

STATEMENT OF JUST PEACE

The Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ declares itself to be a Just Peace Church and defines Just Peace as the interrelation of friendship, justice and common security from violence for all people everywhere, beginning within our church and our community, and reaching beyond to our world. A Just Peace is grounded in God's activity in creation and God's covenant with us, in the reconciling activity of Jesus Christ and our discipleship as members of the Body of Christ, in the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's work through us, in the community of reconciliation, in hope.

We affirm the following as marks of a Just Peace Church: a community of hope, believing a Just Peace is possible; a community of worship and celebration, of Biblical and theological reflection, of study of Scripture and the Christian story, of spiritual nurture and support, of honest and open conflict about issues on which we cannot agree; a community of solidarity with the disadvantaged and marginalized, seeking to be present in places of oppression, poverty and violence, standing with victims and those without a voice; a community of loyalty to God and to the whole human community, above personal political or other loyalties.

We affirm the necessity of all nations working together to insure that people everywhere are able to meet their basic needs, including the right of every person to food and clean water, adequate health care, decent housing, basic education, and the means to provide for these needs for themselves and their families in an atmosphere of freedom from exploitation, oppression, violence and torture.

We further affirm our intention to encourage and support these rights without regard to differences, including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national or social origin, with freedom for all people to participate in their local political process and decision-making and to worship according to their own faith and practice.

We affirm our understanding that declaring our church to be a Just Peace Church is a statement of becoming rather than being, of process and intention, of journey toward a destination rather than the assumption of permanent status.

We ground our declaration and affirmation in Scripture: *... and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* – Micah 6:8 in the Covenant of the Church: *We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world while worshipping [sic] God, and striving for truth, justice and peace.* In the Call: *Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ is called to be: OPPENLY SEARCHING: We believe that the pilgrimage of all human beings is to understand God and God's mission. As progressive seekers on a lifelong spiritual journey, we find more grace in the questions than in dogmatic answers, more faith in our search than in human-conceived answers. IN THE WAY OF CHRIST: We claim our voice as a Christian community, welcoming the challenges and opportunities as we approach God through the life and teachings of Jesus. Together we seek to imitate Jesus' compassionate treatment of those often excluded from society. We covenant with each other and with God to do justice, as Jesus did.*

Grounded in these understandings and covenants, we promise to encourage each other gently, to pray for each other regularly and to challenge each other lovingly as we each and all struggle to understand and accept our own places in the journey and our needs for the strength and wisdom to dispel ignorance, fear, and hatred. We promise further to choose love rather than blame, and learning rather than punishing, as the reasons for whatever judging and discerning we feel called to do to discover our places, individually and together, on the path to Just Peace for all creation.

The Open and Affirming/Just Peace Committee accepts responsibility for bringing issues and information before the membership of the church in ways which educate, invite participation and suggest how individuals and/or groups might become involved in witness and action. Resting in the instruction and inspiration of Scripture, we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our continuing quest for peace with justice, here and everywhere.