

Peace Church Resolution

Adopted December 21st 2016

We, the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, after careful consideration of the scriptures, our long faith tradition, our commitment to social justice, our devotion to the love and teachings of Jesus, and the PCUSA's 219th General Assembly (2010) call for peace discernment, affirm our commitment to the cause of peace by declaring ourselves a "Peace Church" as expressed in the following affirmations inspired by the Presbyterian General Assembly Peace Discernment Process:

1. A Peace Church affirms that nonviolence and peacemaking are essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.
2. A Peace Church confesses that the Christian church has been historically complicit in the world's violence. We pray for the Spirit's courage to "unmask idolatries in Church and culture,"* to speak truth about war and oppression, to stand with those who suffer, and to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation. At the same time, we acknowledge the Church's complicated and troubled relationship with Just War Theory and theology.
3. A Peace Church seeks to understand the nonviolent revolutions and armed struggles of our time, drawing on the traditions of Christian pacifism, just peacemaking and active nonviolence. To this end we will cultivate moral imagination through prayer, study, and engagement with friends and those who may disagree with us.
4. A Peace Church actively challenges the policies and culture of militarism and the practices of empire that negatively impact all people, but especially the most vulnerable members of our society and world.
5. As a Peace Church, and individually as disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves earnestly to seek and promote loving, nonviolent responses to conflict in our daily lives, in our communities, and in our world, to risk calling our nation to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to practice boldly the things that make for peace.

We will embody this commitment to being a Peace Church by:

- Warmly welcoming all people, respecting those who are serving or have served in the military and their families, and inviting everyone to walk with us as we explore together the practice and meaning of peace in the world and in our lives;

* From The Book of Confessions, "A Brief Statement of Faith," Presbyterian Church (USA), 1983.

- Providing our full support for anyone electing to be a conscientious objector to military service, especially our young adults who have chosen this commitment as an expression of their faith;
- Intentionally incorporating the history, theologies and practice of nonviolence, as well as the history of conscientious objection, into educational curricula and programs for all ages;
- Incorporating subjects related to our commitment to nonviolence and peacemaking in worship and in other opportunities for our community to engage in conversations, learning and spiritual renewal;
- Explaining our support of peace and justice in promotional materials, on our website, and in other public communications, including stewardship materials; and
- Being intentional about educating ourselves about the history of our nation and the actions of our government that serve to promote peacemaking or to detract from this goal.