

**Resolution in Support of the Proposal to Ban the Hunting of Mourning Doves  
in Michigan for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Michigan Conference  
of the United Church of Christ**

Submitted by: Delegates of the Congregational Church of Birmingham, United Church of Christ, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan : Anne Honhart 248 644-3678, Jeanne Servis 248 644-5344, Sharon Noll Smith 248 626-8876 and Rev. Penny Lowes 248 651-9329.



Genesis 9:8-10: “Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.”

Luke 3:22: “...and the Holy Spirit descended upon him,(Jesus), in bodily form like a dove.”  
(Also see Mark 1:10, John 1:32)

Matthew 10:16: “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves...”

## **Background**

In July, 2004 the Michigan legislature removed the century-long protection of the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) by declaring it a game species and opening a hunting season in Michigan, ending our state’s heritage to protect the dove as a traditional backyard songbird. Our same legislature had, in 1998, declared the mourning dove a “peaceful songbird” and designated the mourning dove “Michigan’s official bird of peace.”

Citizens from all over the state, through the Committee to Restore the Dove Shooting Ban, signed petitions for a referendum to be placed on the next general election ballot.

On June 2, 2005 the State Board of Canvassers certified, without a single challenge, the 275,000 petition signatures to restore the ban on dove hunting. This suspended the hunt until the election on November 7, 2006 when Michigan voters will have the opportunity to stop the shooting of mourning doves within our borders for good.

1. WHEREAS the mourning dove has been the universal symbol of peace for centuries and the Christian expression of the holy spirit for two thousand years and officially designated by our own Michigan Legislature in 1998 as Michigan's bird of peace;
2. WHEREAS mourning doves have been continuously protected in Michigan for a century;
3. WHEREAS mourning doves mate for life and are beloved Michigan backyard songbirds;
4. WHEREAS the hunting of mourning doves is unnecessary as mourning doves are not overpopulated, they do not pose a threat to agriculture or anything else of human value, they do not provide a viable human food source and hunters have 40 other species of game birds available for their sport;
5. WHEREAS shooting doves is known to produce starvation of the orphaned young as both parent birds are required to tend the nest and feed their young;
6. WHEREAS Michigan is a breeding state for doves, not just a pass through state, whereby hunting of doves could result in a dramatic drop in the number of birds that reach maturity and nest to reproduce;
7. WHEREAS mourning dove shooting results in the discharge and accumulation of alarming amounts of toxic lead shot deposited in the environment and on to crop growing soils resulting in the poisoning of doves, seed eating birds as well as other animals and wildlife feeding in the area;
8. WHEREAS there is an unacceptably high wounding rate for mourning dove hunting;
9. WHEREAS mourning dove shooting produces mistaken identity kills, including American Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks and other federally protected species;

AND

10. WHEREAS in its role as a Just Peace Church, the United Church of Christ affirms its support to the pursuit of peace for God's people and God's creation;
11. WHEREAS in its role as an anti-violent church, the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ stands resolute against the unnecessary hunting of the Michigan State symbol of peace;
12. LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Michigan Conference call upon congregations and persons in all settings of the United Church of Christ within Michigan to engage in serious and prayerful consideration of the non-necessary hunting of the mourning dove, the Michigan Bird of Peace; and
13. LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Michigan Conference United Church of Christ urges all members to vote no to shooting doves and vote no on the mourning dove referendum on Michigan's November 2006 ballot.
14. LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Michigan Conference send this resolution to the press releases throughout the state.

No funding is required for the implementation of this resolution.