

*“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

*Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:36-39)*

## **What Can We Do About COVID-19?**

Wash your hands! Stay Home!

But that’s not all...

United Methodist Women members are responding the Coronavirus pandemic by supporting our households, our congregations and communities, and ourselves while also reaffirming our commitment to Social Justice Advocacy for women, youth and children. The pandemic has made visible the fractures in our society, where the most marginal communities are already being hard hit. This is true of many people in our nation, among them Native American tribes, Asian Americans facing racist vitriol, low-wage workers facing lay-offs with inadequate safety nets, women facing domestic violence while in quarantine, incarcerated people in close quarters unable to protect themselves from the virus, frontline workers, poor families who do not have reserves to stock up on groceries, people without homes to shelter in, undocumented immigrant workers who face job loss and cannot access federal programs, farm workers who pick our food yet don’t get paid sick leave or decent wages, children who do not have computers and internet to continue their schooling online, people with other chronic illnesses who continue to need medical care, and many, many others....

Emergency relief programs passed by Congress are important steps in expanding unemployment insurance, making cash payments, covering short-term sick leave and virus testing, extending loans to small businesses, and including self-employed and gig economy workers in emergency benefits. As debate over further packages continues, United Methodist Women urges members to advocate for federal relief and stimulus packages that put people and the earth first and build towards permanent solutions to economic inequality, structural racism, gender inequality and climate injustices.

Here are vital actions you can take to love your neighbor and reduce the impact of COVID-19 in your community:

- **Economic Justice:** When employees come to work sick, it not only hurts that individual and their family, it also hurts efforts to contain disease spread. Call on Congress to include in their fourth stimulus package universal paid sick days and paid family and medical leave for all employees, transferable from one job to another. These policies should be in place not only during the crisis but on a



United  
Methodist  
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

permanent basis. Contact your senators and congressperson and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, urging them to consider the New York State Paid Family Leave policy as the basis for action in the next emergency package. United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

- **Mass Incarceration:** Contact your governor today to urge the reduction of the prison population, prioritizing the immediate release of medically vulnerable people who pose no risk to public safety but would be themselves gravely endangered during a COVID-19 outbreak. Take action here: [p2a.co/Jvxf2cE](https://p2a.co/Jvxf2cE).
- **Climate Justice:** Contact your elected officials and urge them to include a moratorium on water and utility shutoffs and prioritize people and a regenerative economy in the next relief and stimulus package. More than half of the states are still allowing water and utility shutoffs, making hand washing and stay-at-home orders unsafe for those most financially distressed. Take action here: [p2a.co/33iJHcC](https://p2a.co/33iJHcC).
- **Domestic Violence and Women's Health:** Quarantine can be a dangerous situation for women and children who experience domestic violence. Calls to hotlines have increased as families remain at home. Support domestic violence hotlines in your community or nationally that are experiencing higher demand as people are isolated.
- **Racial Justice:** Bust racist myths and stereotypes and call out discrimination and abuse that target Asians and Asian Americans. There's a long and terrible history of using tragic disease outbreaks as a way to scapegoat vulnerable communities. Educate yourself, educate others and don't allow a medical crisis to give cover to racism. Read GCORR's statement here: [gcorr.org/gcorr-denounces-trumps-racist-and-xenophobic-chinese-virus-language/](https://gcorr.org/gcorr-denounces-trumps-racist-and-xenophobic-chinese-virus-language/). Learn more about anti-AAPI hate crimes: [nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-report-nearly-500-racist-acts-over-last-week-n1169821](https://nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-report-nearly-500-racist-acts-over-last-week-n1169821) #WashTheHate

For more information on United Methodist Women Social Action responses to COVID-19, see:

- **Don't Just Wash Your Hands: Scripture, COVID-19, and Mass Incarceration**, by Emily Jones: [redletterchristians.org/dont-just-wash-your-hands-scripture-covid-19-and-mass-incarceration/](https://redletterchristians.org/dont-just-wash-your-hands-scripture-covid-19-and-mass-incarceration/) *Update/Correction: At the time this was written, there weren't yet reports of a COVID-19 outbreak among incarcerated people in the US. Now, however, we know of numerous confirmed COVID-19 cases (including facility staff and incarcerated people) in jails, prisons and detention centers across the country, with growing numbers each day.*
- **UMW urges Congress to pass a moratorium on water and utility shutoffs:** [p2a.co/33iJHcH](https://p2a.co/33iJHcH)
- **Coronavirus Highlights the Gaping Holes in Our Healthcare and Labor System**, by Carol Barton [pndblog.typepad.com/pndblog/2020/03/coronavirus-highlights-the-gaping-holes-in-our-healthcare-system.html?fbclid=IwAR3Pc8T7rgHcZ5RfmUqJ-joN5vdSGk5VoERmtGV1EYqC7zpEOQL\\_ItAoDAA](https://pndblog.typepad.com/pndblog/2020/03/coronavirus-highlights-the-gaping-holes-in-our-healthcare-system.html?fbclid=IwAR3Pc8T7rgHcZ5RfmUqJ-joN5vdSGk5VoERmtGV1EYqC7zpEOQL_ItAoDAA)
- **Coronavirus Shows Cracks in the Gig Economy**, by Carol Barton: [routefifty.com/finance/2020/03/coronavirus-shows-cracks-gig-economy/164176/](https://routefifty.com/finance/2020/03/coronavirus-shows-cracks-gig-economy/164176/)