

Peace and Justice news



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Peace and Justice Committee
Eastern District Conference
Franconia Mennonite Conference
Mennonite Church USA

An occasional newsletter for local church peace representatives

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for Congregational Leaders
March 10, 2012**

**Food/Hunger Workshops
with Bread for the World
March 15, 17, & April 21, 2012**

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Peace and Justice Committee

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Telling the Story of Mission & Peace

The biblical story of mission and peace makes claims on those who tell it. God acts for the benefit of humans, but then expects humans to mirror God's action.

Just as I have loved you, *you also should love one another.* – John 13:34

I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. *Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?* – Matt. 18:32-33

You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. – Exodus 23:9

You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. – Deut. 24:17-18

And forgive us our debts, *as we also have forgiven our debtors.* – Matt. 6:12

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. – Luke 6:36

So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, *you also ought to wash one another's feet.* – John 13:14

Walking in the Way of Peace

Peace Church within the Empire

Reflections from the Pastors' Breakfast and
Winter Peace Retreat at Spruce Lake
with **Alan and Eleanor Kreider**

God's shalom and mission

God is in the reconciliation business, healing relationships that humans have broken – between God and humans; among humans; and between humans and the created order. God's mission is to heal creation, as reflected in Isaiah's words to God's people in exile who have been crushed by the empire.¹



Peaceable Kingdom - Edward Hicks

Mission and reconciliation begin with God's initiative, but they rely on people who are attuned to hearing and responding to God's directive. Jesus, for example, was met by a Centurion (Matt. 8:5-11) – a Roman officer whose presence connoted danger, violence and oppression to pious Jews. Simply associating with a Centurion would make Jews ritually unclean, but Jesus engages with the Centurion and heals his servant. Some years later (Acts 10) God calls Peter to meet with Cornelius, a "God-fearing" centurion, which not only transforms both men, but ultimately opens the entire church to Gentiles.

While the church often calls people who have specific gifts to be engaged in full-time missionary work, every baptized Christian is called to be in mission, looking for the places that God is at work and joining in that work.

(continued on page 2)

1. See Isaiah 11 (*lion and lamb*); Isaiah 2:2-6 (*swords into plowshares*); and Isaiah 25:6-12 (*vision of abundance and salvation for all peoples*).

Worship, mission and peace

Worship is pervasive in our culture, even among people who would never set foot in church – for example, during football or basketball seasons. At the tiny airport in South Bend, Indiana, that advertises ten non-stop flights daily, about 120 executive jets arrive on Notre Dame football weekends. Fans everywhere have their special clothes, special rituals, special chants and responses. There is often an overwhelming sense of community and unity devoted to a shared cause.



Eleanor and Alan Kreider

Worship is formative: what we worship – what we value – shapes who we are as individuals and as communities. The weekly church gatherings that we call worship should then enable us and shape us to become people of God's peace and God's mission.

The biblical story of mission and peace is an “upside down” story, of working in improbable places, from the perspective of those who are adapted to empire values. Hebrew slaves in Goshen are sprung loose from Egypt's imperial power. The 3rd chapter of Luke's gospel begins, almost satirically, with a recitation of all the political and religious “authorities” of that day, in contrast to the real power of Mary's Magnificat and John's encounter with God in the wilderness.

Alan Kreider has a particular interest in the study of the early church's stance on war and peace, so the conversation included many stories from the early centuries of Christianity as well as early Anabaptists. New Testament letters and other archaeological sources tell us something about early Christians, but there is much we don't know for certain about their practices, because they really didn't leave us much in writing. Also, since we are living in a different era, those early Christian practices can't directly tell us how to live in our present context, but stories about the early church can offer us conversation about how we respond to empires today.

The Roman centurion Marcellus, for example, was martyred after announcing his allegiance to Jesus Christ and renouncing his service to the Emperor. Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder discovered that there was a relic of Marcellus under the altar in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Notre Dame University. Yoder started talking with Catholics about Marcellus, and soon the Catholic peace and justice people discovered Marcellus. So now every year on Marcellus' feast day (October 30th) there is a peace pilgrimage that ends up at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart where there is a service in which Marcellus' story is told and often a lecture on peace theology by a senior Catholic theologian.

For further reading on the Peace Church within the Empire see the resource list at peaceretreat.pjpr.org,

Worship Practices that Reflect Mission & Peace

Here are some examples of how our peace theology can be allowed to suffuse into all aspects of worship.

The Peace Greeting comes from the greetings of New Testament letters and from the early Christian liturgy, when every week before the Eucharist (communion meal), there was a time when God's people would make peace. Superficially it was people greeting each other, “*The Peace of Christ be with you.*” “*And also with you.*” But more than that, they emphasized that if you are not reconciled with each other when you come to worship, your Eucharist will not be effective and God will not hear your prayers. This was a time to initiate reconciliation with others in the congregation.

The Eucharist – the peace meal – is the central ritual for peace making in the church, and the words spoken should reflect God's non-violent action in Christ, including more than just a few verses from ICor. 11. For example,^[2]

“... On the night before He went forth to His eternally memorable and life-giving death, rejecting violence, loving His enemies, praying for His persecutors, He bestowed upon His disciples the gift of a New Commandment: “Love one another. As I have loved you so you also should love one another. Then He took bread into His holy hands, and looking up to You, almighty God, He gave thanks, blessed it, broke it, gave it to His disciples and said: “Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you.” Likewise, when the Supper was ended, He took the cup. Again He gave You thanks and praise, gave the cup to His disciples and said: “Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.” “Do this in memory of me.” ...

Baptism - words of peace can reflect the experience of both death and resurrection. *You are dying to violence; you are being reborn into love that is non-violent.*

Sharing Time - This is where God's ongoing action breaks into our lives. How have we seen God at work? This is the time that we can report what we have noticed. (Excessive focus on medical reports have often given sharing time a bad reputation. Make reports Audible, Brief, Christ-Centered, the “ABC” rule.)

Prayers which reflect our daily work, including **The Lord's Prayer** which is a prayer of reconciliation. Pray it often – in worship, but also in daily devotions.

Footwashing - a ritual with a story, it has actions: kneeling, reciprocity, presence of God

2. Emmanuel C. McCarthy, www.mountosb.org/bfp/nonviolent.pdf, p. 2-3

Congregations Engaged in Peacemaking

A number of our congregations and communities held peace Sunday activities last September –remembering either the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon or the annual International Day of Prayer for Peace.

Doylestown

KrisAnne Swartley works alongside Doylestown Mennonite Church with *the Garden* ministry.³ Anticipating the 9/11 anniversary which fell on a Sunday last year, they were concerned that it could be a politically-charged kind of memorial day in our nation, and they planned a 9/11 walk through the neighborhood. The small group simply walked the neighborhood, saying “hi” to the people they met along the way, encouraging hope founded in the community.

They were unexpectedly rewarded with stories that came out of just that simple act of community. There were 30-year residents of Doylestown who led them around the neighborhood and told the story of their daughter who had been murdered years ago and even took them to her grave. They had a beautiful moment just being with these neighbors in their grief and memories; and then walking around the neighborhood and hearing stories of the beautiful things that happened in community and neighborhood. Perhaps it was peacemaking through the back door – not overt, but covert.

The Garden is a non-traditional ministry of spiritual formation, associated with Sandy Ridge Community Garden. Three new “Garden Groups” began meeting in January, focusing on spiritual conversation and simple acts of generosity in their respective neighborhoods.

Ambler

Last fall Ambler Mennonite Church used a program called *Destroying the Barrier*,⁴ which included pictures of some of the walls around the world (Israel/Palestine, Mexico, Northern Ireland, and Berlin). Members of the congregation who are actually first generation immigrants (from Jordan, Korea, Canada, and Brazil) read the accounts by real people in response to these walls, while pictures of the walls in various states were projected behind them. Participants found it a profoundly moving experience, according to Pastor Donna Merow, realizing what might have happened if those walls had been built to exclude the people up front who were reading the stories.

Whitehall

Leaders of Whitehall Mennonite Church feel that there are many ways in which their church is living out peace and justice – just in being the church community and dealing with concerns that include mental illness, prison, drugs, refugees. Pastor Rose Bender’s residence in downtown Allentown (Zumé House) is also a new guest house for urban ministry.

3. *The Garden* – www.thegardenpa.org

4. PJSN peace.mennolink.org/resources/psunday11/index.html and peace.mennolink.org/resources/psunday11/reflect.html -3-

Peace Mug Award

Dr. Priscilla Benner - MAMA Project

Feb. 11, 2012 – Dr. Priscilla Benner received this year’s Franconia Conference Peace Mug Award during the Winter Peace Retreat at Spruce Lake.

Dr. Benner has been involved since the early 1980’s in the visioning and creation of the organization named MAMA Project. MAMA, which stands for *Mujeres Amigas* (Women Friends) *Miles Apart*, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.



MAMA grew out of what Ruth Cole, Dr. Benner’s sister, and others witnessed for themselves during mission trips to Honduras in 1983 and 1984. Her pictures and stories were shared in eight Mennonite Churches in the Franconia and Eastern District Conferences, and with women’s mission groups⁵ which then reached out to the Mennonite Women’s Organization of the Honduran Mennonite Church, and a partnership was formed.

Dr. Benner grew up in a community where all the influential people in her life were intensely nationalistic. She was introduced to the Mennonite peace perspective when she married David Benner, but the horrible things she witnessed in Central America – extreme poverty, war and militarization, fueled by her beloved country – shattered her world view and transformed her life.

From the outset MAMA has focused on families with children living at risk for early death from malnutrition, beginning with the “Superbar” and “Super Cookies” projects. Since then, MAMA has grown significantly, being involved in direct aid with food supplements, nutrition and childcare education, literacy, scholarships; and when crises such as floods occur, rescue, relief, and reconstruction projects. At times, MAMA’s work has included loans, home construction, latrine and water projects, but today most construction is focused on cementing floors in poor homes.

MAMA has also had a significant role to play in the sphere of national health policy and has had influence in Honduras and in other countries by partnering with others and sharing its materials, systems, and perspectives. Dr. Benner says, “We take teams to work in and experience Honduras, and hope and pray that the fire of their own passion for service will be fueled by this experience.”

Peace Mugs, provided by the Peace and Justice Support Network (PJSN) of Mennonite Church USA and awarded by our conference Peace & Justice Committee, honor those among us who demonstrate a life long commitment to peace and justice.

5. WMSC Women’s Missionary and Service Commission, Mennonite Church; and WIM Women in Mission, General Conference Mennonite Church .

Peace and Justice Calendar

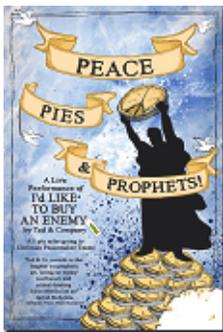
Peace Resources for Christian Education



**A Peace Education Workshop for
Congregational Leaders
Saturday, March 10, 2012
8:30am-12:00n
Towamencin Mennonite Church**

- This workshop will include resources for all ages (children, youth, adults) in many areas of church life.
- For more details and registration information, see the enclosed announcement or peaceyear.pppjr.org

“Peace, Pies, & Prophets” with **Ted & Company** (3 venues)



March 9, 2012 (Friday, 6:30-8:30pm)

Akron, PA: at Akron Mennonite Church, 1311 Diamond St.

March 10, 2012 (Saturday, 7-9pm)

Philadelphia at Broad Street Ministry, 315 S. Broad St., (Across from the University of the Arts and the Kimmel Center for Performing Arts – between Spruce and Pine).

March 11, 2012 (Sunday, 3-5pm)

Souderton, PA. at Souderton Mennonite Church, 105 W. Chestnut St.

Ted Swartz's innovative, interactive satire *I'd Like to Buy an Enemy*, performed during this event, unpacks issues of justice and peace, allows people to laugh, confronts the fear that is such a large part of U.S. culture, and suggests creative ways to confront injustice and conflict in local communities. These are free events with an offering and pie sales going to **Christian Peacemaker Teams**. For more info. see tedandcompany.com/calendar/ or contact Scott Hackman, 215-272-2109.

March 11, 2012 (Sunday, 3-5pm) Lancaster, PA

Stories of Conscience and Taxes in a Culture of War, with Shane Claiborne, Kelly Denton-Borhaugh, PhD, Pat Hostetter Martin, Jack Payden-Travers **Location:** Lancaster Church of the Brethren, 1601 Sunset Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17601. For details, see www.facebook.com/events/276542429084429/

Bread for the World "Offering of Letters" workshops:

March 15, 2012 (Thurs., 7:00-9:30 pm) **Harrisburg** area

Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Rd., Camp Hill, PA 17011. For additional details, see bread.pppjr.org

March 17, 2012 (Sat., 9:30am-12:30pm) **Philadelphia** area in Room 200, Health Services Building, Villanova University, 800 E. Lancaster Ave., Villanova, PA. See bread.pppjr.org.

March 18, 2012 (Sunday, 3:00-5:00pm) Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness (LIPW) Spring Peace Forum with **Dr. Richard T. Hughes** speaking on "**The American Empire & the Kingdom of God**". Dr. Hughes is Distinguished Professor of Religion, and Director of the Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan Studies at Messiah College.

Location: Church of the Apostles, 1850 Marietta Ave, Lancaster PA. Church of the Apostles is inviting attendees to bring non-perishable canned goods for their food pantry. For details, see www.lancasterinterchurchpeacewitness.org.

March 23-26, 2012 (Fri.-Mon.) **Ecumenical Advocacy Days** "*Is This the Fast I Seek? Economy, Livelihood and Our National Priorities*" - workshops on U.S. domestic issues, eco-justice, Latin America, Jubilee economics, Africa and the Middle East, co-sponsored by MCC Washington Office. The event will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Crystal City, VA – just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. Begins Friday evening, and includes Congressional office visits on Monday. Co-sponsored by MCC Washington Office. For further information. see www.advocacydays.org

March 24, 2012 (Sat. 9:30am-12:30pm) Valley Forge, PA **Prison Ministry** event, beginning with the film "*Concrete, Steel, and Paint*" which documents the Philadelphia mural arts department working with crime victims and Graterford inmates to create murals of healing for Philadelphia. Program will discuss opportunities for prison ministry in eastern Pennsylvania. **Location:** St. Matthew's UM Church, 600 Walker Road, Wayne, PA 19087. See stmatthewsvf.org/outreach/prison-ministry-event for details and registration, or contact Pastor Dawn Taylor-Storm at (610) 688-7055, admin@stmatthewsvf.org.

April 21, 2012 (Saturday 8:30am-3:00pm) Allentown, PA Annual *Bread for the World* workshop - in partnership with local anti-hunger organizations. Plenary Speakers: **Rev. Larry Hollar, Rev. Tony Sundermeier, and Rep. Charles Dent** (invited). Workshop topics will include local food and hunger concerns as well as U.S. and Pennsylvania public policy. Sponsored by *Bread for the World* and Lehigh County Conference of Churches – Justice & Advocacy Comm. **Location:** First Presbyterian Church, Allentown. For further information, see enclosed announcement or bread.pppjr.org or contact LCCC office at 610-433-6421 or Larry Hollar: lhollar@bread.org.

April 15-16, 2012 (Sunday - Monday)

National Days of Action for Peace in Colombia

April 15: Congregations in the United States & Canada will worship in unity with sisters and brothers in Colombia, who have endured suffering and turmoil due to Colombia's 40-year war. This will be a time of prayer and worship for a peaceful future in Colombia.

April 16: Collective action will be taken by hundreds in the United States and Canada to speak out and advocate on behalf of the Colombian people, calling on government to end military support to Colombia. For more info. see washington.mcc.org/days

April 29, 2012 (Sunday, 2:00pm) Philadelphia, PA

Interfaith Walk for Peace and Reconciliation. For details, see www.interfaithpeacewalk.org.

June 2, 2012 (Saturday 8:30am – 1:00pm) Philadelphia **What's Next: Career Alternatives for Urban Youth.**

Urban youth with limited family resources are often faced with tough choices when looking at career options. This workshop will provide tools and resources for pastors, youth/young adult leaders and youth workers to support the youth they work with in finding career and voluntary service opportunities. Workshop sessions will also be open to youth and young adults. **Location:** Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, 900 E. Howell St. Philadelphia, PA 19149. This event is sponsored by Kingdom Builders and other organizations with the support of the Peace & Justice Committee. See whatsnext.pppjr.org for details.

Peace Education Workshop for Congregational Leaders

Walking in the Way of Peace 2012

Peace Resources for Christian Education



Saturday, March 10, 2012

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Towamencin Mennonite Church

Kulpsville, PA

(near I-476, Landsdale Exit)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.

– John 14:27

Program:

This workshop will include resources for all ages (children, youth, adults) in many areas of church life (Sunday school, study groups, camps, conferences, retreats, learning tours, Bible school, advocacy and community engagement, urban-suburban partnerships, intercultural training ...).

The program format will be interactive, and discussion topics will be focused on the interests of participants, including small group sessions.

We also welcome stories about the peace & justice programs or projects already happening in our local congregations – what's working well and what is not.

Schedule:

8:30 AM Registration, Refreshments; Resource Displays

9:00-12:00 Peace Resources - plenary and small group presentations and discussion

Location:

Towamencin Mennonite Church, 1980 Sumneytown Pike (Rt. 63), Kulpsville, PA 19443. (meeting in Fellowship Hall)

For more information or to RSVP (by **March 7** – *not required but appreciated*)

Contact us by email: peaceyear@ppjr.org

or by phone: Bob Walden, 610-861-0653.

See our web announcement for more details: peaceyear.ppjr.org/training

Sponsored by the *Peace & Justice Committee, Eastern District Conference and Franconia Mennonite Conference and our conference-related schools.*

Walking in the Way of Peace - 2012 Peace Resources for Christian Education

Saturday, March 10, 2012

8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Towamencin Mennonite Church

Fellowship Hall

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. – John 14:27

This workshop will include resources for all ages (children, youth, adults) in many areas of church life (Sunday school, study groups, camps, conferences, retreats, learning tours, Bible school, advocacy and community engagement, ...).

The program format will be interactive, and discussion topics will be focused on the interests of participants, including small group sessions.

We also welcome stories about the peace & justice programs or projects already happening in our local congregations – what's working well and what is not.

Program:*

8:30 a.m. Registration, Resource Displays
Coffee, Juice, and Pastries

9:00 a.m. Welcome, Devotions, Introductions

9:30 a.m. *Walking in the Way of Peace - 2012* - Overview
Peace Resources - Part 1
(plenary presentations and discussion)

10:30 a.m. Break / Refreshments

10:45 a.m. Peace Resources - Part 2
(small group presentations and discussion)

12:00 n. Adjourn

For more information or to RSVP (by October 7th – *not required but appreciated*),

Contact us by email: peaceyear@ppjr.org or by phone:

Robert Walden, 610-861-0653.

See our web announcement for more details: peaceyear.ppjr.org/training

* This is a tentative schedule which will be adapted to best meet the needs of registered participants – including the possibility of parallel sessions that address different topics or age-specific resources.

Expanding the Circle of Protection



Saturday, April 21, 2012

8:30 am - 3:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church

3231 Tilghman Street
(Tilghman St. at Cedar Crest Blvd.)
Allentown, PA 18104
610-395-3781

Plenary Speakers: **Rev. Tony Sundermeier**
Rev. Larry Hollar
Congressman Charles Dent (*invited*)

Tony Sundermeier is Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Allentown.
Larry Hollar is Senior Regional Organizer with Bread for the World.

Program: This annual gathering will include discussion of both local and national food and hunger issues and tools for advocacy with our elected members of Congress. This year's Offering of Letters campaign focuses on protecting funding for programs for hungry and poor people. This event will offer resource materials, key information, and creative learning experiences to equip you to organize an Offering of Letters in your church, campus, or group.

Workshops:

- Food Aid & Development Assistance
- Getting Healthy Food to Kids
- The 2012 Farm Bill
- Tax Policy - U.S. and Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Public Policy: Impact of Budget Cuts and SNAP Assets Test
- Dealing with "Push-Back" and Negative View of Government
- "How-To" workshops: Public Policy Advocacy 101



Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

[Suggested donation: \$5; Students/Low Income: *Free*]

For further information and pre-registration (by **April 18**), visit bread.ppjr.org, or contact the LCCC office at 610-433-6421.

Sponsored by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches (Justice and Advocacy Committee), Bread for the World, and Second Harvest.

Expanding the Circle of Protection*

Saturday, April 21, 2012

- 8:30 am** **Registration;** Breakfast goodies and coffee/tea available
Resource displays and conversation with workshop leaders
- 9:00-10:45** **Welcome,** Devotions, Introductions, Overview
Biblical Reflection: Rev. Tony Sundermeier
Offering of Letters Overview: Larry Hollar
- 10:45-11:00** **Break** – refreshments, resource displays
- 11:00-12:00** **Breakout session I** – (parallel workshops)
- 12:00-1:00 pm** **Lunch and Conversation**
with **Representative Charles Dent** (*invited*)
- 1:00-1:55** **Breakout session II** – (parallel workshops)
- 2:00-3:00** **Meetings by Congressional District**

Workshop Topics

(most topics will be offered only once – morning or afternoon)

- Food Aid & Development Assistance
- Getting Healthy Food to Kids
- The 2012 Farm Bill
- Tax Policy - U.S. and Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Public Policy: Impact of PA Budget Cuts and SNAP Assets Test
- Dealing with "Push-Back" and Negative View of Government
- "How-To" workshop: Public Policy Advocacy 101

* This is a preliminary schedule; please check the web announcement for program and schedule details and updates at bread.ppjr.org or Email: events@lehighchurches.org or call the LCCC office at 610-433-6421

There will be other "Offering of Letters" workshops in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania. For additional details, see bread.ppjr.org or contact Larry Hollar: lhollar@bread.org

March 15, 2012 (Thursday, 7:00-9:30 pm) Harrisburg area
Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Rd., Camp Hill, PA 17011.

March 17, 2012 (Saturday, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm) Philadelphia area
in Room 200, Health Services Building, Villanova University, 800 E. Lancaster Ave., Villanova, PA