

Jamaica Council of Churches offers International Day of Peace Message

The United Nations has designated September 21, 2020 as the day to be observed as International Day of Peace. This year's theme, ***"Shaping Peace Together"*** is inherently a call for partnership and cooperative and inclusive action in establishing peace. It speaks to the fact that all stakeholders have a contribution to make in peace-building, not the least of which are the victims. Their voices should be the loudest, as they talk of their pain and the hopes which they hold in their hearts for a better life. The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) offers its commendation for and support to this initiative.

The Council believes that it is imperative that the church continues its work to bring peace to the earth, which is a part of the mandate of our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. It is equally imperative that we enter the worlds of those who suffer violence and work towards dismantling the structures which cause their suffering and improving the circumstances in which they experience their pain. Unfortunately, one of the locales where violence is often encountered by many of our people, especially our women and children, is the home. We must therefore speak in ways that will give voice to the concerns of these victims and offer to them comfort and hope. We must also act in ways that will demonstrate our solidarity with them, bring relief and hasten the rehabilitation of those who perpetrate violence or acquiesce to hurting those who are vulnerable.

So let us preach about peace and against violence this Sabbath/Sunday. Let us re-imagine and re-state Jesus' love and care for the oppressed and distressed within the present context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us also reinvigorate our efforts to bring relief and protection to those who are at risk of suffering violence of all forms; for as Jesus said, "And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:40, NRSV).

May God inspire and incite us to deepen our commitment to "seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm 34:14, NRSV).

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Jamaica Council of Churches