

## MINUTE FOR MISSION

### CONGREGATIONS NURTURE NEIGHBORLY CHILDREN ACROSS ETHNIC, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS LINES

I'm sure you haven't forgotten that weekend in August 2016 when racially charged violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, sent shockwaves of fear and grief across our country. I know I haven't. Like you and me and many other Americans, Presbyterian pastor Jon Brown was distraught to the point of numbness. But on the following Monday morning, his hope was renewed, due to his church's participation in the Peace & Global Witness Offering.

His spirits were lifted by dozens of elementary-aged children who had gathered for Peace Camp at the congregation he serves, the Old Bergen Church in Jersey City, New Jersey. "To see children of different races, ethnicities, and faith traditions singing, laughing, and creating together was a powerful medicine for all of us in that moment," he says. The camp was sponsored by local Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations.

The children learned about ways to resolve conflicts and how to handle angry and sad feelings. They brainstormed about what is needed for a good neighborhood and built model neighborhoods out of cardboard boxes and other materials. They learned about the elements of a good neighborhood from resource people such as a police officer, librarian, teacher, and public health official.

The themes were adapted from a curriculum published with support from the Peace & Global Witness Offering. The curriculum, "Building a Neighborhood Together," draws a connection to *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, a PBS program created and hosted by the late Fred Rogers, a Presbyterian minister.

Brigid D'Souza, the parent of two campers and one of the camp's adult leaders, called it "a really important gift" to her children and other campers. "When I was growing up, I didn't attend Bible study camp or any kind of camp like that, so for me it was really informing to see what this type of camp could mean for kids," she says.

Across the U.S., Presbyterians are helping to build peaceful, neighborly communities. Many congregations and mid councils use gifts from the Peace & Global Witness Offering to put creative ideas like Peace Camp into action.

Twenty-five percent of this offering is retained by our congregation for local ministries of peacemaking and reconciliation (*INCLUDING ... any past work of the congregation supported by past PGW offerings — pastor may personalize*), another 25 percent will support these ministries at the mid council level, and the remaining 50 percent supports the peacemaking and reconciliation ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

Your gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering will help build more neighborly communities and a more peaceful world. Please give generously.

### *Let Us Pray ~*

*Gracious God, we give thanks for people  
everywhere who reach out with your  
neighborly love to bridge divisions.*

*We celebrate the diversity you created as  
a gift from you.*

*Help us follow the way that leads toward  
peace and reconciliation.*

*We pray in the name of the One  
who forged this path for us,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord,*

**Amen.**

