



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian  
Peacemaking Program**



## OUR COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING

### *Responding to God's Covenant,*

\_\_\_\_\_ *in* \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF WORSHIPING COMMUNITY OR ENTITY CITY, STATE

*commits itself to peacemaking. In fulfilling this commitment, we will engage in peacemaking through:*

**WORSHIP:** provide worship that expresses the reality of God's peace giving;

**PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY:** encourage prayer, Bible study, and spiritual disciplines that nurture and deepen the spiritual life of the community and equip people to share the gospel message of peace with the world;

**PEACEMAKING IN FAMILIES AND IN COMMUNITY LIVING:** create opportunities for people of all ages to engage in peacemaking practices and develop peacemaking skills such as conflict resolution, mediation, accompaniment and nonviolence that will help them grow as peacemakers in their families, congregations, and communities;

**COMMUNITY MINISTRIES:** work with and support ecumenical, interfaith and other partners in the pursuit of social, racial, and economic justice; confront racism and all other forms of prejudice; and partner with local, national, and global communities addressing poverty, unemployment, and other economic challenges;

**STUDY AND RESPONSE TO GLOBAL ISSUES:** support human rights and economic justice efforts in at least one area of the world through partnerships and relationship-building;

**GLOBAL SECURITY:** study global security concerns, work for worldwide arms control, support alternatives to military solutions to international and civil conflicts, and offer the Church's care to our military personnel, chaplains, veterans and their families;

**MAKING PEACE WITH THE EARTH:** protect and restore God's creation through study, advocacy, and environmentally-mindful stewardship;

**RECEIVING THE PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING:** financially support the churchwide peacemaking effort by receiving the Peace & Global Witness Offering.

The [Session] or [other Entity within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)] will provide leadership and support in its commitment to peacemaking. It will name a team of people to be the contact with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to receive and distribute information and resource materials that will help us to fulfill this commitment.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
MODERATOR / CHAIRPERSON


**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK/WITNESS

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_




## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING



**“Peace is more than the absence of war, more than a precarious balance of powers. Peace is the intended order of the world with life abundant for all God’s children. Peacemaking is the calling of the Christian church, for Christ is our peace who has made us one through his body on the cross.”**

— *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*



**“Peacemaking is an indispensable ingredient of the church’s mission. It is not peripheral or secondary but essential to the church’s faithfulness to Christ in our time. ”**

— *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*

### IT STATES THAT:

**The Church is FAITHFUL to Christ when it is engaged in peacemaking.**

**The Church is OBEDIENT to Christ when it nurtures and equips God’s people as peacemakers.**

**The Church bears WITNESS to Christ when it nurtures the moral life of the nation for the sake of peace in the world.**

Therefore, congregations and other entities within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) engage in peacemaking as an integral and ongoing part of their life and mission.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God,”* said Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace (Matthew 5:9). Peace is the wholeness and well-being that God wills for all creation. Although the effects of human sin wound all of creation, God is continually at work in the world offering healing, wholeness, mercy, justice, and peace. God’s peace is offered wherever there is brokenness—in individual lives, families, congregations, communities, nations and Creation.

God’s gift of peace is most profoundly exemplified in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who calls all Christians to share the gospel message of peace with a broken and insecure world. Responding to this gracious gift, the Church, as the body of Christ, is called to join with others in building a culture of peace and nonviolence for all of God’s Creation.

The General Assembly has affirmed in *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* that God’s peace-giving is central to the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **WHAT IS THE *COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING*?**

The Commitment to Peacemaking is a tool to help Presbyterians engage individually and collectively in peacemaking ministries.

### **WHO MAKES THE *COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING*?**

Sessions, mid councils, Presbyterian Women's groups, colleges, seminaries, and other entities that include peacemaking as part of their life and mission may make the Commitment to Peacemaking. Sessions that have made the Commitment to Peacemaking in the past may use this revision to reaffirm the Commitment and celebrate and renew their congregation's peacemaking ministries.

### **WHO SHOULD AFFIRM THE *COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING*?**

The session is the appropriate body in the case of a congregation. The *Book of Order* gives the session responsibility for "leading the congregation in participation in the mission of the whole Church" and "in ministries of personal and social healing and reconciliation in the community." A presbytery committee could recommend that the presbytery make the Commitment. Other entities may determine if a board of trustees, a council, or the entire group is the appropriate body to adopt the Commitment.

### **WE HAVE DONE PEACEMAKING FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. WHY SHOULD WE MAKE A COMMITMENT NOW?**

Making the Commitment can help members of a congregation or other entity understand that peacemaking is not a peripheral issue but a central declaration of the gospel and essential to the life of the congregation or other entity. The Commitment provides an invitation to grow in peacemaking and to pass on peacemaking ministries to future generations.

### **DOES MAKING A COMMITMENT MEAN HAVING TO DO SOMETHING IN ALL EIGHT AREAS OF THE *COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING AT ONE TIME*?**

It would be difficult to do everything at once. The eight commitments provide opportunities to engage in peacemaking in different ways as needs and opportunities for ministry arise.

### **MAY WE REWRITE THE *COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING* TO MAKE IT MORE APPROPRIATE TO OUR VISION OF OUR PEACEMAKING WORK?**

A congregation or other entity may adapt the Commitment in any way it believes will more accurately reflect its peacemaking ministries, provided the revisions are consistent with *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*. In considering whether to rewrite the Commitment, it may prove helpful to remember that peacemaking is done in a variety of arenas: self, family, congregation, community, nation, world, and all of Creation. It includes concern for racial and economic justice and human rights in the United States as well as internationally.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering, one of four General Assembly-mandated Special Offerings of the PC(USA), funds peacemaking and witness efforts of congregations, presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly. A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this offering to connect with programs/projects they feel witness to Christ's peace. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation within their region. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program uses its share of the offering to assist congregations, governing bodies and other entities of the denomination to do peacemaking. Most congregations receive the Peace



& Global Witness Offering during A Season of Peace, which culminates on World Communion Sunday (the first Sunday in October). However, your congregation is welcome to celebrate this offering at any point in the year.

### HOW MIGHT A SESSION OR OTHER BODY DECIDE TO ADOPT THE *COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING*?

Because of its importance, a period of study and reflection is helpful in making this decision. Different groups may design a study reflection process appropriate to their needs. Such a process might include:

- Study — This could involve studying biblical passages proclaiming God’s peace-giving and God’s call to peacemaking, the *Commitment to Peacemaking*, *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*, and other material. It could also involve reviewing the ongoing peacemaking ministries of the congregation or other

entity. Members of the congregation or other entity could lead this study. Leadership might also come from a mid council dealing with peacemaking or from congregations or entities that have already adopted the Commitment.

- Decide — This could involve voting or establishing consensus or whatever method is appropriate.
- Plan — Once the Commitment has been made, planning to implement the Commitment could be done in ways appropriate to the congregation or other entity.
- Inform the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program — The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program provides resources that will be helpful to peacemaking efforts. Mid councils can also provide useful assistance.

## PEACEMAKING IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Presbyterians affirm God’s sovereignty over all of life. Thus Presbyterians have always engaged in seeking justice that included working for peace. Significant steps in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s peacemaking journey include:

- **1980** — The 192nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* acknowledging the centrality of God’s peace-giving, recognizing past peacemaking efforts of Presbyterians and affirming peacemaking as an integral, ongoing part of the life and mission of all governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church and of individual Presbyterians.
- **1981** — The 121st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States adopted *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling — An Affirmation of Policy and Direction*.
- **1983** — The 195th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urged each session to consider affirming a commitment integrating peacemaking into the life and mission of the congregation.
- **1989** — The 201st General Assembly designated peacemaking a continuing goal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- **2002** — The 214th General Assembly amended the *Commitment to Peacemaking* so that other entities (presbyteries, synods, Presbyterian Women’s groups and more) might express their commitment to peacemaking.
- **2010** — The 219th General Assembly authorized the Peacemaking Program and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to develop a 4-year discernment process and resources. This was referred to as the “Peace Discernment” process.
- **2016** — The 222nd General Assembly approved the Five Affirmations to Guide the Peacemaking Witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA) which came out of the Peace Discernment process begun in 2010. The affirmations build upon *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and increase the PCUSA’s teaching of nonviolence for social transformation.



## MAKING THE COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING:

**DECLARES** that being part of God's peace-giving is a mission priority of the congregation or other entity;

**CHALLENGES** a congregation or other entity to deepen its peacemaking witness;

**ESTABLISHES** a framework for planning and implementing peacemaking in every aspect of the ministry of the congregation or other entity;

**INVITES** Presbyterians to work for peace in their own lives, families, community, nation and world;

**PROVIDES** a means for evaluating peacemaking efforts; *and*

**ENCOURAGES** contact and cooperation with other Presbyterian congregations, entities, individuals and communities in other denominations and faith traditions involved in peacemaking.

## TO REPORT YOUR COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING:

Please complete and return to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396, or scan and email to [peacemaking@presbyterianmission.org](mailto:peacemaking@presbyterianmission.org).

**Responding to God's Covenant,** \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF WORSHIPING COMMUNITY OR ENTITY

**now commits itself to peacemaking.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
MODERATOR / CHAIRPERSON

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK / WITNESS

**PIN Number (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A contact person for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program is:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_



## IS THERE HELP AVAILABLE AS WE IMPLEMENT OUR COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING?

God, who gave us the ministry of reconciliation, is the greatest source of strength and power as we work for peace. Through prayer, study, and action, we experience God's peace-making in our own lives and throughout the world.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program produces a variety of resources to support your peacemaking ministries and can connect you with other congregations and entities in your area who have made the commitment.

Peacemaking resources may be ordered online at [pcusastore.com](http://pcusastore.com) or by calling **800-533-4371**.

- *Commitment to Peacemaking* brochure
- *Companion Guide to the Commitment to Peacemaking*
- *Seeking to Be Faithful: Guidelines for Presbyterians in Times of Disagreement*
- *In Times of Disagreement* pocket guide

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program assists the church as it responds to the gospel calling to “seek peace and pursue it” through:

- Online resources and publications
- A Season of Peace
- International Peacemakers
- Travel study seminars
- Mosaic of Peace conferences
- Workshops and webinars

## CONTACT THE PRESBYTERIAN PEACEMAKING PROGRAM:

Visit: [PresbyterianMission.org/peacemaking](http://PresbyterianMission.org/peacemaking)

Call: **888-728-7228, ext. 5805**

Email: [peacemaking@pcusa.org](mailto:peacemaking@pcusa.org)



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