

Why United Methodist Women Engage in Social Action

Foundation of Campaigns as United Methodist Women

For more than 150 years, Methodist women organized for mission have worked in the name of Jesus to take positions on social justice issues and change legislation, systems, structures and practices considered unjust and oppressive. These bold foremothers advocated to end lynching, improve women's health, raise women's status in society, organize for fair wages and benefits for workers and families and adopt the Charter for Racial Justice.

Today, we continue to build on this foundation as we work to end maternal mortality, attain a living wage for all, interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure energy that is just for all. As United Methodist Women of the 21st century, we are called to be bold in our witness, working to dismantle systems of oppression and build, together, a better world.

Our Biblical Foundations

The Bible teaches us that all creation is God's and "very good" in and of itself (Genesis 1:31). It teaches that God created humankind in God's image—all humankind (Genesis 1:27).

We don't yet live in a society that treats God's creation with dignity and respect. We still live in a world where institutional structures and social relations oppress people and defy the will of God.

Yet the Bible tells the story of God always and everywhere at work for liberation and healing, justice and peace. When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus answered:

**"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"
(Matthew 22:37-39)**

To love our neighbor—and ourselves—means more than just providing care and comfort in times of suffering; to love our neighbor as ourselves we must change the systems that do harm in the first place.

This was a vital message of Jesus' ministry, challenging the existing social order, proclaiming God's reign:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)

The early Christian community recognized the vitality of this call. Christianity is not just something we believe, it is also something we practice. We are called to be “doers of the word, and not merely hearers” (James 1:22). We are called to a living faith—a faith that makes itself known by its fruits.

Indeed, God is always at work to make change in the world, appearing in unexpected ways and reversing the norms of “polite” society to ensure abundant life and wholeness for all.

Our Methodist Heritage

Our United Methodist heritage reflects a history of commitment to vital discipleship and social action. John Wesley strongly emphasized the Christian life as a combination of faith and love put into practice.

The United Methodist Church affirms these same beliefs today:

By joining heart and hand, we assert that personal religion, evangelical witness, and Christian social action are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing. Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world. (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*, ¶102)

Get Involved in Campaigns

United Methodist Women's national campaigns are a way for us to work together on shared goals across lines of difference and geographic distance. When we all come together and lift our voices to address a specific shared concern, we are far more likely to win measurable change for our communities. Prayerfully consider how God is calling you to join one of United Methodist Women's campaigns.