

Just Peace Covenant

Unanimously adopted at a Special Congregational Meeting on September 15, 2019.

As members and friends of Niles Discovery Church, we commit ourselves to be a Just Peace Church in partnership with The United Church of Christ (UCC) and the World Council of Churches. The UCC defines 'just peace' as the "interrelation of friendship, justice, and universal security from violence."¹ We commit to striving to create peace with justice through our relationships with local, regional, national and international communities. We commit ourselves to pursuing just peace relationships with all of God's creation.

Our just peace work will be guided by examples of peace with justice found in the scriptures, as well as the stories of injustice, violence, and silenced voices in scripture. Through the words and stories of Jesus, we will be encouraged and brave in our just peace work. The scriptures emphasize that all people are created in God's image, all people are our family, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, and practice the spirit of the Jubilee year². All these scriptural concepts will drive our just peace commitment and activities. We will strive to be allies with people impacted by intentional and unconscious bias, whether it is racism, patriarchy, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, able-ism, ageism, classism, nationalism, and any other prejudicial practice.

We will strengthen our faith, understanding, compassion, and just peace work through truth telling and listening with individuals and groups, through conversations, seminars, reading, sermons, vigils, celebrations, charitable work, and actions of solidarity designed for systemic change. We will create space for those experiencing injustice to be understood and to define their reality and needs. We will be guided by the words and work of great peacemakers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the myriad of contemporary prophets working together to create a peaceful world of justice for all of creation.

We commit ourselves to continue on our path of being good stewards of the earth. We will work to protect creation from climate change and other threats to the planet that endanger a balance of all aspects of creation: the earth, the waters, the air and all living things.

We commit ourselves to work for peace with justice in all of our ministries and in our personal lives. We will continue to uphold our covenant of radical welcome of all people no matter where they are on their life's journey, our many ways of embodying the United Church of Christ's "3 Great Loves," our Green Chalice standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and our Open and Affirming standing in both denominations.

We affirm that these commitments reflect and support Niles Discovery Church's ongoing covenant as a Just Peace church.

¹ From *Just Peace Church Handbook* (p.4), available on the UCC website at https://www.ucc.org/justice_just-peace (accessed on 17 August 2019)

² From Luke 4: 16-21, Isaiah 61: 1-2 and Leviticus 25: 10-13