



September 20, 2020



Thirtieth General Synod called on the congregations of the United Church of Christ to mark the Sunday preceding September 21 (which the United Nation recognizes as the "International Day of Prayer for Peace") as **Just Peace Sunday**.

The theme for Just Peace Sunday 2020 is based on the lectionary passage in Matthew 20 in which the owner of the vineyard suggests a form of economic relations not based on a transactional sense of fairness, but a deeper call to justice and restoration. "*You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.*" (Matthew 20:4)

This year, Just Peace Sunday takes place at a time in which systemic racism is being exposed not only through the repeated examples of *physical violence* against black lives as witnessed in the shootings of Jacob Blake, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others; but also through the generational *economic violence* that has come sharply into focus this year. The economic violence of slavery, white supremacy, and racism has had a generational impact on black communities and has created the racial wealth gap we see today, a gap in which the net worth of white households is about 10 times that of black households. We are only now starting to uncover the full impact of this gap, but one such metric today are the unequal health outcomes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inequities of today have never been so clear, challenging us to seek a deeper call to reparative justice and that is based not on what is owed, but on what is "right." As a Just Peace Church, we are called to take seriously this call to do what is *right*, **seeking racial equity and a just economy**

The Working Group challenges 50 PSEC churches to make a commitment to do something to mitigate climate change in the coming months.



It's September. This is a good time to renew your church's commitment to the **50-50-50 Green Church Initiative**.

The PSEC Climate Justice Working Group invites you to celebrate the Season of Creation, which begins Sept. 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. It concludes Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. For more on The Season of Creation go to seasonofcreation.org. The Season of Creation is a monthlong prayerful observance that calls Christians to pray and care for God's creation. The Season of Creation is an ecumenical initiative and "a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together." We are called to join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.

The theme this year is "Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope." Jubilee, in biblical terms, refers to a period of restoration every 50 years, when the land rests and justice is restored. The theme recognizes 2020 as the 50th celebration of Earth Day, so it fits nicely into our **50-50-50 Green Church Initiative**. There is still time for churches to do something for both the Season of Creation and the PSEC Challenge:

- Hold a special service that reflects the sacredness of creation
- Hold a service to honor those working on environmental protection and sustainability
- Create a special bulletin insert with information and prayers for the season
- Hold a service to bless the animals
- Take on projects like recycling, composting, tree planting
- Preach about caring for the earth.

For a list of churches that have made a commitment, more suggestions for actions your congregation can take, and a form you can use for your church to accept the challenge, visit psec.org/green.