

peace and justice news

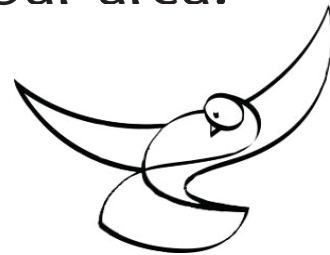
Special Issue, September 2014

Eastern District and Franconia Mennonite Conferences Peace and Justice Committee

Samantha Lioi has been serving as Minister of Peace and Justice of Eastern District Conference and Franconia Mennonite Conference for two years. What has she been doing during her time with us? What are her hopes for the future of this ministry?



See inside to find out more about Samantha and to learn how you can be a part of God's vision of shalom in our area!



**The PJC gladly
endorses Samantha's role and
partners with her to reach
her ministry goals.**

Ministry Description

Based in Franconia Mennonite and Eastern District Conferences and in collaboration with their Peace and Justice Committee, the Minister of Peace and Justice will bring a background of study and practice in peacemaking and justice-building, grounded in Scripture, and nourished by spiritual disciplines and relationships of love and accountability. The position's purpose is to build relationships which develop and strengthen Anabaptist peace and justice theology and practice throughout the two Conferences.

The Minister of Peace and Justice will provide leadership within the Conferences, particularly among congregations, seeking to develop relationships and partnerships more than programs. To that end, the Minister of Peace and Justice will have face-to-face conversations with congregational leaders, including pastors, to learn/explore what they are already doing and thinking related to peace, justice and reconciliation, including intercultural relationships, and what areas of growth they might be seeking; will facilitate mutual resourcing among congregations with different interests and strengths; and, will support Christian formation in God's mission at the congregational level.

"I'm grateful for this season to serve and be a voice among the various local bodies. I continue to pray for more light, and deeper grounding in the love of God, and, I hope for all of us, a decent dose of humor!"

-- Samantha Lioi



To fulfill her ministry goals, Samantha has:

- met with pastors and leaders of over 40 congregations;
- preached and led Sunday School at numerous churches regarding peace and justice;
- met with conference executives and leaders;
- brought together peace representatives from 20 congregations;
- planned a well-attended evening on race and the church;
- met with youth pastors and leaders;
- begun creating worship resources;
- developed relationships between veterans groups and churches to work toward common goals;
- joined with others in speaking out publicly for peace and justice.

“God is calling me to keep before the Church the essential and undeniable connection between our inner spiritual lives and our ability to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ (to behave like Christians).”
-- Samantha Lioi

“Samantha Lioi is passionate about helping congregations see justice in less abstract terms. For Lioi, justice is less about the business of law and politics and more about creating spaces in our busyness to share our lives with unexpected people. Following in Jesus’ footsteps, justice can be as ordinary as sharing mutual food and fellowship across socially-constructed lines of race, religious, or class divisions. A member of the Allentown intentional community known as Zume House, Lioi has seen these practices slowly begin to have a transformational impact on the community. ‘We’re all so busy that we sometimes lack the attentiveness that is critical to entering mutual relationships with others. It’s important to be reminded that doing justice can’t only be seen as doing for others but doing with others too,’ says Lioi.

For her, Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective is patiently cultivated in the presence of others. Only from within diverse relationships do we begin to grasp a better sense of our own shortcomings and need for spiritual transformation. Lioi is hopeful that congregations in Eastern District and Franconia Conferences will continue to seek encounters which lead us to ‘become more honest with ourselves, cultivate courage to face our fears, and display a greater willingness to be changed by our neighbors.’”

-- John Tyson [<http://franconiaconference.org/taking-time-for-justice-learning-from-samantha-lioi/tern-blog/>]



How may you support this important work?

- Pray for Samantha.
- Write her notes of encouragement via the conference center (see address below).
- Volunteer to be a peace representative for your church, if there is not one yet.
- Support Samantha's position financially. **The Peace and Justice Committee must raise \$20,000 by the end of November 2014** to pay for Samantha's efforts up until then. More will be needed for the position to continue. **WILL YOU HELP?** Your donation of any size will be much appreciated. Also consider asking your congregation to provide future support. Checks may be made out to Franconia Conference and sent to 569 Yoder Road, Harleysville, PA 19438; write "PJC Minister" in the message line.



*Seek
peace and
pursue it!*

(I Peter 3:11b)