

A JUST PEACE PRONOUNCEMENT
First Congregational United Church of Christ of Colorado Springs

Voted on and Approved of at the Annual Meeting - January 29, 2017

We, members of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Colorado Springs, declare ourselves to be a Just Peace Church. We strive to be a community where respect and justice are foundational. We seek to share equal power, build nonviolent relationships, discover ways in which as a church and as individuals we can alleviate systemic injustice, confront violence, foster peaceful relationships, promote conflict resolution, and reconciliation in our homes, neighborhoods, communities, nation, and world.

Therefore, we publicly and prayerfully commit ourselves to be a proactive witness to the possibility of a just world by proclaiming First Congregational Church a Just Peace Church.

We believe peace-building and social justice are central to our identity as Christians and followers of Christ. We, as a community of faith, have identified Micah 6 as our theological touchstone:

“... and what does the Lord require of you but to... do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

We believe peace and peace-building starts personally with us, our relations to each other, our neighborhoods, our community, our nation, and world...

In Luke 4:16-21 Jesus calls for the renewal of just relationships:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He 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 4:16-21, NRSV)

As a Just Peace Church, we commit ourselves to...

1. Peace-building: Attitudes and activities aimed to assist people in resolving conflicts and building sustainable relationships.
2. Integrating our vision of peace and peace-building into the full life of our church by:
 - a. Actively seeking a meaningful understanding of how to apply our Christian faith and spiritual experience to challenging issues in our community and world.
 - b. Creating a peace-building umbrella/vision that captures the work we’re already doing, combined with new initiatives in our church and in our community.

- 
- c. Examining peace in concentric circles.
 - i. At the center of our peace work is ourselves and how we relate to our families and neighbors.
 - ii. As the circles enlarge, so too our peace work moves out in to the community and world.
 - d. Developing our peace-building knowledge and skills, while we continue to support our church's existing values, work, and priorities.
3. Spiritual development--making our spiritual convictions known throughout our community as follows:
 - a. We will, through prayer, study, reflection, and worship, develop our understanding and focus our spiritual journey around peace and peace-building.
 - b. We will continue to live out our commitment to Micah 6.
 4. Looking for specific issues of injustice, violence, and intolerance in our community, nation, and world.
 - a. Educating ourselves on these issues.
 - b. Collaborating within our church and leadership to creatively and peacefully confront these issues.
 5. Equipping and training our congregation and members of our community by:
 - a. Confronting the prevalence of violence in our society.
 - b. Developing peaceful methods of communication.
 - c. Teaching and practicing conflict resolution skills whenever possible.
 - d. Inviting guest speakers, theologians, and leaders of peace-building to challenge our thinking on peace.
 6. Creating and engaging our community in open, peaceful dialogue--making our church the epicenter of peaceful dialogue in the Pikes Peak Region. We will:
 - a. Value the life experience and stories of others in our peaceful dialogue – demonstrating respect for the richness and wealth of life experience.
 - b. Develop, maintain, and model a climate and dialogue process where diverse points of view can be heard in our search for understanding and peace--seeking to understand other points of view. "No matter how flat the pancake, there are two sides."
 - c. Create teams of skilled moderators who can lead peaceful dialogue.
 7. Practice accountability by annually reviewing our Just Peace work – revisiting and revising our Just Peace statements and goals.
 - a. Continually seeking and integrating congregational feedback.
 - b. Encouraging and empowering all to bring their concerns and ideas to the table.