

Grounded in faith.
Working for justice.



Dear Pastor,

On behalf of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, I invite you to embrace a new opportunity for your congregation to affiliate with the Church Council as a **“Participating Congregation.”**

What is unique and timely is the call to discernment in order to affirm the full, conscious and active participation of your faith community in the life of the Church Council. This initiative leaves in place our official membership of 16 Christian denominations, and the congregations therein, and ecumenical and interfaith partners. A description of this mutual commitment of your congregation to other King and South Snohomish County congregations through the Church Council is attached.

For many congregations, this initiative is a chance to strengthen your relationships with congregations throughout the region and to make substantive the interconnection of your church with the Church Council and its board, staff, ecumenical infrastructure and mission. Adding “fiber and texture” to what may be occasional and issue-oriented contacts is especially important as the church rises up to meet the challenges “for such a time as this.” In a word, as Christian communities, we are drawn to the unity of communion with one another: we belong to one another in Christ.

Engagement as a Participating Congregation adds vitality to our shared work of being authentic witnesses in the life of our local communities, accountable to God as we are for the world. This, we believe, is a moment for coming together as never before. Knowing each other and “conspiring” together is a joyful way to embody the healing and liberating love of Jesus. The Church Council honors your ministry and seeks to build respectfully and intentionally on the gifts you offer.

I ask you and your decision-making body to review the following documents: the Participating Congregations document (for signatures), the “Engage” document (for commitments), and the benefits to Participating Congregations. Once you are ready, you can send the completed documents to Irene Muller at imuller@thechurchcouncil.org or mail them to The Church Council of Greater Seattle at PO Box 18467 Seattle, WA 98118.

I look forward to arranging with you a time to present a framed acknowledgement of your commitment to being a Participating Congregation. You are most welcome to send any questions to me at mramos@thechurchcouncil.org.

Thank you for your faithful service as a congregation and your steadfast fellowship in God’s vineyard!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Ramos".

Michael Ramos
Executive Director



The Church Council of Greater Seattle Recognizes and Honors

(Name of Congregation)

as a

Participating Congregation

We recognize that we are called by God to be partners in the continuing work of creation, bringing nearer the Shalom of wholeness and peace. As a Christian congregation in the Greater Seattle area, we unite with others through the Church Council of Greater Seattle to respond to God's call so that the Church as a whole may bear effective witness to God's power and love, to God's justice and righteousness in this time and this place.

We commit ourselves with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and our witness to support the Church Council of Greater Seattle as a visible symbol and living embrace of our unity in Christ, for the sake of the world.

Michael Ramos, Executive Director

Name and Title

The Rev. Dr. Linda M. Smith, Board President

Name of Congregation

Date _____

Date _____

Church Council of Greater Seattle

Participating Congregations: Living Out Our Unity as Christians

A Participating Congregation **ENGAGEs** with the work of the Church Council in **two or more of the areas described below**. The examples under each heading are meant to **encourage and inspire** your congregation as you discern how you are called to engage as a Participating Congregation with the Church Council.

We look forward to continued conversation with you regarding how this relationship can flourish and what each party can do to support each other as we engage in cooperative ministry such that the Church as a whole may bear effective witness to God's power and love, to God's justice and righteousness in this time and this place.

Explore the Diversity of our Christian Unity and of other Religious Faiths

Convene formal and/or informal conversations covering different topics of interest for Christian and interfaith communities. Support faith communities facing harassment or persecution. Join in service opportunities that allow different congregations to serve together and with the community.

Nurture Relationships and Foster Collaboration

Share what you do with the Church Council and other congregations – and share invitations and news from the Church Council and other congregations with your congregation. Join with other congregations around similar interests or geographic location. Create opportunities to join together to listen, learn best practices and participate in actions in the larger community. Focus on neighborhood conversations and priorities, as well as regional.

Gather for Prayer and Worship

Gather for prayer and worship ecumenically through opportunities such as Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and community vigils. Extend the work through encouraging the swapping of parishioners and pulpits and/or participating in interfaith prayer and worship.

Act Faithfully for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation

Embrace the challenge of working for God's *shalom* both within your congregation and in the community. Join together collectively and take risks faithfully for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Give Financially to Sustain the Work We Do Together as a Church Council

Give financially to sustain the structure that makes our collaboration possible. All support all. Participate with an annual financial commitment at a level meaningful to your congregation – fitting your abilities and your commitment to ecumenical justice work.

Engage in Trainings, Workshops, Dialogues and Conferences

Join in the *Weaving Our Strengths* Conference, participate in trainings on race and racism, homelessness and housing, living wage, and ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. Invite church members, friends and neighborhood congregations to attend one or more of the above and assist in convening and participating in follow-up activities.

Church Council of Greater Seattle

Benefits of being a Participating Congregation

- **Increased Relationship**
 - Connect with the broader Christian community
 - Encounter different ways of responding to God's invitation
 - Pray, worship, and sing with people of other traditions
 - Discover interfaith partners and allies in other sectors
- **Programs to equip and renew your mission call to serve the common good**
 - *Weaving Our Strengths* Conference: a day of strengthening local churches' efforts for common good
 - Skill-building workshops and events on issues of concern to the community
 - Gatherings for prayer, dialogue, and learning on our core areas of work
 - Web resources for study, action, and worship
 - Share best practices with other congregations
 - Working groups for homelessness, economic justice, and immigrant and refugee accompaniment - ongoing organizing & coordinating of faith response
 - Join in faith-based community organizing for the common good
 - Advocacy partnership to come alongside your hopes and your call for justice-making
 - Point of connection for people in your congregation who have a call in ministry but whose call is not fully supported by the congregation
- **Communications Crossroads**
 - A website with rich resources for study, worship, action, as well as a comprehensive calendar of faith community events & directory of faith agencies
 - Promote your events & learn of others'
 - E-newsletter and action alerts
 - Network for coalition building with other organizations and individuals who share interest in ecumenical work