

***Diocese of Washington***  
***Southern Africa Partnership Task Force***  
***Theological Statement***  
***(Adopted 7/10/03 and readopted 4/6/04)***

We as members of the Southern Africa Partnership Task Force of the Diocese of Washington affirm the call of Jesus that we “may all be one” (John 17:21), and we accept his vision of a definition of neighbor that is universal (Luke 10:29-37). By this we see that we are both called into relationship with our sisters and brothers in Christ wherever they may be, and called into relationship with all humankind, across race, cultures and nations.

We also affirm that at particular times we are led into special relationships through prayer, discernment and opportunity. While recognizing God’s call into relationship throughout the world, and especially God’s call to many of our brothers and sisters in this Diocese to be in relationship with other regions of Africa, we see our emerging diocesan commitment to deepening bonds with the Church of the Province of Southern Africa as a profound particular calling at this time.

We acknowledge that we do not know where this call will lead. We do know, however, that for us to be one, we must enter into a partnership that is mutual and authentic, and that is characterized as self-giving, trusting and compassionate. We see our relatedness with the Church of the Province of Southern Africa as one where we both give that our companions may receive, and receive that which our companions may offer.

We understand that relationship not only honors human dignity but also confronts human failure, including the structures that humans have created to govern our lives. God calls us to do justice in God’s name (Micah 6:8). We see the need to address oppression and injustice in our own society as well as both to hear and respond to the stories of oppression and injustice experienced by our partners.

We know that God, “who reconciled us to himself through Christ..., has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18), and this demands that we together with our partners continue to witness to the devastating legacy and current reality of injustice and violence in our countries and in the world. We see in this the call for a reconciliation with justice, where we seek together to heal broken relationships between one another and in our stewardship of the earth. We see in this, too, a message of hope and thanksgiving.

Finally we remind ourselves of “the love that God has given us in letting us be called children of God. And that is not just what we are called, but what we are!” (1 John 3:1). We see in this a reminder of the joy that can also come from this Partnership. Thus as we work together for the establishment of justice, reconciliation and peace in our communities and countries, we pledge ourselves to celebrate as well, enjoying this opportunity to deepen our ties as part of the one Body of Christ.