

A Message to the Church from the Executive Council

The Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, gathered this week in Cleveland, suspended its activities in order to join the country in listening to President Bush's address regarding military action against Iraq.

During this Lenten season, a season in which the church recommits itself to resisting the principalities and powers that oppress and violate humanity and all creation, the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ affirms its commitment to peace, not war. We find Saddam Hussein's brutality and violence morally and ethically unacceptable—and we also believe that a war that victimizes an already oppressed people is a horrible solution to a horrific problem. In light of the President's message, we, as the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, affirm our beliefs:

- that war is not the answer
- that war against Iraq represents political, theological and spiritual failure
- that the failure to gain support of the international community must be cause for humble examination
- that war with Iraq fails to promote just peace, for which the UCC has long advocated

In the coming days we encourage people in all settings of the United Church of Christ to

- Pray for peace
- Pray for those of all nations who find themselves in harm's way
- Pray for our national and world leaders
- Consider protesting the war in voice and action
- Contact political leaders of our country to urge the pursuit of peace-building strategies
- Pray for UCC leaders who are traveling to the region, and for missionaries and partners serving in the region
- Support the special One Great Hour of Sharing "Olive Branch" campaign
- Engage in faithful actions of public witness
- Organize and join in public prayer vigils in our churches and communities
- Persist in praying and working for peace with justice

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