



ABOLITIONIST CHAPEL TODAY

DON'T SHACKLE ST. NICK!

BUY WITH CARE AND HELP ENSLAVED CHILDREN RECEIVE THE GIFT OF FREEDOM
THIS CHRISTMAS

On December 6, at the beginning of holiday preparations, we celebrate the feast day of St. Nicholas (270-346 C.E.): bishop of Myra, (present-day Demre, Turkey), Christianity's champion and patron saint of children, and known to us today as St. Nick or Santa Claus. But this year he will not bring good cheer to the estimated 10+ million children enslaved in forced labor and debt bondage, many of whom make the products we will buy as Christmas gifts for friends and family.

Fortunately, we can help unshackle both St. Nicholas and the children that continue to inspire his legend. With careful shopping, we can change demand for manufacturers and retailers, who push suppliers to deliver goods at ever-lower costs and thus encourage extreme forms of exploitation to make those goods. We no longer have to participate in supply chains that bind children to misery.

Please consider the following:

Buy Local-Made. Buy Union-Made. Buy Made-in-the-USA. Buy Fair Trade.

Consider materials and places of origin

The United States Department of Labor bi-annually releases a list of products imported into the United States that are most likely to be tainted by forced labor and child labor. The list consists of **155 goods** from **77 countries** (seven goods, one country more than last report).

The leading/most problematic materials cited were: **gold** from Nigeria and 21 other countries; **bricks** from India and 17 others; **sugarcane** from Belize and 17 others; **coffee** from Brazil and 16 others; **coltan** (in most all electronic devices) from the Democratic Republic of Congo; **cotton** from India and 15 others; **toys** from China; **cocoa** from Cote d'Ivoire and 6 others; **garments** from Viet Nam and 7 others.

Accessed October 29, 2020:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor>

Most forced labor and child labor in the United States occurs in the agricultural, restaurant, hotel/motel, and janitorial industries.

Check on specific companies and products:

Many **Holiday fairs, shows, and farmers' markets** in the Greater Boston area showcase the works of local artists, craftspeople, and specialty farmers.

The **AFL-CIO** has a list of union-made/made-in-America goods and foodstuffs for holidays and household needs at <https://www.pinterest.com/aflcio/made-in-america>. Also, their holiday gift guide can be found at <https://aflcio.org/MadeInAmerica> (be sure to scroll down the whole page).

Suppliers of Fair Trade Goods: check also fair trade goods at your local retailers

From Equal Exchange: <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/>

From Not For Sale: <http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/holidaygiftguide/>

From the Fair Trade Federation: <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/findmembers/>

From FairTrade: <https://www.fairtrade.net/products.html>

From FairTrade Certified: <https://www.fairtradecertified.org/products>

From The World FairTrade Organization: <https://www.wfto.com/find-supplier>

Consider alternatives

Make, bake, or otherwise create personalized gifts, using materials that are local, union-made, and/or Fair Trade.

Exchange all or a portion of your gifts through organizations such as Heifer Project International, www.heifer.org, or Plan International, <https://plan-international.org/>, that directly address the poverty that lures and forces children into slavery.

Give the gift of time. Write up invitations to a meal, or the sharing of a task, or the enjoyment of a project or trip together. What would your family member or friend most like or need from you?

Long-term, consider joining a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program for fresh, local fruits, herbs, and vegetables, or join a community buyer's coop for local goods.

Don't Shackle St. Nick!

Instead, in his memory be an informed, ethical gift giver this Christmas.

This Advent season of waiting for a Child
should not be a time to be complicit in the misery of children.

Patronize informed, ethical companies, and promote positive change.

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO ALL

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

For more information or to join the conversation, contact Rev. Dr. Victoria Hart Gaskell at

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