

Motion as passed April 30, 2021: To affirm the Covenant Agreement between the Northern Lights Region DOC, Pacific Northwest Conference UCC and JUSTAPAZ and CEDECOL, as presented.

**JUSTAPAZ, CEDECOL's PEACE AND JUSTICE COMMISSION,
PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE UCC AND
CCDC NORTHERN LIGHTS REGION**

Covenant Agreement

Biblical Foundation:

“I pray that according to the riches of his Glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in all.

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.” -Ephesians 3: 16-20 4: 1-6, 15-16

Theological Reflection:

The passage above offers a compelling framework for understanding the relationship between the **Justapaz, CEDECOL's Peace and Justice Commission, the UCC Pacific Northwest Conference and CCDC Northern Lights Region**. In our partnership covenant, we remember that our faith is a spirit-driven gift of God which has allowed us to taste a love so compelling and so transforming that it changes everything about our lives. We acknowledge that the partnership is not so much something we are creating, but rather something to which we are responding that has its origins in the creative movement of God.

This movement of God's spirit, not only rests upon us as a gift, but calls us forth into a larger body of relationships stretching far beyond our own immediate circumstances, we are invited by God to discover what the Body of Christ looks like from God's view of the whole human family, particularly as that family is found in **Colombia and the U.S. Northwest**.

However, we are invited to more than just passive observation. We are called to active engagement with the wider church, growing ways which strengthen the ligaments of Christ's body between **Justapaz, CEDECOL's Peace and Justice Commission, the UCC Pacific Northwest Conference and CCDC Northern Lights Region**.

Partnership is the ligament connecting our lives together in response to the movement of the Spirit of God. As such, we recognize that no one part of the body is more important than another. Each part brings gifts to the table of celebration which can mutually strengthen each church's witness to Christ and God's vision.

We especially remember that in all our shared life, we are claimed by God to live a life of unity marked by faith, humility, gentleness, patience and love. These spiritual gifts are essential to the health of the Body of Christ and to the health of the partnership we embrace between the people of **Justapaz, CEDECOL's Peace and Justice Commission, the UCC Pacific Northwest Conference and CCDC Northern Lights Region**

Covenant Agreement

Seeking to lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, the churches of the **UCC Pacific Northwest Conference and CCDC Northern Lights Region** covenant together with **Justapaz and CEDECOL's Peace and Justice Commission**, for a period of five years to:

- **Pray** for each other's churches and ministries.
- **Listen** with open hearts to each other regarding the joys and challenges of ministry and life.
- **Learn** about each other's countries, ministries, and life situations.
- **Develop** lasting friendships through e-mail correspondence, virtual presence, and visits to each other's countries and churches.
- **Coordinate** the sharing of resources, projects, and people between our two respective ministries.
- **Celebrate** the richness of affirming the fullness of life and the hope for enduring peace by sharing materials for worship, which could be, included in liturgies, music, and resources of each other's worship life.

Strengths and Weaknesses Statement

Recognizing that healthy relationships rely on an honest assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses, churches in the U.S. often live with growing edges in need of development and refinement. Often we find that we are a people of affluence driven by a myth of scarcity. Our view of the world is often informed by self-interest, which lacks a global perspective. We are aware that there is much which our churches in the U.S. can learn about peace, justice, and reconciliation from our sisters and brothers in **Justapaz and CEDECOL's Peace and Justice Commission**. We are hopeful that our partnership can help us learn how to promote peace, justice and reconciliation in the United States. We are excited about how different expressions of spirituality may enrich our lives.

We are also excited to discover how God may use the gifts, which we bring to the table of partnership. In particular, we celebrate the gift of openness which God is nurturing in our life, readying us for this new relationship. While financial resources for support of special projects will likely be a part of lived relationship, it is our desire that these would be shared in a way which honors the mutual nature of our relationship.

As it is written in the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, "God bestows upon us God's Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races."

Signatures:

Date:

“I am about to do a new thing.... do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19

Timeline

2017: We began working toward a new partnership through our Global Ministries arm of the DOC and the UCC in the spring of 2017. Our committee had suggested Latin America as an area of interest because of the connection with farm laborers in Eastern Washington. We hoped to relate to a different part of the globe than S. Korea, where a partnership already existed. (Currently the partnership with S. Korea churches is dormant.)

Tom Morse, from Global Ministries, met with our committee and suggested two possible partner church organizations in Latin America. One of them was Colombia. Committee members reflected on the choice and selected Colombia.

2018: In summer of 2018 we began participating in zoom calls with two organizations in Colombia: JUSTAPAZ (an organization for justice and peace, organized by Mennonites) and CEDEPOL (Council for Peace of the Evangelical Council of Churches in Colombia). These organizations work for peace and justice in Colombia and relate to one another. These calls occur approximately monthly. Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto, L.A. Secretary for Global Ministries, the leaders of JUSTAPAZ and CEDECOL, persons from the east coast and several of our committee members participate in the calls. We are learning about the situation in Colombia and their ministries. We are getting acquainted with their leaders Pablo Moreno and Martin Nates. Ed Evans, a GM committee member, takes notes from the calls.

2019: A small group of the committee prepared documents to send to Angel Rivera-Agosto, in Indianapolis in January and February of 2019. These documents described the strengths and challenges of the Disciples Region and the UCC Conference.

In September 2019 we received a visit from Michael Joseph, mission co-worker to Colombia. He spoke in churches and met with clergy groups in the Region and the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC. Michael also met with our Global Ministries Committee and gave us a good introduction to the ministry of JUSTAPAZ and CEDECOL.

(Michael did not return to Colombia and a search began to find a new mission co-worker for Colombia. Currently, there is a couple who are working through the process to be named mission co-workers to Colombia by Global Ministries.)

2020:The GM committee proposed a mission pilgrimage to Colombia which was planned for September 2020. When the pandemic prevented that Angel Agosto-Rivera and Lorna Hernandez from Global Ministries suggested a virtual pilgrimage. This was a first for Global Ministries as well as us!

Over the summer we recruited DOC and UCC participants, eight each. The Disciple participants were Sandy Messick, Wayne Daly (All Pilgrims, Seattle), Dick Cunningham (Queen Anne CC, Seattle), Bill & Connie Robey (1st Christian, Puyallup), Janet Larsen and Adam Janes (Othello CC, Othello, WA), Gloria Soja (1st CC, Helena, MT), Annette Bratke, (Grand Ave. CC, Bozeman, MT), and Mary Olney-Loyd (All Pilgrims CC, Seattle).

There were two preparation meetings led by Lorna Hernandez and Angel Agosto-Rivera. The virtual pilgrimage took place September 21-26. The hosts in Colombia traveled to the remote area called Choco, in NW Colombia. They delivered food aid and COVID-19 supplies to six villages. Everywhere they went they video taped their experiences, including worship and interviews. They built a web site about their travels, including cooking sections. See:

<https://www.justapaz.org/pilgrimage-for-peace-medio-san-juan-choco/>

Our time together included video of their experiences in Choco, a live ecumenical communion service, conversations with various scholars and Christian leaders regarding issues facing Colombians. Two of the days our group shared reflections and debriefed our experiences together.

2021: January 21, 2021 our Global Ministries Committee met and reached consensus. We recommend to the DOC and UCC Boards of Directors to form a partnership between the Northern Lights Region DOC, Pacific Northwest Conference UCC and JUSTAPAZ and CEDEPOL.

After that meeting Rick Russell and Mary Olney-Loyd met via zoom with Angel Rivera-Agosto who shared the attached Partnership Covenant with us. An official motion to this effect from the Global Ministries Committee will be forwarded to you soon.

We are very enthusiastic about moving toward an official partnership! It has taken nearly three years to come to this place – yet we are already living into something new and exciting! The Christian leaders in Colombia experience hardship and violence in their Christian walk as they deal with the aftermath of a 60-year civil war. We are challenged and heartened by their deep faith. We look forward to learning from them and sharing ourselves with Christians in Colombia.

Please read the accompanying Partnership Covenant and note the ways to live into the partnership on page 2. I will be present at your February 7 meeting and encourage your questions.

Respectively submitted,

Mary Olney-Loyd, Co-Chair Global Ministries Committee