

Peace with Justice Covenant Congregations

“It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

”The Peace with Justice Covenant Congregation Program aims to make shalom — a word of greeting or farewell meaning peace — visible and active in people’s lives and communities. The General Conference assigned The General Board of Church & Society to put into service the program and called the denomination to “strengthen its capacity to act as a public advocate” in communities and nations throughout the world” (*From Becoming and Being a Peace with Justice Covenant Congregation Workbook*)

As the Peace with Justice Coordinator of the Susquehanna Annual Conference I am here to support congregations in this annual conference as they live into peace with justice principles. One of the ways churches can embrace a corporate life of peace with justice is to explore becoming a covenant congregation. Such congregations go through a eight step process with the end goal of making a covenant of peace.

Steps include:

Step One - Organizing a small group to start the process

Step Two - Establishing Connections

Step Three - Identifying and prioritizing a list of issues

Step Four - Develop a method to introduce the program to the congregation

Step Five - Design proposed action plan

Step Six - Adopt a Covenant Congregation program

Step Seven - Celebrate the Covenant

Step Eight - Continue to be who you say you are

These steps can take as long as your congregation needs. I will serve as a resource to you, as needed, throughout the process and can help you plan specific Peace with Justice projects.

After exploring the process, if your church chooses to become a covenant congregation you will covenant to:

Continue to approach issues of peace with justice from the perspective of Jesus Christ

Engage in ongoing action to remedy those manifestations of sin and evil in individuals, systems, and structures that stand in the way of God's Shalom

Participate in a yearly celebration of Peace with Justice Sunday

Please feel free to download and read through the Covenant Congregation workbook at the following link:

<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/atf/cf/%7B689fea4c-8849-4c05-a89e-c9bc7fff64c%7D/PWJCOVENANTCONGREGATIONWORKBOOKFINAL.PDF>

If you have any questions or wish to start the process of becoming a Peace with Justice Covenant Congregation, please contact me.

May we seek God's shalom together.

Blessings,

Pastor Michelle Bodle

Peace with Justice Coordinator of SUSUMC

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