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancies, reduce abortions and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

¶ 162.G Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?



- Social and economic conditions, such as high rates of poverty, income inequality, unemployment, low educational attainment and geographic isolation can make it more difficult for individuals to protect their sexual health.¹
- More than 1 in 7 women (close to 18.4 million) and more than 1 in 5 children (more than 15.5 million) lived in poverty in 2014.²
- Just 38% of teen girls who have a child before the age of 18 receive a high school diploma before the age of 22.³
- 67% of teen mothers who moved out of their own families' household live below the poverty level.⁴
- Teen mothers were almost 2 times as likely to forgo prenatal care in the first trimester compared to older mothers.⁵
- The CDC estimates that close to 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the US accounting for \$16 billion in health care cost.⁶
- Half of these new infections are among young people aged 15–24.⁷
- Young women and young men are heavily affected by STDs but young women have more serious long-term health consequences. Estimates show that undiagnosed STDs cause more than 20,000 women to become infertile each year.⁸

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

Be a space that cultivates community

- Support women who are often times the primary caregiver in the family and community.
- Teach women and girls that they are beautifully and wonderful made.
- Create space for intergenerational discussions of: identity, gender roles, sexuality, sexual identity, sex, healthy relationships, and what it means to be a family.

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats12/minorities.htm>

² <http://nwlc.org/resources/national-snapshot-poverty-among-women-families-2014/>

³ <http://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/childbearing-education-economicwellbeing.pdf>

⁴ <http://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/childbearing-education-economicwellbeing.pdf>

⁵ <http://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/childbearing-infant-health.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats14/std-trends-508.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Teach and take steps

- Map out the resources available to your community by meeting with healthcare providers and social services agencies that focus on women's health, hygiene, and reproductive rights.
- Spread the word. The Affordable Care Act ensures that insurance covers little or no cost Prevented Care Services which include HIV and Sexually Transmitted Disease screenings, Women's Preventative Health Services, HIV and STD screening and counseling, FDA approved birth control, breast feeding support and supplies, also covered is Essential Health Services including maternity and new born care.⁹
- Ensure that there is comprehensive, culturally based sex education that covers sexual orientation, how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and awareness of reproductive rights.¹⁰ This could be used to educate youth and young adults.
- Inform women and girls about emergency contraception and care that is available and how to access.
- Advocate for an increase in access and affordability of condoms and birth control to prevent unplanned pregnancy, to reduce sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.
- Encourage mutuality and equality in relationships. Therefore each partner feels empowered to ask their partner to use protection to guard against sexually transmitted diseases.
- Encourage youth and young adults to seek relationships built on mutual respect and equality.

Ask for more

- Call for the monitoring of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and other state and congressional actions.¹¹
- Promote reproductive rights by expanding contraceptive access, availability and affordability.¹²
- **Get Connected.** Contact **Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy,** sburton@umcjustice.org

⁹ <http://www.bwhi.org/issues/healthcare/access-to-healthcare/>

¹⁰ Yee, J. (2012, Spring). Voice from the Field. Connections A Biannual Publication of Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Vol XV, 9 http://www.wcsap.org/sites/wcsap.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/uploads/resources_and_pubs/SPRING%202012%20CONNECTIONS.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.bwhi.org/issues/healthcare/access-to-healthcare/>

¹² <http://www.bwhi.org/issues/reproductive-health/contraception-access/>

HIV/AIDS

Pastoral Resources for Action – US General

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Read Luke 17:12-19


The parallels between leprosy in scripture and HIV/AIDS are staggering. Both are dreaded, because there is stigma, shame, blame, and are seen as death sentences that cast the victims away from community and family. Hence, Christ's encounters with lepers sets standards for ministry with those infected with HIV/AIDS.



- Jesus hears and responds to the loud cry for mercy.
- Jesus immediately brings hope to what appears to be a hopeless situation.
- Jesus enables return to community.
- Jesus acknowledged the person's return.
- Jesus engenders praise, thanksgiving and glory to God.

For bible study ideas see Luke 17:12-19 questions.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?



“The global AIDS pandemic provides a nearly unparalleled opportunity for witness to the gospel through service, advocacy, and other healing ministries. United Methodist public health specialists, health workers, social workers, teachers, missionaries, clergy, and laity live and work in areas where the AIDS pandemic is spreading. United Methodist congregations, schools, health facilities, women's, men's, and youth groups can play a major role by providing awareness, support, education, and care to those affected by HIV/AIDS.”

2012 Book of Resolution, #3243, “The Church and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic”

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the world, The United Methodist Church commits itself to a holistic approach of awareness, education, prevention, treatment, community organizing, public advocacy, and abstinence.

2012 Book of Resolution, #3243, “The Church and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic”

WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

In the United States more than 1.2 million people are living with HIV, and almost 1 in 8 are unaware of their infection.¹

Women account for 1 in 5 (20%) new HIV infections in the U.S.²

Most women are infected through heterosexual sex (84% of new HIV infections in 2010).³

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/ataglance.html>

² <http://kff.org/hivaids/fact-sheet/women-and-hivaids-in-the-united-states/>

³ Ibid.



MSM represent about 4% of the male population in the United States. In 2010, MSM accounted for 78% of new HIV infections among males and 63% of all new infections. MSM accounted for 54% of all people living with HIV infection in 2011.⁴

In 2011, 15% of newly infected persons were injection drug users.⁵

It is beneficial for people living with HIV to know their status early. An international clinical trial recently demonstrated that starting antiretroviral treatment immediately instead of waiting for the immune system to deteriorate could reduce the risk of death or serious illness by 53%.⁶

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

- Be a safe space. Talk about HIV and listen compassionately. Increase knowledge about HIV, to prevent new infections and to help those who are living with HIV/AIDS. Together we will build a healthier community.⁷
- Host a bible study to discuss and identify the ways Luke 17:12-19 calls your community to respond to the burden of HIV/AIDS.

Prevention

- Know your HIV/AIDS status.
- Be honest about your status and reach out to others for support.
- Reduce stigma by creating confidential and supportive spaces to eliminate myths by sharing your status and story.
- Promote awareness of the nearest testing center and service centers for treatment and care.
- Push for safe needle exchange programs, due to high number of new infections resulting from drug usage
- Be in conversation about sex. Create opportunities to talk about sex within the context of reproduction, family planning, and Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Education

- Teach youth and young adults about gender inequalities, sexual violence, unsafe sex, and drug use.
- Build a network by connecting with: elders, youth, educators, school administrators, clinics, community nurses and service providers.
- Map out the resources that are available and needed in your community.
- Support efforts by coalitions working to eliminate HIV/AIDS.

Ask for more

- Create a plan of action, gather information, and review policies that relate to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment while generating community support.
- Advocate for the US government to support prevention, care and treatment services that are multilingual, holistic, comprehensive, and culturally relevant.
- Plan an event for World AIDS Day, December 1st.
- **Get connected.** The General Board of Church and Society can support your efforts. Contact **Susan Greer Burton** at sburton@umcjustice.org

⁴ <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/ata glance.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-undiagnosed-hiv-patients-20150624-story.html>

⁷ <http://banyantreeproject.org/wp2014/>

Pastoral Resources for Action

Guided Questions for Luke 17:12-19

In your community what gets in the way of people experiencing hope?

What does it feel like when you are shunned or excluded from your community?

How is shaming and stigma visible?

Why do we blame victims of HIV/AIDS? How do we benefit from this blame?

How do we make those who are infected and affected seem estranged?

If we were to be more like Christ we would offer healing, and care for those living with HIV/AIDS and those who are affected; how have you been a part of this healing?

In your community a place of welcome or does it hold on to the fear and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS? How could you change this culture of misinformation and fearful?

What traditions or customs do we have to welcome people back to the community?

How will you celebrate God's presence among you as you work to end HIV/AIDS in our community?



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Pastoral Resources for Action – US General

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went (*II Samuel 13:19-20*).



The horrors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) are brutal. SGBV is a demonstration of power and control that ignite deep emotional and physical wounds that scar one's life. Scripture records this in the stories of Tamar, (*II Samuel 13*), the victim of Judges 19, and Dinah (*Genesis 34*). All are grim reminders of the need to practice and affirm the sacredness of all and each person's right to safety and loving care.

The history of our faith is the history of attempts to recover the insight of Genesis 1, that all creation is sacred in God's sight, and all human beings are made in the image of God. Jesus was an advocate for the sacred worth of all. In the account of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), we see Jesus actively oppose violence against women. Jesus saw beyond the stigma and blame that her accusers imposed on her. Unlike King David, Jesus did not employ his power to conceal the injustice, but instead recognized her dignity, interrupted the proposed violence and sought to restore her to community. Jesus' response expresses his commitment to abundant life (John 10:10) and his call to create circumstances in which abundant life can thrive. Jesus' gracious response reaches for the redemption of both victim and perpetrator and stops the cycle of violence.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?



Violent, disrespectful, or abusive sexual expressions do not confirm sexuality as God's good gift. We reject all sexual expressions that damage the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity.

¶161.H *Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*

WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

Sexual assault occurs anytime a person is forced, coerced, and/or manipulated into any unwanted sexual contact, attempted or completed, without consent.¹



Sexual violence includes: intimate partner violence, stalking victimization, sexual coercion and rape are experienced by persons of every sexual orientation and gender. But the victimization of women is far more prevalent. We need to address gender based violence and exploitation.

Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men experienced sexual violence not including rape in their lives.²

¹ http://nkaceda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Brochure_ENG_KAN-WIN.pdf

² <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/infographic.html>

79% of female rape victims were first raped before the age of 25.³


28% of male victims of rape reported they were first raped when 10 years or younger.⁴

More than half of female and nearly half male stalking victims were stalked before the age of 25.⁵

Children who have experienced domestic and sexual violence may more likely tolerate the same behavior throughout their life. Sexual assault disempowers individuals, causing low self-esteem and worthlessness. Many survivors feel like they have lost control over their lives.⁶

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

Be a place of healing, grieving and hope

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- Build a community where friends and family gather to share pain, seek care, and are accompanied on the long journey of healing.
 - Teach and model that all people are beloved children of God and celebrate the sacredness of women and children.
 - Preach and teach in sermons and Bible studies; speaking truthfully about sexual violence in our communities and the call of scripture to live into a world free of violence.
 - Equip leaders to respond and care for those who are survivors of sexual and gender based violence.
 - Be an intergenerational place of healing and safety. Caring for survivors, reaching out to those experiencing harm and perpetrators alike.
 - Believe the survivor, never allow them to be blamed for their abuse. Allow survivors to share their story.
 - Remember that the support survivors receive can make a significant difference between beginning the healing process and continuing to feel hopeless and isolated.⁷
 - Build relationships with the emergency care services, social service providers, health centers and shelters in your area. By building these relationships you will know what resources are available to your community, trust that care is culturally competent and know the barriers to care.

Teach and take steps

- Cherish and protect our bodies by encouraging discussion with youth and young adults about our bodies, sexuality, sexual identity, sex and healthy relationships.
- Children and youth should have an adult in their lives that they trust, who will believe and protect them.
- Ensure that there is comprehensive, culturally based sex education that includes sexual orientation, how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and awareness of reproductive rights.
- Combine education and awareness events with other activities to help participants build trust and openness to ease into conversations about sexual violence.
- Generate awareness of sexual violence, dating violence, rape, stalking and their harmful effects. This will help to destigmatize the shame that is often placed on the person who has survived abuse.
- Include men in preventing and speaking out against sexual violence. Encourage boys to develop positive identities and positive masculinity.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.


⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <http://www.nurturingchange.org/resources/understanding-domestic-and-sexual-violence/impact-of-domestic-violence-and-sexual-assault>

⁷ Ibid.

- Continue to be in conversation about and develop means to address gender based violence and oppression in our communities.
- Create holistic comprehensive community solutions. Build trust with service providers as the healing process involves long and short term needs.
- Ensure that service providers can see individual women in light of her socio-cultural and immigration history, consider her vulnerabilities and possible victimization. This helps advocates see the barriers that survivors face in their own communities.

Ask for more

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- **Advocate** for victim services in your community which should include: legal, medical, and counseling services, housing assistance, emergency shelter and transportation.⁸
 - Lobby to have the US government spend more to provide resources and support to survivors of sexual assault. Health services should be multilingual, holistic, comprehensive, and culturally specific to navigate the barriers that prevent survivors from seeking care.
 - **Get connected.** The General Board of Church and Society can support your efforts. Contact **Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy**, sburton@umcjustice.org