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Dear friends in Salem area faith communities,

This is the week we celebrate the important program that began in Salem and is helping transform people around the world. It's the **12th Annual Hands and Words are Not For Hurting Week, October 18-24**, but certainly appropriate to observe (and re-observe) throughout the year on the Sabbath that best works for you.

There are many appropriate ways to build awareness. The pledge ("**I will not use my hands or my words for hurting myself or others.**") and the iconic visual reminder that goes with it (a signed purple handprint) have proven to be powerful tools in the struggle against violence and abuse, particularly among children, in our communities.

For evidence of the cultural transformation that this wonderful program has helped achieve, go to their website: www.handsproject.org/. I notice there, for instance, that "Hands" is now part of the curriculum at the Public Safety Academy, San Bernardino, CA, and even as part of the strategy used to help educate students at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in Baltimore, MD. Not to mention its major involvement in a class at McNary High School in Keizer!

As you'll read on the site, "The Hands & Words Project is designed to work in partnership with all abuse and violence prevention, conflict resolution, character building skills programs." In other words, this is a program made-to-order for faith communities, and we should be proud that Salem, City of Peace, is the center of this project.

The "Hands" affirmation of peaceful relations within our families, schools, and communities gives us a simple and effective way to act against abuse and violence. Thanks for whatever support you can offer this worthy cause.

God's peace!

Charlie Wallace

Charlie Wallace
University Chaplain



P.S. Please let the "Hands& Words Project" Office know how you've celebrated this year. That way your experience can help inspire others in this important work.