

Three Great Loves

by John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

Five years ago, the United Church of Christ attempted to alleviate hunger by engaging the entire denomination in a shared, collective effort known as Mission: 1.

Four years ago, we attempted a shared initiative to restore health to the planet in an initiative we called Mission 4/1 Earth.

Both times, the full weight of the United Church of Christ was brought to bear as an agent of impact and for transformation. It was a powerful and beautiful thing we did.

We are going to try this again.

At Synod, we will introduce a new campaign - Three Great Loves.

Like the previous mission initiatives, we will attempt to engage the entire denomination in a shared effort and measure the impact of that commitment.

“Three Great Loves” is a response to our newly articulated purpose, mission, and vision statement which reads:

- We will love the lord our God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves. (Purpose)
- United by the Holy Spirit and inspired by God’s grace we love all, welcome all, and seek justice for all. (Mission)
- A just world for all. (Vision).

These words are intended to articulate why the United Church of Christ is called by God into being – and unless we can operationalize them into mission that matters, they are just words.

Therefore, we are inviting and calling the United Church of Christ into mission. We are challenging the entire denomination to engage in Three Great Loves:

The love of Children
The love of Neighbor
The love of Creation.

Every setting of the United Church of Christ is invited to make two commitments:

First, discover ways in which you can engage the members of your faith community in mission that serves the needs of children, responds to the suffering of your neighbor, and/or honors the call to be good stewards of God’s creation.

Second, find a way to narrate the impact of your commitment and tell the story to the rest of the denomination. We will create a web presence that archives and details not just the stories of your shared mission in this collective effort, but the details about the difference these commitments make.

Begin today talking with your board, council, consistory, deacons, youth group or any other relevant body about what you are willing to do to demonstrate a love for children, a love for neighbor, and a love for Creation. We believe an entire denomination that is willing to engage in an extended time of mission to serve these “Three Great Loves” can change the world. We know that your part in this mission matters – no matter where you are located or how large or small your community is.

Help us to engage the United Church of Christ in mission once again, all pulling together in common cause and for a common purpose.

The world is in need of our great love. And our love for the world can transform it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.