

A Statement from First Presbyterian Church of Grinnell in Support of Grinnell's Muslim Community (January 2016)

The First Presbyterian Church of Grinnell comprises a community of citizens who seek to understand and deepen our faith through worship, prayer, study, thought, and discussion. We call ourselves Christian because we are committed to understanding, following, and applying the lessons of our founding teacher Jesus Christ. Within our membership we welcome differences of opinion, differences in certainty of belief, and seekers at all stages of their faith journeys. Relating to one another, in all our multiplicity, is part of what makes us a church, part of the "body of Christ," striving to be of service in a complicated and troubled world.

But while we often disagree about or puzzle over our faith and beliefs, we try hard to live up to the "great commandment" Jesus taught us when he said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We unite in applying this commandment to the recent harsh treatment of Muslims in our world and in our country. In particular, we take this opportunity to reach out to our closest neighbors in this struggle—Muslims who live in or visit Grinnell.

The recent surge in our country of hateful words and actions toward Muslims runs completely antithetical to Jesus's neighborly love. We at First Presbyterian condemn any such words or actions. Grinnell has always prided itself on being a community that welcomes all people, where all residents and visitors feel safe and free to work, play, worship, and relate to one another in harmony. By offering this statement of support, we at First Presbyterian reaffirm this vision of Grinnell in a spirit that embraces our Muslim brothers and sisters.