



GRACE  
Episcopal Church

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## **RENEWING OUR COVENANT:**

A Statement of Commitment and Action

*From the Rector, Wardens and Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church*

*Madison WI*

*April 19, 2017*

Grace Episcopal Church reaffirms its commitment to respect the dignity of every human being, strive for justice and peace among all people, and seek and serve Christ in all persons (*Book of Common Prayer, pp 304-305*). We have grave concerns about the proposed bans on immigration and refugees and the targeting of undocumented persons. We worry about the increase in statements and actions in our nation that target particular groups of people based on their skin color, their religious affiliation, their gender or orientation, their disabilities, or their country of birth. These are artificial divisions that we vehemently denounce as discriminatory and disrespectful. We believe our nation can do better, and we pledge to work toward that better vision here and now. We commit to pursue justice and mercy in God's name, joining with others who share our values. Here's how we will engage this work:

### **1. We will go deeper in faith.**

We commit to read, study, and live the words of Jesus. We are challenged by his words: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (*Matthew 25:35-36*). We are also guided by the words of the prophet Micah: "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" (*Micah 6:8*) We must seek both courage and humility as we respond.

### **2. We will listen.**

We will listen to those with whom we may disagree as we seek safe and sacred spaces for hearing each other's stories, pains, fears, and hopes. We will foster such dialogue so that our children might learn the meaning of the diversity and pluralism that is America's best future.

### **3. We will lift up truth.**

We will strive to replace fear with facts when it comes to public discussions about immigrants, refugees, Muslims, racial diversity, and national security. Our times require a moral compass, and truth-telling is an important part of this.

4. We will reject racism.

We will name white supremacy, racism, and Anti-Semitism as sins. We believe all people are made in God's image. We proclaim allegiance to Jesus Christ who breaks down all barriers that divide us, including ethnicity and race.

5. We will love our neighbors by protecting them from hate speech and attacks.

We will identify, report, and confront hate speech and behavior — against all ethnic and religious groups, women, LGBTQ people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and all marginalized groups. Our church stands as a safe haven for people threatened by those who would attack them.

6. We will welcome the stranger, as our Scriptures instruct.

We will advocate for immigrants and their families, and we will oppose the mass deportations of immigrants who are members of our communities.

7. We will defend religious liberty.

We embrace Muslims as fellow Americans and stand with our local mosques in congregational solidarity. We will denounce the defamation and banning of Muslims, and will seek to disrupt any attempt to require registration of Muslims.

8. We will protest with our best values.

We will defend constitutional values and workplace fairness, striving to respect the dignity of every human being. Whether in our streets, schools or in our workplaces — we will protest with dignity, discipline, and non-violence, not with hate for hate.

9. We make these commitments to you, and with you.

The days and weeks and years ahead will surely require much of us. Grace Church will be here to provide sustenance for the journey, resources for learning, safe space for dialogue, and opportunities for prayerful resistance and action. Join us as we engage this work, as community, in God's name.

*Adapted from a document published by the Vestry of St. Mark's Cathedral Parish, Seattle, WA; December 20, 2016*