



PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

Introduction to the 2023 Path of Peace

Greetings and welcome to the 2023 **Path of Peace** reflections. This year's reflections celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Commitment to Peacemaking. Begun in 1983, the Commitment has offered a tool to Presbyterian congregations and worshiping communities to shape their peacemaking ministries. By affirming the Commitment, congregations and worshiping communities 1) declare that working for peace is an essential mission priority, 2) establish a framework for implementing peacemaking in their corporate life, 3) invite their members and friends to work for peace in their own lives, households, communities and world, and 4) challenge themselves to grow in and pass on peacemaking ministries to future generations.

Over the past 40 years, the contributors to the 2023 Path of Peace reflections have each in their time been involved in the peacemaking ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For each day's contribution they have been invited to identify a biblical passage, share a personal reflection, suggest an action and offer a prayer for the journey. In this "Season of Peace," may we be enriched by the wisdom, experience and "commitment to peacemaking" they share with us. Peace be with you!

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

Sunday, September 3

Shine Your Light

No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. — Matthew 5:15

For decades I put my lamp under a basket and checked my culture at the door of “becoming American.” Growing up under the influence of Presbyterian mission workers in Iran and Scottish teachers in England, I came to the U.S. for college, and for years I stowed away my true self in an attempt to assimilate.

Not until I was 49 did I realize the error of my ways. During the Senate confirmation hearings of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, it hit me: Put your light on a lampstand. In all the talk about what the new Justice would bring to the Supreme Court, I heard that it would be a big gain to have a Justice “with two lenses on life.”

Really? I have four lenses I look at the world through. I always thought that made me a chameleon and an outsider in most settings. That’s when I finally learned that being American is multifaceted and your best work is done with all your facets shining. I am an Armenian Iranian American who spent formative years of her childhood and teens in England. That’s four diverse lenses. I am fluent in three languages and cultures; four, if British English counts. During those hearings in 2009, I finally realized this is a good thing!

It is an empowering liberation to be myself and to speak my truth, also enabling me to speak truth to power and be a more effective peacemaker speaking out for justice and making “good trouble” for human rights.

CALL TO ACTION: Be yourself and shine your light. Trust that you are most effective as a peacemaker when you don’t deny who you are. Fan the spark of the Holy Spirit by doing what comes most naturally. You may not see where and how your light will illuminate a path for others, but share your true self just the same, and trust that God is right there with you.

PRAYER: *Loving God, thank you for giving me a light to shine in the dark places where I see injustice. Help me find my voice to be bold so I can put my light on a lamppost. Amen.*



Noushin Darya Framke is a Presbyterian ruling elder serving on the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. A member of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board of Presbyterian Women, Noushin has done advocacy work in the church for Palestinian human rights since a 2006 PC(USA) Peacemaking trip to Israel/Palestine.

Monday, September 4

The Movement for Peacemaking Today

The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. — Acts 12:6–9

I read Acts as an underground resistance movement countering the oppressive, unjust practices of the Roman Empire and religious leaders, who curried favor within rather than stand up to empire and suffer consequences. What if the angels who broke Peter out of prison were an actual group of prison abolitionists of that day?

My adult lifetime in the church has roughly paralleled the trajectory of the Peacemaking Commitment. I was shaped by its clarion call to resist violence, and then slowly and inexorably disappointed as it was watered down by many churches that signed it, ignored and eventually largely forgotten with the passage of time.

Here's the Good News as peacemakers today. The movement to resist violence and the structural power of empire is alive and well, although it is largely occurring outside the church. Next generation activists are far more diverse and savvy about power than my generation was. Resistance today goes to the heart of what ails our country: a complicated web of structural racism that privileges people who look like me while intentionally incarcerating, stealing the labor of, and stripping rights and opportunities from Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Immigrant, Queer and Trans people, and the list goes on.

If the church is to be relevant in that movement, we must not just renew our Commitment to Peacemaking; instead join in a far more nuanced, profound and faithful vision of peacemaking that goes to the heart of structures that make for racism, violence and oppression!

CALL TO ACTION: Go to the Peacemaking website to find more about the [Commitment to Peacemaking](#) or get involved with the [Presbyterian Peace Fellowship](#) to find out what it means to commit to the work of Peacemaking today.

PRAYER: *God of Challenge, abide in each of us, pushing us to greater acts of daring for and with all those whom you love. We pray for our hearts to be opened to the possibilities of justice not yet understood, action not yet taken, organizing not yet carried out, community not yet fully realized. Push us beyond ourselves, into acts of solidarity with those dismantling the structures of injustice we have failed to identify. Amen.*



Rick Ufford-Chase is co-director of the Center for Jubilee Practice and program associate for Curriculum at Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary. He served as moderator of the 216th General Assembly (2004) and lives with his wife, Kitty, in Northern Vermont.

Tuesday, September 5

Disturbing the Comfortable

*They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying,
'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. — Jeremiah 6:14*

At times, the most frustrating work in peacemaking is the task of convincing folks that there is work to be done. We live in a time and a place where much energy is expended in concealing pieces of our history and of our present. At this moment, protecting the comfort of privilege has become a greater value than confronting the reality of oppression and of our complicity in it.

As Reformed Christians, we are supposed to be honest about our own sinfulness and our need for confession. It is central to our liturgical practice, and it should be central to our peacemaking work. We can't begin the work of atonement and reparation until we acknowledge that our practices need changing. We can't be peacemakers if we won't acknowledge the places where peace is absent.

Many of us work and live in spheres of privilege, given the historical placement of our denomination in this country. It doesn't take a lot of effort for some of us to shield ourselves from the evil of our country's long history of exclusion based on race, gender, creed, and sexual orientation and identity. It doesn't take much work for some of us to cry peace when there is no peace. But we can't be disciples of Jesus Christ and at the same time live in comfortable lies. We can't stand silent when those lies are told and taught. Sometimes peacemaking begins with disturbing the comfortable, even when they are us.

CALL TO ACTION: Read a banned book written by a BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ author. Share it with someone.

PRAYER: *Gracious and loving God, grant us the humility to change, the curiosity to learn and the courage to challenge. Amen.*



Dr. Robert Trawick, a ruling elder currently serving as Albany Presbytery's general presbyter, taught philosophy and religious studies for over 20 years at St. Thomas Aquinas College, served as a member of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and currently serves as co-moderator of the Israel/Palestine Mission Network. Rob's passionate about theater, making music with friends, and vinyl records and lives in the Hudson Valley with his wife, Amanda Trigg, and, occasionally, their son, Owen.

Wednesday, September 6

The Power of Nonviolence

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.

They said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land, yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. — Luke 4:16–30

In the example and teaching of Jesus there is a clear emphasis on nonviolence. Nonviolent liberation characterized Jesus' public ministry. Empowered by God's Spirit, he freed people from spiritual, physical, social and economic forms of bondage. He brought good news to the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed and the enslaved — all people marginalized or excluded by society.

When members of Jesus' hometown synagogue were so infuriated by his preaching that they drove him out of town, intending to throw him off a cliff, "he passed through the midst of them and went on his way" (Luke 4:30). Jesus didn't try to run away, nor did he try to defend himself with violence. Instead, he chose a third response. He stood his ground with courage, faced down the angry mob, and made his way through the crowd without striking one blow.

Jesus' teachings about loving one's enemies and turning the other cheek have nothing to do with being passive in the face of injustice or acquiescing to evil. On the contrary, Jesus urged his followers to stand up to evil and injustice, to overcome the oppression and violence of others, but without resorting to violence and oppression ourselves.

Nonviolent struggle has proven to be a powerful means of wielding power in a variety of conflicts. Nonviolent "people power" movements have shown themselves capable of overthrowing dictators, thwarting coups d'état, defending against invasions and occupations, challenging unjust systems, promoting human rights and resisting genocide.

CALL TO ACTION: Deepen your inward journey as a peacemaker using the journal resource ["Resurrection Living: Journeying with the Nonviolent Christ."](#)

- Encourage your congregation to take its peacemaking efforts beyond the Commitment to Peacemaking by considering becoming a [Peace Church](#), deepening its peacemaking witness to reject violence and war and embrace Jesus' way of nonviolence.
- Help youth examine their own consciences and think through their views on war and peace using the booklet "Presbyterians and Military Service."

PRAYER: *Loving God, we long for a world at peace — a world free from violence and war, hunger and poverty, injustice and oppression. In Jesus Christ, you show us a force more powerful than evil, sin and death. You show us the power of love and truth to bring about personal transformation and social change. Help us embrace Jesus' way of nonviolence. Help us heal the wounds of our broken world. Amen.*



Rev. Roger Scott Powers has served congregations in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Baltimore; and Oakland, California. Nationally, he has worked with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Before attending seminary, Roger co-edited (with William B. Vogele) "Protest, Power, and Change: An Encyclopedia of Nonviolent Action from ACT-UP to Women's Suffrage" (Garland, 1997). He is married to the Rev. Susan Quass, his partner of 38 years. They live in Maine.

Thursday, September 7

The Children Among Us

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." — Matthew 18:1–3

Her voice was steady, despite the fact that the meeting had shifted from strategy to impassioned debate. "A child is a child is a child." She said that channeling Gertrude Stein into the meeting about small arms and child soldiers. As we struggled with who should have access to special programs after and during war, she repeated, "A child is a child is a child is a child."

Once everyone quieted, she reminded us that our task was assuring that children, despite what they'd seen or experienced, were still children and had every right to safety, autonomy, identity and dreaming. "Children will teach us who we are and what we value. They have and will show us that we can be better."

Her words stayed with me, as I was just an Office to the United Nations intern sitting in the back of the room, but I will never forget that charge, nor the incredible work they were accomplishing walking beside young people emerging from the horrors of war-rebuilding lives, communities and nations.

I still have a tiny, rusted cross on my desk — a bullet from the Liberian civil war transformed by former child soldiers, training as metal workers and artisans. It is a constant reminder that children will show us a way, and we are privileged to learn from them. It's a little dangerous for a children's pastor to have something sharp and rusty around, but when children see it, they too understand that a world can be transformed.

CALL TO ACTION: As church community, God has uniquely formed us with generations bound together seeking and striving for shalom. When we fail to learn from and with the youngest members of our community, we lose their witness and wisdom. When we fail to protect the most vulnerable among us, we injure our collective body. God has placed these teachers among us; may we work so that their voices are heard, their dreaming valued and their growing celebrated.

PRAYER: *Loving and Abiding One, you have formed us as a family; may we journey together with gentleness and respect. May we share our wisdom and learn from one another. May every child, known to us and known to you, be surrounded in your love, upheld by community and blessed by your peace. Guide as we work together for such a world. Amen.*



Rachel Pedersen serves as the associate pastor for Children and Family Ministry at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Her faith and call to ministry were fundamentally shaped by the Peacemaking Program and the many saints who modeled and molded a church that seeks justice, loves mercy, and boldly proclaims and works for peace.

Friday, September 8

A Vision of Well-Being

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets. — Zechariah 8:4–5

Biblical faith is an adventure in hope. Despite violence and suffering, we are always being called to a new reality in which swords are beaten into plows, enemies are reconciled and peace becomes possible. Lately, a small glimpse of that vision has taken up residence in my imagination. In days to come, says the prophet Zechariah, boys and girls will once again play safely in the streets of Jerusalem, while old men and old women, leaning on their canes, will delight in watching them from the sidelines. No doubt this word speaks so powerfully to me because I am now an old man, concerned for the future of my great-grandchildren. Does it seem too light a thing to imagine God's new realm as children playing safely in the street? Think how, decades ago, our children were taught to "duck and cover" beneath their school desks, as if that could protect them from nuclear disaster; now our great-grandchildren are taught what to do if an "active shooter" is in the building. Would it really be so light a task to create a world in which children might play safely in the world's streets and school yards? Is it really such a small thing to hope for and work for a world in which boys and girls, everywhere, might group unafraid? In which women and men of great age, leaning on their canes, might delight in cheering their grandchildren at play?

CALL TO ACTION: Invite a few friends to talk together about this reflection.

- Think about the children in your life: What are your hopes for them? Your worries?
- In your community, what would need to change for children to be able to play safely? For grownups to share in their play?
- What organizations are working for the safety and well-being of children, in the U.S. and world? How might your church become involved in their work?

PRAYER: *Grandmother God, we pray for the day when all children will be lovingly tucked into bed at night, wake up each morning to a good breakfast, and enjoy the blessings of school room and playground. Grandfather God, thank you for reminding us who we are, fashioned of your spirit and stardust, children of wonder and promise. Ageless God, we pray for courage and persistence as we act our way into citizenship in your Peaceable Kingdom. Amen.*



Dick Watts is now one of those elders "of great age." He served pastorates in Illinois and Ohio, founded the Swords Into Plowshares Project in the Presbytery of the Western Reserve, and served on the staff of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. He is the author of "Hungers of the Heart: Spirituality and Religion for the 21st Century."

Saturday, September 9

Choosing Life Over Gun Violence

Choose life, that you and your descendants might live. — Deuteronomy 30:19b
And a little child shall lead them. — Isaiah 11:6b

As a young mother, I spent a lot of time with sleeping children in my lap. Looking down at their tender faces, struck by how innocent and trusting they were, I wanted to be a trustworthy mother.

There were stockpiles of nuclear weapons on a hair's trigger then. The more I learned, the more dangerous and contrary it seemed to my beliefs. I was thrilled to discover passionate companions — Presbyterians committed to peacemaking, part of a larger global disarmament movement that resulted in a worldwide shift in public consciousness and a substantial reduction in nuclear arsenals.

Today I have grandchildren growing up in the U.S. and England. Again, I am witnessing the implications of an arms race, now, a peculiarly American one. The threat of gun violence is virtually nonexistent for children in England. However, in the U.S., civilian-held firearms now outnumber people, including military-style assault rifles, and firearm deaths have become the No. 1 cause of death among children, ages 1–19 (Kaiser Family Foundation, April 2023). If “good guys with guns” truly made us safer, the U.S. should be the safest place on earth. Instead, “active shooter drills” start in preschool, and 1 in 5 Americans has a family member who was killed by a gun, including deaths by suicide (KFF, 2023). With each new mass shooting, I hear the voices of our children and future generations urgently calling us to act. I am asking myself what actively “choosing life” means for me.

CALL TO ACTION:

- Reflecting on the photo of a child you love, listen with your heart to their call.
- Identify all the ways gun violence impacts you and your community.
- Familiarize yourself with facts about gun violence.
- Inventory gifts and talents you have — money, time, networks, writing, speaking, supporting.
- Google “gun violence prevention” to identify potential companions and opportunities to help.
- Develop a list of action steps to make to elected leaders and follow through regularly.

PRAYER: *Spirit of Life and Love, have mercy on us. Let us not turn away from the faces and cries of our children, calling us to break the vicious cycle of gun violence. Let us not succumb to despair, weariness or desensitization. May we seek out companions for this work, and together, be strong, courageous, creative and relentless in our persistence. May we choose life and be worthy of our children's trust.*

Amen.



Donna Miller served with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program from 1987–2001. She later trained and practiced as a psychologist while living in England. Recently, she coordinated the two-year Presbyterian Mental Health Initiative.

Sunday, September 10

Safeguarding Human Dignity for All

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in suffering; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. — Romans 12:9–21

I've always believed that we can and must engage in the struggle for peace and justice without stripping away or denying the dignity and humanity of others. Be they colleagues with whom we disagree about strategies, individuals who hold ideological views that drastically differ from ours, or even perpetrators who have brought about harm, trauma or destruction — we do not hold the right to deem and distribute the validity of God's createdness of others.

To be clear, this doesn't mean that we should remain in relationships and situations of danger or that we do not hold people accountable for their words and actions; rather, we should do so without denying the humanity and dignity of all people. All. People. When we are able to be in the work for justice while viewing all involved through the lens of God's createdness, we express a posture of dealing with conflict and disagreement that is too often beyond our collective will or imagination.

This posture is excruciating for me personally; it is much easier to disparage someone's intellect, one-dimensionalize their lived experience, or lob a barrage of ad-hominem attacks all in pursuit of temporal satisfaction or social affirmation. What eases my pull toward dehumanizing tactics is that God reminds us over and over that God is God and God's judgment is left to God, not us. This is a liberating way to think about our work — we can focus more on the work of the world and not the distribution of God's judgment.

CALL TO ACTION: Take an inventory of public (in person or online) statements you have made that deny or strip away the dignity and humanity of another. Once this is done, resist repeating the behavior and commit to being creative and courageous in finding new ways to hold people accountable, express support of colleagues and amply salutations of injustice that need to be addressed.

PRAYER: *God, you are God, and we are your created. Grant us the courage to let you be God and the audacity to embrace the excruciating breadth of your Creation: ally, enemy, friend, stranger, colleague or accomplice. God, we are all your created, now grant us the fortitude to live as if we believe it. Amen.*



Bruce Reyes-Chow muses on topics of faith, culture, politics, race and technology; hosts the “BRC & Friends” podcast; has authored five books, including “Everything Good about God is True: Choosing Faith” (Broadleaf, 2024); consults and coaches with Convergence. Ordained in the PC(USA) since 1995, Bruce has led churches in the San Francisco Bay Area for nearly three decades and is a former moderator. Bruce and his spouse have three adult children and live in San Jose, California.

Monday, September 11

Reaching Across Our Fears

“Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” — Matthew 22:39b

I live in St. Augustine, Florida, and I often ask myself, “How are we called to live faithfully as peacemakers in this time and place?”, which I believe is moving toward dystopia. It is just such a time when loving your neighbor takes on new meaning.

In July 2015 I engaged in a “love your neighbor” action outside our Islamic Center, where armed demonstrators were carrying Islamophobic signs. We convened 65 people of all faiths to stand in support of our Muslim neighbors. We served chocolate cake and lemonade to our Muslim and our demonstrating neighbors. This led to meaningful conversation and cessation of demonstrations.

Two years ago, weeks before the presidential election, fearing that violence would follow the election, I stopped at a Trump stand boasting an AK-47 banner. I brought cookies and engaged the Trump supporters there, saying that I loved my country and knew they did, too. My faith told me to love my neighbors, and they were my neighbors, not enemies, so I brought them cookies.

What I have learned is that the hardest part is reaching across my fears, but when I can, (which surely isn't always), I discover “life in all its fullness.” Trying to bridge divisions “fills me up” and energizes me. I've found that it isn't about changing people's minds. It's about building respect and understanding, which makes room for personal transformation. It's about what Bryan Stevenson calls “getting proximate.”

CALL TO ACTION: I recommend the website livingroomconversations.org to help build bridges across many divisions. Choose one of their topics and convene a few relatives or acquaintances with differing views. Let go of trying to find agreement and enjoy an opportunity to build respect and trust among new friends of different persuasions. The hardest part for me is trusting the process, but the process does work.

PRAYER: *Loving Vision Planter, nurture your vision of a beloved community within us. Thank you for our companions, near and far, living or deceased, who accompany us and challenge our thinking. Give us courage and compassion for our journey. Amen.*



Ervin Bullock was associate for Conferences and later associate for Network Support for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program until 2008. She is the interfaith coordinator for Compassionate St Augustine. Ervin is from Alabama. She and her husband have seven children and now live in Florida — all fertile situations and places for learning about peacemaking.

Tuesday, September 12

The Creative Resistance of the Other Cheek

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also.”

— Matthew 5:38–39 (RSV)

This passage has always been confounding and agonizingly opaque. This is the epitome of so-called Christian passivity — a cliché, synonymous with being a doormat. Some have used it to normalize abuse and oppression. The insights of Walter Wink can help us understand this passage’s power. The Greek word for “resist” in this passage (*antistenai*), is often used to refer to military campaigns, with soldiers and weapons of war. The translators of King James, eager to stay in his good graces, likely modified this to suggest Jesus was saying that any resistance to oppression — or the king — is wrong. That’s not what Jesus is saying.

Why is Jesus so specific about the “right” cheek? For a right-handed person, a blow between equals would normally land on the left cheek of the opponent. The only way to hit the left cheek of an opponent is with the back of the right hand. The conflict Jesus is describing is not a fistfight, but a humiliating insult. Who were those who would receive a backhand slap in Jesus’ day? Servants, slaves, women, children — in other words — subordinates. A backhand slap was the normalized way of putting one’s inferiors in their place, of asserting power and domination. What happens to the power dynamic if, instead of acting like an inferior, the subordinate actively resists by “turning the other cheek”? Turning the other cheek means you are asking to be treated as an equal. Jesus is inviting us, not into passivity, but into active resistance.

CALL TO ACTION: Who are the perceived “subordinates” of our day? How does this interpretation of this passage change your understanding of the struggles for justice, equity and dignity in our history? What examples of “turning the other cheek” can you think of in history or in your own life that exemplify the power of Jesus’ message? Join the exploration of faith-centered nonviolence by learning more about what it means to become a [Peace Church](#) within the PC(USA).

PRAYER: *God of wonder, justice and love, guide our steps in the way of peace this day and every day that we may be willing to take risks for the cause of peace around the world and at home so that we may be called peacemakers and followers of the Prince of Peace. Amen.*



Geoff Browning is a Presbyterian minister and former campus minister at Stanford University. He is also the host of the [“Benders of the Arc”](#) podcast and a parish associate at First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, California, one of the first churches in the PC(USA) to declare itself a [Peace Church](#).

Wednesday, September 13
Making Broken Situations Whole

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. – John 14:27

I grew up in the “Sputnik Era,” when the educational emphasis was on math and science, not on learning another language.

After college and military service, I found myself in seminary. Imagine my shock upon learning that Presbyterians required seminarians to know both Hebrew and Greek.

Little did I know that I was preparing myself to be part of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. It was important to discover that biblical peace is not the absence of conflict. It is wholeness; the wholeness giving of God. Wholeness requires justice.

Throughout my life, I’ve asked: “What will make this broken situation whole?”

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, a joint effort between the then two denominations, was being developed, and I was asked, “Could I help?” I set out to bring the “southern” presbyteries on board. This program helped the Presbyterian Church become whole.

As the Peacemaking Program developed, I became the associate director. All sorts of peacemaking efforts were bearing fruit. Trips to the Soviet Union helped us wrestle with what it means to love your enemy.

A friend was elected to Congress. It was a learning lab on making the broken whole through public policy advocacy. Then, Columbia Theological Seminary as director of the Faith & the City project, seeking to increase the ability of clergy to be public leaders to help make communities whole. In retirement, the peacemaking journey continues as an organizer of Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic, and working to make Creation whole has become a priority.

CALL TO ACTION: In the midst of a Creation broken by so many things: domestic gun violence, wars between nations, climate change, racism, wealth disparity, demonizing those with whom we disagree, and on and on, keep asking what is going on in this broken situation and what will make it whole?

PRAYER: *O God, the giver of wholeness, give us the courage to ask the right questions and to follow through when we find answers. In the name of Christ who shows us the way. Amen.*



Rev Dr. Jim Watkins is a native of Decatur, Georgia, a graduate of Georgia Tech and a member of the GT Sports Hall of Fame (distance runner). He holds a master’s and doctorate from Columbia Theological Seminary and has served the church as pastor, associate director of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program,

seminary faculty and interim presbytery executive. Jim also served as senior staff for a U.S. Representative. Married to Mary; they have two children and four grands (being a grandparent is not overrated).

Thursday, September 14

Troubling Times and Birthing Pangs

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

— Matthew 24:6–8

What Jesus said in Matthew 24 is happening right now. We cannot shy away from the disasters of our world. We have wars, famines and climate disasters everywhere. The atomic bomb is a constant threat to our existence. The geopolitical structures of the world keep moving. We see the rise of fascism as a metastases of capitalism spreading and the cries of white supremacy holding on to violence and destruction. Politics have been swallowed by the rich, the dissociation of governmental life from the demands to care for the poor, extractivism destroying every form of life, and big companies squashing local producers. These conflicts won't cease; instead they'll grow as the earth reaches exhaustion.

Indigenous leader Davi Yanomami, from the Amazon forest, says what we call climate change they call the revenge of the earth. The earth is angry because we can't hear the voice of the land, of anything that is not human. What we are doing to each other and to the earth is the beginning of our birth pangs.

There might be a possibility to give birth to a different world, a different way of living together. In order to do that we must continue to do the work of peace, because the work of peace is the work of justice. We need peace and justice to all humans and to the rivers, oceans, animals, mountains, forests and all forms of life. We must gain maturity to know better and keep on doing the work of peace.

CALL TO ACTION: Friends, the work of peace never ends! Instead, it only grows. We need peace more than ever! Yes, we are weary, we are fearful, but we must continue. The God who brought us this far will continue with us for the sake of those hurting: people, trees, rivers, birds, insects and the whole world.

PRAYER: *God of peace, you have told us that the world is going to be more difficult as time passes. We are feeling the end of the world even though we know it isn't. Help us in our exhausted feelings and our sense of powerlessness. Give us the strength we need to keep working for peace in our homes, in our communities and in the world. Amen.*



Originally from Brazil, **Cláudio Carvalhaes** is the professor of Worship at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Married to Katie, they have three kids and one dog, Amora. He is the author of "How Do We Become Green People and Earth Communities?: Inventory, Metamorphoses, and Emergenc(i)es."

Friday, September 15

Seeking Peace on the Korean Peninsula

“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.” — Matthew 5:23–26

In 1980, the same year the Commitment to Peacemaking was approved, Chun Doo-hwan, a military general, took power in a coup d'état in South Korea. This dashed the hopes of Korean citizens hoping for democracy after years of dictatorship. In order to silence the calls for democracy, this dictatorship needed the U.S. to approve use of its forces, since the U.S. maintains wartime command authority over the South Korean military. As Presbyterians in the U.S. were considering “peacemaking skills such as conflict resolution ... and nonviolence,” our government approved sending soldiers, who massacred approximately 160 citizens over 10 days in May 1980, in the city of Gwangju.

After this, half of South Korea began to question whether the U.S. was actually interested in democracy in Korea or whether we prefer allies who favor capitalism and the primacy of U.S. interests. The more they learned, they began to wonder whether that hasn't been true since the division of Korea in 1945 and through the Korean War.

This year, 2023, marks the 70th anniversary of the armistice agreement that has frozen the Korean War in a ceasefire state. This also maintains a state of war, which perpetuates U.S. command authority over the South Korean military, authority we utilized to hinder the most recent peace process between South and North Korea.

Some people ask me if my work in Korea is helping Koreans reconcile. I suggest my work is reconciling the U.S. to North Koreans and South Koreans, who value self-determination.

CALL TO ACTION:

- Add your name to the [Korea Peace Appeal](#) along with Koreans who believe that only peaceful actions bring peace, rather than hostility, sanctions and threats.
- Seek out stories, beyond U.S.-centric sources, of how this current conflict developed.
- Support a Korean peace process led by Korean leadership on the Korean Peninsula rather than the U.S. administration.

PRAYER: *God of the cosmos, your love transcends all boundaries and divisions that we create throughout our world. Help us to see the human beings caught up in ideological conflict. Inspire us to seek genuine human security for all children of God, including those who don't align with our national interests. Lead us to cultivate your Shalom, even when the soil feels uncomfortable. Amen.*



Kurt Esslinger grew up on the plains of West Texas, but lives now in the concrete jungle of Seoul, South Korea. As a mission co-worker he is assigned to the National Council of Churches in Korea, where his work focuses on the Reconciliation and Reunification Department and the Ecumenical Forum for Korea (EFK). Kurt is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Caption:

Kurt is pictured greeting the Rev. Kang Myong Chul, chair of the Korean Christian Federation in North Korea, at a meeting of the EFK in Thailand.

Saturday, September 16

Peace Requires Food Security

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.” — Leviticus 19:9–10

When she got up to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, “Let her glean even among the standing sheaves, and do not reproach her. You must also pull out some handfuls for her from the bundles and leave them for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.” — Ruth 2:15–16

When I worked at the Presbyterian United Nations (U.N.) Office at the beginning of the new century, I heard about the Security Council addressing HIV/AIDS as a matter of security. Something clicked in my brain. I’m not concerned with “security” in the sense that we must defend ourselves against military threats, but I’ve spent a lot of time thinking about what undermines security and peace worldwide. One of many threats is hunger. People with enough to eat are able to learn, produce and contribute. The four pillars of food security identified by the Food & Agriculture Organization of the U.N. are availability, access, utilization and stability.

Across the world, including in our communities, people face food insecurity. Whether they’re unable to gain access to fresh healthy food by virtue of location (food deserts) or lack of means (food is unaffordable), people are unable to meet a basic need. We often expect all people to behave a certain way in society, but it’s cruel to expect hungry people to engage productively in their families and communities. Peace requires food security. Access to food is not just the right thing — it is the biblical thing. The Lord spoke to Moses, mandating that the poor and the immigrant be given access to food. Such regulations were common across the ancient Near East, but Israel was unique in including foreigners in its laws. Rather than being a measure of justice or charity, this expectation is actually a sign of holiness on the part of the landowner.

CALL TO ACTION: Consider your own community.

- Who are those working to ensure greater access to food?
- Where are those who face ongoing food insecurity?
- Is the school district doing everything it can to provide free and reduced-cost meals to children?
- Advocate for increased access through policy and direct action not as charity, but as part of your Christian commitment to holiness.
- Share a meal when you can.

PRAYER: *Holy One, we pray that our hearts and minds might be opened toward those facing hunger. May we turn from hoarding to sharing the deliciousness of your Creation. We pray that our actions result in eager children with full bellies, and elders who eat what they like when they want to. Keep all of us mindful, generous and joyful as we share with others. Amen.*



Laura Mariko Cheifetz is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a double-PK from the Pacific Northwest whose ministry spans social justice advocacy and theological education. She is a queer biracial Asian American of Japanese American and white Jewish descent. She served as a Gender Justice intern in the Presbyterian United Nations Office in 2000–01.

Sunday, September 17

Is Peace with the Empire Possible?

*The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea. — Isaiah 11:6–9*

This year coincides with the 75th commemoration of the Nakba and the 30th anniversary of the Oslo “Peace Process.” The hope was that Oslo would lead to a Palestinian State based on 1967 borders, 23% of historic Palestine. Native Palestinian population is confined to isolated pockets, like the Native American reservations in the United States, while prime land and resources of the West Bank are under Israeli control. Just as the 368 treaties signed between the U.S. government and American Indian tribes weren’t honored, promises between Israel and Palestine continue to be broken. The Nakba of the Palestinian people continues because Israel is a creation of western empire.

The Bible struggles with the question: Is peace with the empire possible? In Revelation, John doesn’t see any possibility of peace with the empire; instead, God will dismantle the empire and establish a new Jerusalem. The book of Jonah reaches a different conclusion: God shows Jonah that the empire isn’t necessarily a hopeless case. Advocacy in Nineveh brings about changed minds and hearts and leads to mass repentance.

A third vision is offered by the prophet Isaiah, who imagines the unimaginable: a peaceful existence made possible by a vegetarian lion that neither harms nor lives at the expense of the ox. This vision of shared land is possible if Israel ends its military occupation, settler colonialism, and exploitation of Palestinian human and natural resources. The international community must end its complacency. People of faith are called to be the agents of change.

CALL TO ACTION: As Palestinian Christians, we call upon our friends in the U.S. to:

- Pray and advocate for justice and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and people.
- Visit and stay in Palestine. We would love to see you in Bethlehem at Dar al-Kalima University, the first and only university with a focus on art, culture and design in Palestine.
- Buy Palestinian products, show Palestinian films and host Palestinian exhibitions.

PRAYER: *Our heavenly father, our loving mother, you hear the cry of your people in Palestine, asking “How long, O Lord?” They have been longing for freedom, justice and life with dignity. We pray for the end of the Israeli military occupation, for a time when the Palestinian people will be free. Help us, Lord, to be true peacemakers and not “peacetalkers.” Give strength to all those working for peace based on justice in Israel/Palestine. Amen.*



Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb is founder and president of Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem. A widely published Palestinian theologian, Mitri is the author and editor of more than 40 books, including “Decolonizing Palestine: The Land, the People, the Bible”; “Politics of Persecution: Middle Eastern Christians in an Age of Empire”; and “Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes.” A social entrepreneur, Mitri has founded several organizations, including Bright Stars of Bethlehem, a U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Monday, September 18

Investing in Peace

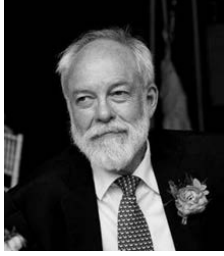
For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether [you have] enough to complete it? ... Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not ... first ... consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions. — Luke 14:28–33 (condensed)

If Jesus' personal challenges also apply to communities, then divestment of stocks and bonds is part of institutional discipleship. The sayings in this passage are about costly discipleship, about possessions — or ill-thought projects — that could cost us our discipleship. Applied to a ruler contemplating war, we have a trigger warning against trigger pulling. Applied to a society seeking justice and peace, we have a call to economic conversion, investing more in butter — education, housing, health — than guns.

Arguably, the Peacemaking Program has not done enough about economic conversion over the years. Yet when the Advisory Council on Church & Society (ACCS), whose study proposed the Peacemaking Program, was designing the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) in 1971, it considered all four of the specific social ethical imperatives in The Confession of 1967, including the call for peace and cooperation (para. 9.45). That call opposes “diverting human power and resources from constructive uses and risking the annihilation of humankind.” Churches, like other communities, depend on wise institutional stewardship for their sustainability, but our purpose is also prophetic and redemptive. Thus, when the Call to Peacemaking asked all entities of the United Presbyterian Church to respond, MRTI proposed a three-part investment screen to restrict military-related investments, adopted by the General Assembly in 1982. All church portfolios were encouraged not to invest in the top ten Defense contractors, the producers of nuclear warhead components, and to point to economic conversion — companies more than 25% dependent on military production. That policy still stands.

CALL TO ACTION: That 1982 policy has been updated, yet has never proposed divesting from all military-related companies, nor abolishing our military. Rather, it asks how much we and our congregations, colleges, and seminaries should invest in war-making capacity. Our investments are instruments of mission. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, successor to the ACCS, should think creatively for the whole church and society about new policies to help our economic conversion witness be both faithful and effective.

PRAYER: *Indwelling God, we all compete in a very unequal economy, and our congregations are as starved for resources as 90% of our citizens. Let not our anxiety make us or our leaders too short-sighted or selfish to see the greater good. Help us balance our local and larger responsibilities; enlarge our horizons; save us from amnesia; let us defuse the most angry. Keep our hands to the plowshare building for the beloved community of Christ. Amen.*



Rev. Christian Thomson Iosso, Ph.D., was ordained to serve both the Advisory Council on Church & Society and the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment; was privileged to work in open, wise and courageous parts of the Church; pastored a wonderful congregation; served as Coordinator of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy; is married to the Rev. Robin Hogle; is a father of three and grandfather of two (so far!); and is an interim pastor and consulting editor.

Tuesday, September 19

The Moral Agency of Eve

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. — Genesis 3:1–6

Have you ever noticed that God lies in this story? God tells the first couple, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." But the serpent reveals the truth, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." In seeing that the tree was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and that it would make one wise, Eve made the first moral decision — to eat the fruit. In that moment, Eve not only exercises her own moral agency but chooses the very trait that defines our humanity — our ability to know good and evil.

Across the country, politicians and judges are acting to force women and people with wombs to bear children, rejecting our moral agency, imposing state control over our bodies and childbearing, violating our human right to bodily autonomy and the sacred covenant of parenthood. When we say that we need to trust women to make the critically important decision about whether to continue a pregnancy, it is rooted in a reinterpreted understanding of this story that recognizes and affirms the moral agency and wisdom that Eve chose in the garden. Understanding Eve's actions as the origin of humanity's deepest connection with the divine helps us recognize the importance of respecting and supporting the moral agency of women.

CALL TO ACTION: Affirming that access to abortion care is only the beginning of reproductive justice, Christians across the country are called to join the Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity ([SACReD](#)). SACReD congregations' commitment to equity, dignity and holistic well-being for all people serve as the basis for creating a religious movement to share the message of reproductive dignity and to participate in culture change that recognizes and supports people in their reproductive journeys.

PRAYER: *Gracious God of the garden, source of moral wisdom and courage, we pray for your justice and peace to break into our world and empower us as we work to overthrow the forces of violence and oppression currently targeting the most vulnerable people seeking abortion care in our country. Guide us as we seek to find the knowledge and pathways to becoming peacemakers amid the morass of moral censure and totalitarianism in our country. Amen.*



Rebecca Todd Peters, Ph.D., is professor of Religious Studies at Elon University. Her work is focused on globalization, economic, environmental, and reproductive justice and she is the author of “Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice” (Beacon, 2018). Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), she serves on the Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s Clergy Advocacy Board, is a founding member of SACReD (the Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity) and is vice president of the Society of Christian Ethics.

Wednesday, September 20

Ministry with Incarcerated People

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. — Luke 24:28–35

This reflection comes from my volunteer work as one of a team of chaplains at the County Jail. I hope others will join in ministries with incarcerated people.

Tonight, I was allowed to celebrate communion for the first time. It has taken three years to get permission to do so, for fear of contraband. I had to bring a can of Welch's to pour into Dixie cups and a sealed pack of saltines, which I snagged from a restaurant. We gathered in the dimly lit hallway between the cellblocks, so the surveillance cameras could make sure I wasn't slipping in anything. This meant we didn't have a table, so the women made one with their hands. As we set up, the very young corrections officer with a Bible verse tattooed on his forearm monitored us from behind the murky glass. He said, "Can I take communion with y'all?" I said, "Sure, come on out." He said, "I can't, 'cause I gotta monitor y'all." Laverne said, "Right, I'll make you a doggie bag." And he laughed. Then I broke the saltines into pieces and said the traditional words: "... and their eyes were opened and they recognized Him." Charisse said, "I bet God wishes He was here." Angela said, "I think She is." We laughed and laughed; cracker crumbs went everywhere. In that moment, I learned a lot about community, theology, grace and equality in the eyes of God — if not in the eyes of the law.

CALL TO ACTION:

- Become acquainted with the statistics: The United States has 4% of the world's population and 16% of the world's incarcerated population. To start, connect with [The Vera Institute \(vera.org\)](http://TheVeraInstitute.org).
- Advocate for policy change reducing incarceration and prioritizing reconciliation and rehabilitation.
- Put a face on the statistics — start a ministry with incarcerated people and their families.
- Follow up on the action of the 225th General Assembly to develop resources for ministries with incarcerated people.

PRAYER: *After your resurrection, Jesus, you walked the road and broke bread with your disciples. In that moment, their eyes were opened to your invincible and inclusive love. Open our eyes to see you in faces of our siblings whose lives are broken by crime and incarceration. Remind us that nothing can separate them or us from you saving grace — not sin, not death, not hate. Amen.*



Carol Wickersham recently retired as a teaching elder in Milwaukee Presbytery and associate professor of Community-Based Sociology at Beloit College. The 40 years of her ministry has included activism and pastoral work at the grassroots, national and global levels. Carol has also worked with the World Council of Churches, the sanctuary and labor movements, unhoused populations, as well as coalitions against torture and for criminal justice reform. She consults with organizations in transition, including congregations.

Thursday, September 21

A Cloud of Peacemaking Witnesses

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him ...

— Hebrews 12:1–2

“Poetry doesn’t just emerge. It emerges from the soul of a community.” — Joy Harjo

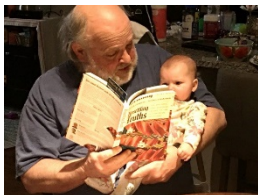
Peacemaking is a communal calling and a community endeavor. Reflecting on the Commitment to Peacemaking evokes peacemakers I have known and peacemakers I know now. Congregations, mid councils, committees and individuals who have supported and challenged me flit before my eyes, fill my mind and tug at my heart. I don’t name them because there are too many, because I have forgotten names, because I failed to realize we were and are companions on the journey.

With profound gratitude for the cloud of witnesses, I cannot let the 40th anniversary of the Commitment to Peacemaking pass without naming Dick Watts. Responding to God’s call, Dick helped create and staff the Swords into Plowshares peacemaking ministry of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. After serving on the Peacemaking Program staff, he served as interim executive presbyter, a role landing him in the “I Supervised Mark Koenig Support Group.” Among Dick’s gifts to the Presbyterian Church and God’s world was the Commitment to Peacemaking. He played a significant role in conceiving, creating and implementing the Commitment.

The Commitment provides a holistic understanding of peacemaking that informs and guides multiple dimensions of our lives following the Prince of Peace. It invites Presbyterians to engage in peacemaking and to expand and deepen our peacemaking ministries together. All those communities and individuals who dance in my mind and heart and all those I do not know lived and live commitments to making peace. For Dick Watts and all committed Presbyterian peacemakers, thanks be to God.

CALL TO ACTION: Remember the individuals and communities past and present who have nurtured your peacemaking commitment and shared your peacemaking journey. Thank them — in person or in prayer. Consider a contribution in their honor or memory to the Peace and Global Witness Offering or to a justice-seeking, peacemaking effort you have in common.

PRAYER: *We thank you God for companions in peacemaking: communities and individuals well known to us and individuals and communities we have never met. For the challenge and nurture our companions provide, we are grateful. Inspire us to thank those who have touched and who now touch our lives. We pray in the name of Jesus, who goes with us. Amen.*



W. Mark Koenig serves as a communications associate in the Administrative Services Group of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. Through the years he has served as a co-pastor in Iowa and Cleveland Heights and an interim

pastor in Queens. He worked in the Racial Justice program area, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations and two presbytery staffs.

Friday, September 22

Sowing Right Relationships

Who is wise and knowledgeable among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be arrogant and lie about the truth. This is not wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. — James 3:13–18

Sowing and reaping. These metaphors echo throughout the Bible. What you sow, you reap, Paul reminds the Galatians (6:7). In the parable of the Sower, Jesus warns of the impact of different kinds of soil on the growth of good seed. Likewise, in the letter of James, the work of peacemaking is an act of sowing and reaping.

Peacemakers sow *dikaio syne*, a Greek word that means both righteousness and justice. Peacemakers plant righteousness: right relationships with others and with God, relationships based on integrity, gentleness, flexibility, mercy and expansive welcome. Peacemakers plant justice: equity within the community, dignity and fair treatment to those who are marginalized, the recognition of every human being as a bearer of God's image. Peacemakers, in this way, prepare for a harvest that reflects God's desire for right relationships in all of God's beloved world. This, for James, is the way of holy wisdom, a reflection of God's wisdom that comes to us as a gift, and that leads us in the way of peace. By contrast, envy, selfish ambition, arrogance and falsehood lead to wars and other kinds of conflicts, conflicts that reflect the values of an unjust, imperial world order, and that tear apart this God's good Creation.

What will you sow today, tomorrow, in the next weeks? How will you walk the path of a peacemaker, sowing righteousness and justice, that God's holy wisdom may grow and flourish?

CALL TO ACTION: Consider a peacemaking challenge that you are called to address, either through word or through deed. As you consider your response, ask yourself these questions. Is my response both gentle and honest? Am I able to hear and weigh multiple perspectives on the problem? Is my response merciful? Am I treating those without power fairly? Does this problem expose my own needs to repent and reform? Will my response encourage right relationships and justice?

PRAYER: *Father of Lights, who gave us birth, grant us your Holy Wisdom. We would be peacemakers, sowing righteousness and justice in your beloved world. Guide our ways, that they may be "pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy." Bless the harvest that we sow, that it may grow into good fruits nourishing your Creation. Through Jesus Christ, our brother and our Savior. Amen.*



Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer is the academic dean and First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport professor of New Testament Studies at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, in Austin, Texas.

Saturday, September 23

A Difficult Text for Peacemakers

*“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.
For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,
and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.*

*“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” —
Matthew 10:34–39*

Matthew 10:34–39 is unrelentingly difficult for peacemakers. The sword of verse 34 doesn’t spontaneously arise out of inevitable tension between Jesus-followers and others, let alone enter on the hip of someone opposed to Jesus’ gospel; Jesus carries it into the fight. The peace that the sword supplants doesn’t vacate its rightful place in Jesus’ midst; Jesus says such peace shouldn’t have been there to begin with. And the familial divisions of verses 35–37 aren’t so much the inevitable product of following Jesus; they are seemingly the means through which such following is made manifest.

Violence and division are not consequences; they are means intrinsic to Jesus’ ends. The rhetorical shock-value of Jesus’ statements should stun us at every reading. Perhaps there are hints about peacemaking hidden within such rhetoric. The militarist metaphor of the sword applies not to the tension between Jesus’ followers and an imperial state; rather to tensions within their own families: a not-so-subtle reminder that kin-doms, as much as kingdoms, can be sites of pain and conflict. Meaningful peacemaking begins in the relational complexities of home-life, not with grand performative gestures in the wider body politic.

Note the paradoxical grace-note of verse 38: perhaps, where none of us is worthy of Jesus, taking up the cross — including the cross of a commitment to peacemaking — is not heroic achievement or act of satisfying atonement; it’s what one does imperfectly, daily as one lives out commitment to Jesus and a vision of peace that quite literally passes understanding.

CALL TO ACTION: Giving attention to the many contexts in which peacemaking is essential and the dailiness of peacemaking as a Christian discipline rather than a meritorious achievement clarifies its importance for all Christians in all walks of life in all contexts. Subtly, Matthew 10:34–39 maps out paths for all of us who are commanded and enabled to follow the Prince of Peace.

PRAYER: *Lord, you are our guide and our goad, and we pause to turn inward to feel your pulse as it quickens our lives and draws us toward your peace. You are our guard and our goal, and we pause to turn outward to see your purposes as they shape the world with which you are harmonizing us. Looking in and looking out, show us your peace as we recommit ourselves to your peacemaking. Amen.*



Mark Douglas is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and professor of Christian Ethics at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. He is the author of numerous books, including, most recently, “Christian Pacifism for the Environmental Age” (Cambridge University Press, 2019) and “Modernity, the Environment, and the Christian Just War Tradition” (Cambridge University Press, 2022). He is currently working on a new book, “War in a Warming World: Religion, Resources, and Refugees.”

Sunday, September 24

The Pursuit of Peace

Pursue peace with everyone and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. — Hebrews 12:14

Pursuing peace is a requirement for those running the Christian race. In a world filled with violence, hostility toward the “other,” and disregard for human dignity, pursuing peace violates social, political and economic norms — even in America.

The pursuit of peace requires compassion. We must consider the humanity of other people as well as the suffering the environment endures, where we live, work, worship and play, long enough to detect where painful predicaments exist. People are suffering because of the many “-isms” that frame our collective existence. The environment suffers from the pollutants we emit every day. There is need, therefore, for Christians to walk with kindness, gentleness, consideration and love.

The writer of Hebrews knew experiences like ours. Ancient Rome is known for its violence, its oppression of other peoples, and the way it destroyed many of the environments it inhabited. It is also known for its military might, its technological advances, and its brutal business and political leaders who put wealth and notoriety ahead of the humane treatment of people — especially those whom it colonized and enslaved. The pursuit of peace in such a context set one apart from the norms of a society drunk on the intoxicating brew of greed and power.

Pursuing peace is seeking the well-being of other people. It is endeavoring to ensure that the needs of others are met. It is effort expended in the interest of the common good. It is, when done in God’s name, an act of holiness.

CALL TO ACTION:

- Cultivate compassion — for yourself, your community, your congregation and beyond.
- Challenge your own “isms.”
- Seek the well-being of others, helping to meet their needs in simple, concrete ways; this is the pursuit of peace.

PRAYER: *O God, help us to walk in love and compassion as we pursue peace in this broken world of ours. Amen.*



Mark Lomax is the pastor of First African Church in Lithonia, Georgia. He is also an associate professor of Homiletics at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

Monday, September 25

Mutually Empowering One Another

*The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion and will feed together, and a little child shall lead them.*

*The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the
adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the
knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. — Isaiah 11:6–9*

Recently, I attended a presentation by Father John Deer, an internationally known author, activist, and teacher of peace and nonviolence, and he said, “Active nonviolence begins with the vision that we are all one.” This passage in Isaiah provides a vision of each animal exhibiting unnatural behaviors, living without fear while co-existing in peace — an equalization and balancing of power was needed to achieve this peaceful existence.

I recall a peacemaking conference on racism where Eric H.F. Law, an Episcopalian Priest, talked about this passage as providing a perfect example of the work of multiculturalism. The Commitment to Peacemaking intentionally addresses building skills in peacemaking. This specific peacemaking conference welcomed Eric H.F. Law to provide the opportunity to learn and practice the skill of Mutual Invitation. In its simplest form, Mutual Invitation is a communication tool that balances the power within a group to have a truer, more authentic dialogue that values each individual and is mutually empowering.

The news each day shares stories of people and communities disempowered, marginalized and powerless. Yet, at the same time there are stories of people who are gathering to march, making their presence known and showing solidarity. The vision that we are all one and the Isaiah passage speak to sharing power. This is not a simple request or an easy task, but peacemakers need to be there to strive for balance, to create opportunities for more authentic dialogue and to mutually empower others.

CALL TO ACTION:

- Support a restaurant or business in your community that's locally owned and operated by a person of color; ask them their story.
- Read one article that helps you understand how and why people are using gender and nonbinary pronouns.
- Try using Mutual Invitation (which can be found in “The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb” by Eric H.F. Law), at an upcoming meeting.
- Ask a young person how they feel about banning books in school.

PRAYER: *God, when we agree with one another, we take a step closer to understanding. When we listen and encourage one another, we take a step closer to standing next to each other. When we share power with each other, we stand together. Amen.*



Nancy Eng MacNeill (she/her/hers) is a former associate for the Peacemaking Program, currently working on her pickleball game having just retired to the California desert with her partner and two Carolina Dogs.

Tuesday, September 26

Peacemaking is the Believer's Calling

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

— Matthew 5:9

Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling was completed in Advent, in the spirit of that season, only days before Christmas 1979. It reflects the hope of Advent and the realities of the season in which Herod killed the children, and in which witnesses to the savior's birth came from other nations. The text from Matthew in this passage refutes the absoluteness of Rome as it takes the title of Caesar as peacemaker and gives it to the church, Jesus' "followers," in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew typically presents Jesus as going beyond the law of Moses and providing guidance for action. The document Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling combines the words from Matthew in the Commitment to Peacemaking with the vocational theology of John Calvin. "Vocation" in the title is a key word in Calvinist or Presbyterian theology. When the General Assembly adopted this title, it meant divine work for the whole church. The Commitment to Peacemaking of 1983 put the vision of the 1980 General Assembly to work in peacemaking. More than half of the churches affirmed the Commitment.

In the New Testament, the church was not just blessing Roman policy. Nor in our case was it just blessing U.S. policy but leaning away from it in its own work, vocabulary and mission. The Commitment broadened the turning toward peace in local, personal, social and national matters. The recent General Assembly recognized that the peacemaking work requires taking risks for peace.

CALL TO ACTION: Form a peacemaking team in your congregation to advise the session on actions. This last year, our team at [East Liberty Presbyterian Church](#) urged monetary relief for suffering in Ukraine, led a four-church march in the inner city against gun violence, initiated the removal of Stonewall Jackson from our stained glass window of Presbyterian educators, wrote repeatedly to state legislators for common sense policies for lessening gun violence, and sponsored a news conference on our church steps against voter suppression. The fulfillment of the Commitment to Peacemaking requires congregations to lead in the work. Peacemaking needs institutional grounding.

PRAYER: *Lord, let us have peace with justice and may our church contribute to its beginning. Amen.*



Professor Ron Stone of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary coordinated many of the peacemaking policy committees of the Advisory Council of Social Witness and General Assembly following Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling. He presently serves on East Liberty Presbyterian Church's Peace Committee and on the Pittsburgh Presbytery's Peacemaking Committee, both of which he has chaired.

Wednesday, September 27

The Things That Make For Peace

As [Jesus] came near and saw [Jerusalem], he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes." — Luke 19:41–42

If we are paying attention, our hearts and souls are wrenched by the daily news — intractable war; mass shootings; polarizing conflict; legislation that denies basic human rights; deadly and destructive weather events fueled by climate change. Indeed, the things that make for peace are hidden from our eyes.

Jesus is weeping, as we do, over this sorry state of affairs. Sometimes it is easier to avert our eyes, to pretend that we do not see what is going on around us. Perhaps our hearts just can't take more. Maybe the violence and brokenness are so prevalent and all around us, we have become desensitized to the pain and suffering of God's Creation.

It is a privilege to be able to look the other way in these perilous times. Individuals, communities, and all of God's Creation that are caught in the middle of any form of violence and injustice do not have such privilege. As paradoxical as it might sound, as peacemakers, we must confront the brokenness of life in order to see the things that make for peace.

The challenges are immense, to be sure. But following Jesus demands that we keep our eyes and hearts open to his leading. He will surely lead us to messy and broken places, as he has for thousands of years. Fearful and uncertain though we might be, we will follow, trusting that Jesus will open our eyes so that we may rededicate ourselves to the things that make for peace.

CALL TO ACTION: Peacemaking is intersectional and interconnected. The challenges are many. We cannot heal all the brokenness facing the world, but we can:

- Have courage to see the "things that make for peace" in the brokenness.
- Focus on one or two challenges.
- Know that peacemaking is not a solo activity. We can build community.
- Work. Pray. Rest. Repeat.

Finally, trust that God is at work at all times and in all times and in all ways, accompanying you in the journey.

PRAYER: *Now, I am supposed to say to you, "Go in peace." But how can I say, "Go in peace," when you are going into a world marred by war, hunger, poverty, violence and racism? But I dare say, "Go in peace," because Jesus says, "I give you my peace." Remember — Jesus also says, "If you would be my disciple, take up your cross and follow me!" So, I dare to say, "Go in peace!" If you dare! Amen.*

—Adapted from a benediction by the Rev. Dr. Clinton Marsh,
Former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church and dedicated peacemaker



Sara Pottschmidt Lisherness is the deputy executive director for Mission Programs for the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). She has been involved in peacemaking with the Presbyterian Church since the 1980s, serving as a peacemaking advocate for the San Fernando Presbytery; a program associate and coordinator for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program; director of the Compassion, Peace & Justice Ministry; and interim director for Presbyterian World Mission of the PMA. She enjoys hiking with her dog, gardening and cooking.

Thursday, September 28
Shifting Our Point of View

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

— 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

The biblical idea of peace points us toward a connected community of humanity, centered on inclusion, justice and equity. Our Scripture passage reminds us that developing such a community is very difficult. Paul begins by saying that he previously saw Jesus (and everyone else) from a human point of view, using the categories of the fallen world to judge others.

I grew up with this human point of view — racism, sexism, materialism, militarism, nationalism — I judged others to be inferior to the white, straight guy that I took myself to be. It was deeply embedded in me because people who loved me and whom I loved taught me this perspective, this “human point of view.” To use the biblical image, I was captured by these categories, and I had no idea how to find the way to peace.

However, as Paul puts it so well in this letter to the Corinthians, Jesus was coming for me, not the white Jesus whom I had been worshiping, but a new and surprising Jesus whom I had trouble believing. Jesus sent prophets to me again and again, and I began to shift my perspective to view Jesus and everyone else from God’s point of view, not from my human contextual point of view. These “fallen categories of the world” are still deeply embedded in me, and I am wrestling with them all the time, but I know that Jesus continues to come for me and for all of us in our captivity.

CALL TO ACTION: We are asked to become ambassadors of reconciliation — to recognize our captivity, to trust others to point out our continuing captivity, to begin to trust ourselves to become those prophetic voices, to be those ambassadors of Christ to others, seeking to build a community built on inclusion, justice and equity. These are the building blocks that lead us all on a path of peace.

PRAYER: *O God, thank you for calling us to walk on a path of peace. Send us your Spirit so that we may comprehend the joy of seeking to see others as you see them. Strengthen us so that we may persevere in the times when we are asked to be prophetic voices. Help us to hear that we are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We pray in your holy name. Amen.*



Nibs Stroup was a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War in 1970–72, and is a retired Presbyterian minister, pastoring Oakhurst Presbyterian in Georgia for 33-plus years. Nibs and his spouse, the Rev. Caroline Leach, were recipients of Greater

Atlanta Presbytery's Peacemaking Award and the Church Women United Human Rights Award. Stroup is the author of five books, including the award-winning "Passionate for Justice: Ida B. Wells as Prophet for Our Time."

Friday, September 29

The Prophetic Work of Reconciliation

The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them.

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. — Isaiah 11:6, 9

For the past 10 years I have lived as a mission co-worker in Colombia, a beautiful country whose people are struggling to transform their society by ending decades of armed conflict. Metaphorical wolves and lions terrorize both rural and urban communities, so these words from Isaiah sound even more improbable here than they might in other places, and yet they convey a powerful call to prophetic work for reconciliation.

We have so many fears, and some are far from irrational — especially in a context such as Colombia. Fear helps keep us safe; no one would blame the calf for mistrusting a lion moving in next door. Still, the Bible offers us a vision of the peaceable kingdom, the wolf and the lamb, the calf and the lion: “they will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain.”

Are we willing to imagine that somehow God will make real that promise? If we truly believe and hope for a new future in God’s shalom, we must be willing to release our fears and our assumptions and open ourselves to possibilities that might seem unachievable today. Isaiah’s vision posits that it is possible to calm the destructive hunger of our metaphorical lions and wolves so that they cease to be a threat to the calf and the lamb. I imagine this requires collective will and societal systems that guarantee all will have the basic things they need to flourish.

What if we take this vision as our challenge, our task?

CALL TO ACTION: Begin a new connection with a person or organization engaged in peace building and reconciliation. For Colombia you might connect with the ecumenical peace platform [DIPaz](#) (Interchurch Dialogue for Peace; website in Spanish), sign up for advocacy alerts from the Latin America Working Group or subscribe to my mission co-worker newsletters. Or you may want to find someone in your own community involved in the important work of transforming a culture of violence.

PRAYER: *God of life, we long for your shalom but sometimes doubt it could ever become a reality. Grant us the prophetic imagination to believe in your dream of peace and wholeness for all Creation. Help us to humble our attitudes and expand our expectations so that we might be led by a little child to the future you have promised. In Jesus’ name. Amén.*



Rev. Sarah Henken is a PC(USA) mission co-worker, serving with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia as accompanier for Peace Initiatives, Diaconal Service, and Sustainable Development and coordinates the Colombia site of the Young Adult Volunteer Program. Originally from Los Angeles, Sarah comes from a family of

church musicians and received her bachelor's from Occidental College and her M.Div. from McCormick Theological Seminary. Sarah lives in Barranquilla with her partner and their daughter.

Saturday, September 30

Calling Ourselves Peacemakers

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

— 2 Corinthians 5:16–21

I seem to specialize in conversation stopper job titles: spiritual counselor, reconciliation catalyst, peace and justice coordinator. This makes me a little sheepish about sharing this information with acquaintances. Peace and justice may be the “well, bless your heart” of callings. This has indeed been several people’s response. I know I am not alone.

In truth, it is a bit of an audacious identity to call ourselves peacemakers. Still, we know that, as Peacemaking: The Believer’s Calling articulated some 40 years ago, “God’s work of peace (and justice) is for all believers,” even me and you.

Paul’s words remind us that we (still) live in a divided and broken world. But we are shepherded by our whole-hearted and tenacious God, who loves us beyond measure. In that security, God’s love compels us into the vulnerability in which deconstructing biases and changing our behaviors and beliefs is a normal part of our work as Christians.

Ministries of reconciliation cannot be faked. Neither, though, will we do it perfectly. This is part of our call to a vulnerable and authentic faith. We will make mistakes. We will ask forgiveness. We will change. Like everything in Creation, we are evolving.

The faithful, consistent, reconciling ministry of Presbyterian Peacemaking is as *central* and relevant as it was upon its birthing 40 years ago. And so, we labor, accompanied by God’s Spirit and faithful communities into a world that is longing for peace, justice and reconciliation. What a blessed calling!

CALL TO ACTION: Consider how God is calling you today to tend to peace and reconciliation. Is it a particular issue? Is it the needs of a particular country or community? Is it personal work in your family? Or is it in your own soul? Write down one small step can you take to respond in faith and love to this call?

PRAYER: *Loving and reconciling God, we want to bless the world with your vision of a just, peaceful and reconciled world. We recommit ourselves to you and to this blessed calling. Give us courage to face ourselves and our communities with integrity, aligning our longings with yours so that we may bless the world with your shalom. Amen.*



Shannon Parks-Beck is a freelance writer, blogger, musician and chaplain. She has served as social justice and peacemaking coordinator for the Seattle Presbytery, reconciliation catalyst with Presbyterian World Mission, and as a writer for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. She was mentored by a founding mother of the Peacemaking Program, Helen Hamilton, who said in her Scottish brogue, “Sometimes peacemaking is as simple as saying thank you,” and the great encourager, the Rev. Robert McClure.

Sunday, October 1, World Communion Sunday
40 Years with the Commitment to Peacemaking

Peace be to the whole community. — Ephesians 6:23a

When I meet people for the first time and they ask what I “do,” I usually pause and watch for their reaction. You see, the work of peacemaking can either be a source of connection or confusion. It can lead to more conversation or to a change in conversation. I don’t think it’s because peacemaking is hard to understand. Most people get it and want peace in the world, but it can be hard to define, notice or point out when we see it. For the past 40 years Presbyterians and their congregations have been committed to making peace real, their expressions of peacemaking reflecting the varying and diverse commitments and concerns among us. Peacemaking can look like offering support to immigrant families, transgender siblings, mission co-workers or conscientious objectors. It can be feeding impoverished people, sheltering unhoused individuals, or visiting incarcerated and detained people. It can take shape as a tutoring program for children, an anti-violence program for youth, a neighborhood garden for the community, or a sanctuary ministry for refugees and asylum seekers. It can be voiced as advocacy for sensible gun legislation, fair housing, voting reform or reproductive justice. There really is no limit to the ways in which “peacemaking” shows up in the life and practice of our congregations and then is extended by them to the whole community. Much like the communion meal we share, we are nourished by the One who brings peace, and is our peace, so that we can extend that peace to the whole community.

CALL TO ACTION: Think of one new practice that you or your congregation can do for peace, then plan to do it as a response the next time you celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

PRAYER: *God of community, your peace is for all of us. Help us each to know your peace, and then to work for peace in one of the broken or forgotten places in our community and world. Amen.*



Rev. Carl Horton serves as the coordinator of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. He is highly committed to equipping peacemakers and strengthening the church at all levels for its engagement in peacemaking. In his free time, he is a backyard farmer, piano student and dog wrangler.