

Three Great Loves

by John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

With its new Mission Statement, the United Church of Christ is committed to exploring what it takes to build a just world for all by simply loving God and loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.

To help the entire denomination not just speak those good words but live them out in tangible, meaningful ways we have also committed to participating in the Three Great Loves mission initiative (ucc.org/3greatloves).

This is, first of all, an invitation to every setting of our denomination to practice love of children, love of neighbor, and love of creation.

Every day across the life of the UCC - in congregations, through our Council for Health and Human Service Ministries agencies, in Conferences, at seminaries and historically related colleges, on army bases and in hospitals where our chaplains serve – love is freely offered and changes lives.

This is not simply a call to action, though. It is also an invitation to share the stories of the impact your love creates. I travel the world and the country witnessing your good works and hearing the testimonies of those whose lives are changed by your love. It is an honor for me to bear witness to, and to hold as a treasure, those good works. This initiative is an opportunity not just to practice love, but to create new ways of hearing across the life of the denomination the powerful stories of impact told by those whose lives and worlds changed because of what you do.

The Three Great Loves mission initiative serves as a way for us all to embody and incarnate a missional commitment to love neighbor and build a just world for all. It will be our concentrated effort to focus our reason for being on the calls to love and justice: two themes consistently raised in the sacred stories we find in our Scriptures and used to describe what is to be found in the heart of God and in the ministry and message of Jesus.

What would it look like for an entire denomination to focus its attention this way? We are going to find out.

Over the next two years, discover new ways to love children, to love neighbor, and to love creation.

When that love changes a life or your community, we are asking that you not keep that story a secret. Share it with the world. Our UCNews site (ucc.org/news) is already posting stories almost daily (it is really hard to keep up with all that your commitments to love and justice make possible!) on the work you are doing and the impact it is creating. Write to us and tell us what you did and the difference it made. We will commit to curating and narrating your stories of impact. Go often to either UCNews or the Three Great Loves web pages and check out what your family in faith is doing every day.

Nothing short of changing the world as a fulfillment of our mission is what we are about here. As your General Minister and President, I have the joy of watching your love in action. You make me very proud.

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.