

PPF Joins Indigenous People in Demand for Climate Protection

In October, PPF joined the People vs. Fossil Fuels movement on the streets of DC in a week of action led by Indigenous water protectors. Hundreds were arrested, including some from the PPF delegation. This powerful coalition of climate activists demands that President Biden uphold his campaign promise to take climate change seriously and protect frontline communities. We cannot pick and choose pipeline projects; we must divest from fossil fuels and build a just and renewable energy revolution.

"People are dying right now from the pollutants, the toxins, the climate catastrophes that are happening, and we have to stop the harm," said Siqiniq Maupin, the director of Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic, which is working to protect Indigenous lands and stop oil drilling in Alaska. "Biden's election was riding on climate change, his entire election on people of color, Indigenous people. But when it really comes to when it matters, our lives are still being sacrificed for oil and gas."



Representatives from Faith groups hold prayer vigil at People vs Fossil Fuels action days in DC.

From the Line 3 pipeline in Minnesota to oil and gas drilling in Alaska, Indigenous peoples are on the frontlines of the fight against fossil fuels. Major pipeline projects and other forms of oil and gas extraction not only threaten the land and water in Native communities, but are often in direct violation of treaty rights or violate laws around Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Fossil fuel construction has also been linked to sex trafficking and an increase in Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. In response, the rallying cry has become "Respect us or Expect us!"

The People vs. Fossil Fuels mobilization is calling on the President to:

Stop approving fossil fuel projects and speed the end of the fossil fuel era.

Declare a climate emergency and launch a just and renewable energy revolution.

Will you add your voice to the movement and call upon President Biden keep his promise? Email the White House today, using the contact form at www.whitehouse.gov/contact/

We will no longer allow the U.S. government to separate us from our relationship to the sacred knowledge of Mother Earth and all who depend on her. Her songs have no end, so we must continue the unfinished work of our ancestors who have walked on before us. – from the statement issued on Oct. 14 from Indigenous leaders occupying the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the first time since the 1970s.

2022 General Assembly

It's time to plan for our presence at the 225th General Assembly, scheduled for next summer. Current plans are for a hybrid meeting, with plenary sessions all online. The agenda will include all of the overtures and reports deferred from 2020, including the critical ones on climate change and fossil fuel divestment. Join our General Assembly Working Group, which will be meeting monthly by zoom to help brainstorm for effective advocacy, outreach, fellowship, and celebration at the G.A. Contact Timothy Wotring, working group convener, at timothywotring@gmail.com.

Join the Guns2Gardens Campaign

Our vision is to create a network of congregations across the country that have an ongoing ministry of disarming unwanted guns. Our model is the nonprofit organization RAWtools, which for almost ten years has been working to disarm guns and forge the scrap pieces into garden tools.

PPF is asking you join with other congregations across the United States to host a disarming event at your church.

Sign up for a Guns to Gardens Action Circle to learn more about building congregational support, organizing an event, and providing pastoral care and spiritual reflection for participants. Contact Deanna Hollas at deanna@presbypeacefellowship.org.

...BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

17 Cricketown Road Stony Point, NY 10980

presbypeacefellowship.org info@presbypeacefellowship.org

Aric Clark and Abby Mohaupt, Co-Moderators

Len Bjorkman, Moderator Emeritus

Whitney Palmer, Treasurer

Emily Brewer, Executive Director 929-251-3277

emily@presbypeacefellowship.org

Art Hunt, Deputy Director art@presbypeacefellowship.org

Christa Galvin, Financial and Administrative Assistant

christa@presbypeacefellowship.org

Lucy Waechter Webb, Manager of Communications and Digital Organizing

lucy@presbypeacefellowship.org

Deanna Hollas, Gun Violence Prevention Ministries Coordinator

deanna@presbypeacefellowship.org

Alison Wood, Accompaniment Coordinator alison@presbypeacefellowship.org

Abby Mohaupt, Fossil Free PCUSA Co-Moderator awmohaupt@gmail.com

Liv Thomas, Fossil Free PCUSA Co-Moderator livthomas2512@gmail.com

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Send donations online or to our Stony Point office. Send address changes to christa@presbypeacefellowship.org or mail to the Stony Point office.

Contact the editors at:

Jan Orr-Harter JanOH4@aol.com & Marilyn White marwhite@igc.org

Reflections from Colombia

By Ruth Noel

We have been in an accompaniment partnership with the IPC (Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia) since 2004 as they work for safety and peace. Part of our commitment is to say YES to invitations when we can. For the first time since the pandemic begun we were invited to come and visit. In August, three PPFers traveled to Colombia to affirm our partnership with the IPC and to share what we observed, learned, and experienced with you in the PPF network. Though accompaniment has been on hold since the pandemic, our relationship has not.

Think about what it's like to have spent most, if not all, of your life from the time you were 15-18 years old camping, with no modern comforts, training and fighting with a group of people who become like family. After four years of negotiation, you sign a peace agreement with the government. You both agree to the terms. You follow through on your commitments, but the government only follows through on a few points. How would you feel? What would you do?

FARC combatants laid down their weapons on, among other things, the promise of government assistance in setting up life as a civilian including housing, land, and monies to set up farms and businesses that can become self-sustaining over time. They also admit what they did wrong and are in dialog with those they harmed, seeking reconciliation and peace for both parties. The people we met in three reintegration communities are passionate and sincere in their desire to move forward in creating better lives for themselves and their children. They clearly stated to us that they have no intention of going backward and picking up arms again. It was a very hard and difficult time. They have no desire to repeat it.

At the same time, the folks we talked with do not fault the minority of ex-combatants who've chosen to go back to arms and are fighting. They mourn with them the loss of 300 companions who have been assassinated since the Accords were signed; people whom the government is obligated to protect. Some of them fear for their lives yet live in hope and continue to work for peace. They give thanks for the international support received, both material support that allows them to build dignified housing, and spiritual/emotional support that encourages the signers of the Peace Accords to continue in their commitment to peace. Their one strong request to us is to amplify their voices and ask the U.S. government—who are guarantors of the Accords—to pressure the Colombian government to comply.

*Join Our Advent Bible Study
See presbypeacefellowship.org/events/ for sign up
information*

PPF Statement on Afghanistan after US troop withdrawal in August 2021

It is not inevitable. The reality we have seen in the last two weeks—of Afghans holding onto planes taking off from Kabul, of interpreters and their families hiding in their homes in fear, of bombings by ISIS-K, of US drone strikes—is not inevitable. These realities are a direct result of imperialist occupation by the United States.

The crisis in Afghanistan right now as the United States pulls out after two decades of war is only inevitable (as President Biden has said it is) if we think war is inevitable. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship condemns military action by any party to a conflict, holding it to be usually counter-productive and always contrary to the Christian gospel.

Rev. Ben Daniel puts it this way: “If the tragic images of folks trying desperately to rush the Kabul airport in hope of being airlifted beyond the totalitarian reach of the Taliban communicate anything to Christians dwelling in the relative comfort of American suburbia it must surely be this: military violence does not work.”

The United States used the lie of white saviorism—that we were going to “save Afghan women”—to justify the violence of war, but the truth is that Afghan women didn’t need saving by the United States, and furthermore, “human rights cannot be vouchsafed with bombs.”

So what’s our response as Christians who believe that the realism of Jesus is more compelling than the so-called realism that attempts to justify war? Our response is two-fold:

Respond to the humanitarian crisis happening right now:

Sign the petition by Afghans for a Better Tomorrow (www.weareafghans.org/take-action) calling upon the Biden administration to lift refugee caps so more Afghans can find safety; it is the US’s moral duty to evacuate and admit all Afghans seeking asylum, not only those who aided the US military.

Give to Afghans for a Better Tomorrow as they work to aid and help evacuate as many refugees and asylum seekers as possible.

Lift up the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan in your church with prayers and by singing the hymn written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (see page 8).

Work now to prevent the next war:

Learn more about becoming a Peace Church and joining a network of congregations who dream and work toward a world without war, step by step at www.presbypeacefellowship.org/peace-church/

Use the Inventory of Conscience (link is on the Peace Church web page) to accompany young people who are discerning how to live out peace in their lives as they come of age to register for service to the military; this is a great tool for

confirmation classes.

Finally, if you’re a pastor who has veterans in your congregation who are struggling right now, they may be experiencing moral injury, which is something many service people experience but few have resources to deal with. Here is an easy-to-use guide for you to provide pastoral care to people who serve(d) in the military and are experiencing moral injury because of the violence they witnessed and/or were required to participate in: presbypeacefellowship.org/resources/pastoral-care-for-veterans-experiencing-moral-injury-a-brief-resource/

Compiled by: Rev. Emily Brewer, Rev. Ben Daniel, Rev. Lucy Waechter Webb, with support from the Peace Church Working Group



A Prayer for the Area We Call Afghanistan

By Barbara Kellam-Scott (PPF Activist Council member)

May I be content to be heart on, hands off,
To withhold all judgment of should have, should now.

To remember it's too late for all that,
At least a century too late.
It is not our land,
even though we took our turn at trying to make it in our image.

The varied people of this place, these places,
With their several languages, cultures, beliefs,
Are, however, members of the Kindred we call God,
Beloved as we are, subjects of Grace if they will take it.

May I be content to let my heart call to each soldier
That he no longer needs that rifle,
If he wants his leader to be heard and recognized
By the world that tried to push and plan for his lands.

May I be content and compassionate,
But leave the resolution to the Spirit that binds me
To these my sisters
and, all of them, my brothers.

Not My Generation:

Young activists bring new energy to gun violence prevention work

By Lindsay Morgenstein

Lindsay Morgenstein is Co-Communications Director and a Co-Founder of Not My Generation, a national organization uniquely focused on localized, intersectional gun violence prevention advocacy for and by young adults. She is also a senior student at Duke University.

Lindsay spoke to PPF on September 1 at the 8th annual Barstow-Driver Award event honoring Cheryl and Doug Hunt. What follows is a portion of her remarks.

As we continue to grow, build power, and influence decisions about public safety, Not My Generation is deeply committed to staying true to the ideals of our name by working to become the last generation to pass along the gun violence epidemic to the next. Often, in working with older generations, we're presented with the same sentiment. "I'm sorry our generation didn't do more. I'm sorry we left this mess for you." While these empty apologies are deeply frustrating to hear, they power the ideas of Not My Generation, inspiring our organizers to refuse to say the same thing to our children and our children's children.

Our generation will not allow the American gun violence epidemic to keep a stranglehold on our country or our communities any longer. We know, of course, that this is a tall order and that we need buy-in from all members of our communities in an intergenerational, interfaith, interracial, united front in order to reduce and end gun violence.

As you may know, gun violence in the United States is a public health crisis of epidemic proportions, claiming more than 40 thousand lives and causing an additional 85 thousand firearm related injuries per year. This crisis is a uniquely American issue. Americans are twenty-five times more likely to be killed in a gun homicide than residents of other high-income countries and women in the United States are twenty-one times more likely to be murdered with a gun than women in peer countries.

Though gun violence impacts Americans in every zip code and from every background, communities of

color bear the brunt of the epidemic, as evidenced by the fact that Black Americans are twice as likely as white Americans to die from gun violence and fourteen times more likely than white Americans to be wounded by gun violence. Beyond causing loss of life and the traumatization of entire communities, gun violence is also an economic burden, costing the United States an estimated 229 billion dollars each year, 87% of which is borne directly by American taxpayers.

For all of these reasons and more, Not My Generation is committed to ending the American gun violence epidemic in all its forms – including mass shootings, community violence, suicides by firearm, domestic violence, police violence, hate crimes, and accidental shootings. This approach to gun violence prevention is an approach that recognizes all the different forms and the complexities within the gun violence prevention movement, including which communities are most impacted by which types of gun violence. It is one which I personally, and I would venture to say, my generation of organizers, generally see as critical.

In line with this belief, Not My Generation strives to recognize and account for the reality that gun violence is not simply a stand-alone policy issue, but rather a symptom of wider systemic injustices, particularly as they relate to race, class, and gender. And if I can leave you with anything this evening, it would be that I hope that any and all gun violence prevention work you do in the future will be centered on the belief that gun violence prevention must be a broad endeavor that not only focuses on changing policy but also on fundamentally changing the systemic and historical factors, institutions, and societal beliefs that have caused the American gun violence epidemic to persist.

In doing this difficult work of digging deep into the issues we care about most, and addressing both the root causes and systems of fundamental inequities upon which our country is built, Not My Generation – and frankly, much of my generation – are abolitionists. Typically, when I claim that label, particularly as a young white woman, I'm greeted with eyerolls, incredulous looks, and accusations of naivete. I would

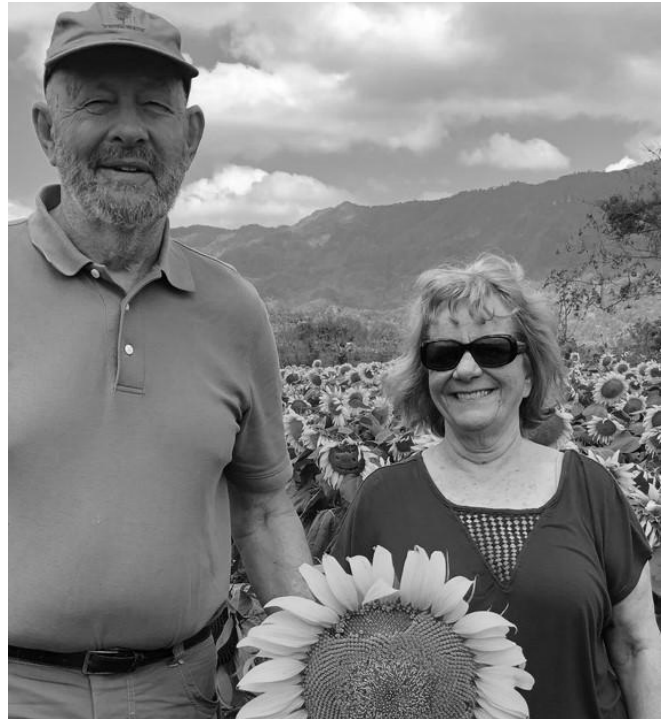
argue, however, that there is nothing naive about working to build a future that centers rehabilitation, community, and love over punitiveism, hate, and fear. It's why I am proud that the energy of this organization is committed to antiracism and the liberation of all people, and acts on these beliefs by adhering to abolitionist principles – believing deeply in a world free of police, prisons, and state-sanctioned violence.

Like many of you, we know that policing and prisons in the United States are firmly rooted in racial capitalism and an unresolved legacy of chattel slavery. And we know that these issues are intimately related to all types of gun violence. So I present you with the argument that it is our responsibility and our charge, particularly those of us who carry white privilege, male privilege, or other forms of privilege that shield us, to some degree, from the worst of the gun violence epidemic, to be and to operate in the world as abolitionists.

This is our calling as contemporary people of faith, as human beings concerned about the well being of our neighbors, because a better, radically different type of future is possible, if only we're imaginative, creative, courageous, selfless, and patient enough to pursue it.



Guns to Gardens: Learn how your faith community can become a Disarming Congregation and transform guns into garden tools (see page 2).



Cheryl and Doug Hunt Receive Barstow Driver Award

More than 130 friends and supporters gathered virtually on September 1 to honor Doug and Cheryl Hunt of Stockton, California. Cheryl and Doug, who are retired teachers and active members of First Presbyterian Church in Stockton, have volunteered with PPF as Colombia and Agua Prieta Accompaniers, FossilFree PCUSA supporters, Gun Violence Prevention working group members, and SOA Watch Border Encuentro participants.

Cheryl and Doug Hunt are the recipients of the 8th Annual Anne Barstow and Tom Driver Award for Excellence in Nonviolent Direct Action in Retirement. The award was created in 2014 to honor those who have taken significant risks for the cause of nonviolent peacemaking. Previous awardees were Anne Barstow and Tom Driver, Don Beisswenger, Gene LeFebvre, Melinda Thompson, Peggy Howland, Merilie Robertson, and Linda Eastwood.

In Their Own Words:

A tribute to lives dedicated to peacemaking and nonviolence

This is a time of deep sorrow for the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship community as we mourn the deaths of three of our most beloved friends. It is also a time of profound gratitude for the gifts we have received from them. Theirs were lives of faithful witness, courageous leadership, and generously shared wisdom.

Tom Driver

"Tom lived a long and meaningful life as a parent, professor, pastor, internationalist, and activist; we were blessed by his life and continue to be blessed, challenged, and inspired by his legacy of faithful and courageous nonviolence. We in PPF have been so inspired and pushed by Tom's example of nonviolence that we created an annual award named after Tom Driver and his wife Anne Barstow for excellence in nonviolent direct action." – Emily Brewer, PPF Executive Director

Tom Driver was the content editor of the Nov/Dec 2005 issue of Church & Society, "Rethinking War, Rethinking Peace, Rethinking Peacemaking: Trusting the Nonviolence of Jesus Christ Today," which he developed in collaboration with the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. These words are from the introduction:



Peace was absent in the days of Jesus' mission. Like us, he lived within a violent empire. Much like ours today, the Roman Empire of Jesus' time was predatory and destructive, even though (also like ours) it brought great material benefit to some and saw itself in idealistic terms. Jesus' teaching of peace struck at the very foundations of that empire, and it responded by attempting to destroy him.

If violence could win, Jesus Christ would be dead today. But it cannot. This truth, which is a corollary of the truth that God is love, is at the heart of the Christian gospel.

Discussions of war and pacifism among Christian theologians have a way of foundering on the shoals of theory and absolutisms. As the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, our hope is to steer by a more specific and pragmatic compass. We in PPF are more interested in the discipleship of making peace than in establishing or defending a position of theoretical principle. In our discipleship, we seek to avoid those compromises through which churches often find reasons to endorse wars. To us, the realism of Jesus, whatever others think of it, is more compelling than the realism of "this world." Because the destructive power of war is now greater than ever in previous history, threatening to demolish civilization, if not all of planetary life, the urgency of building peace has never been greater than at present.

The specific things we followers of Christ can do for peace may seem small in comparison with the vast energy and resources the nations devote to war. Yet they matter. To engage in them is to get beyond the dread feeling that there is nothing to be done. Americans are fond of looking for quick fixes. We want immediate results. The structural violence of today's global economic system is so immense and well entrenched, as are its institutions of militarism, that it is foolish to think they can be quickly overcome. The task, as Walter Wink has persuasively argued, is to engage "the powers" — and resist them, while at the same time laying the foundations for social structures that can be peaceful because they are just. This task requires courage, patience, and a willingness to walk in faith. Most people walk along a road called "Peace If Possible, War If Necessary." That is not the straight and narrow way to which Jesus points. Nor does it lead to the life abundant he came to give.

Lois Baker

"In 1983, John Connor called me in NY from a hospital bed in Oregon: You have to go to Houston in my place to speak at a presbytery peace conference. You will meet the amazing Lois Baker. So I went, with an infant in tow and wrote a speech on the plane. There was Lois, so tiny in body, so enormous in spirit. Peace was a tough sell in Houston and she was ready, everything was organized and people showed up. The theme was Ephesians 6.... putting on the whole armor of God. The focus was preventing nuclear war. Lois became a PPF friend and her exploits are legend, at GA, SOA Watch, and along the Appalachian Trail. She was a true activist and had little patience for naval gazing. She was dauntingly positive, always certain of God's plan for peace." – Jan Orr-Harter

In 2014, Lois Baker wrote to every commissioner assigned to the General Assembly Peacemaking and International Issues Committee, urging them to urging them to support nonviolence as the church's fundamental response to war.



Let me tell you a bit about myself. I served in the U.S. Army Medical Division in Europe during World War II. The tragic loss of life, limb, and sanity that I witnessed there turned me into a committed peacemaker. When the Presbyterian Church created the Peacemaking Program, I volunteered immediately to serve on both the presbytery and local church peacemaking committees. I served on the Texas Conference of Churches Border Task Force, traveled to Nicaragua and Colombia with Witness for Peace delegations, and went to Washington D.C. countless times to ask my Congressional representatives to vote for peace instead of war. I celebrated my 80th birthday in 2001 by walking a good portion of the Appalachian trail. Many wonderful Presbyterians supported my hike with pledges of support, and we earned enough to clear a minefield in Mozambique.

Recently I have been following the process of discernment about peace and nonviolence that the church has been involved in for the past 4 years. I was able to attend the General Assembly in Minneapolis in 2010 when the Peacemaking and International Issues Committee initiated this process in response to an overture. I was amazed and pleased when the committee decided to change the purpose of the process from "seeking clarity on **whether** God is calling the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to war and terror" to seeking "clarity **as to** God's call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war....I was especially pleased when the Peace Discernment Steering Team was created, and saw that its members were mostly young adults.

Imagine my dismay when I saw the final report submitted to you, after it had been edited and rewritten by ACSWP! All mention of the nonviolent teaching of Jesus and the centuries of pacifist practice of the early church have been removed from the affirmations to be sent to the presbyteries! Furthermore, specific language implying an endorsement of "just war" has been added. I have lived to see and study many wars, and I have yet to see one that meets the "just war" criteria of protecting noncombatants, minimizing the amount of force used, and only resorting to military action as a last resort. This is an obsolete theory that should be abandoned by modern Christians.

Peggy Howland

"Peggy was a trailblazer, one of the first women ordained in the PCUSA. She was Presbyterian through and through – she gave me no end of hard times when I was moderator of Hudson River Presbytery if I didn't follow Robert's Rules with precise enough order. And yet, she also invited me to come to Florida 2 years ago to lead a workshop on gun violence prevention for her presbytery and she excitedly reserved the guest apartment in her senior living facility for my husband and me to stay in so we could see her throughout the weekend, and she hugged me like a daughter when we left for the airport to return home. I give thanks for her life and witness." – Margery Rossi

Peggy Howland served as an overture advocate for Hudson River Presbytery at the GA in 2014. Her words to the Peacemaking Committee were a succinct summary of the PPF worldview.



I'll be 81 years old this summer. I was 11 when the atomic bombs obliterated most of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and our weapons grow ever more deadly. We ask this General Assembly to "Recognize God's call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war."

Please notice: We are NOT saying: All Presbyterians must become conscientious objectors and never fight in a war again, although quite a few Presbyterians do make that choice. We are NOT saying: We Presbyterians will never respond to violence with violence, although many of us acknowledge Jesus taught this, and Christians in the early centuries of the church refused to fight in war. What our overture DOES say is that violence, terror and war are DEEPLY CHALLENGING US TODAY. It says we recognize that GOD CALLS US to respond to these CHALLENGES.... a CALL for the CHURCH to embrace nonviolence as OUR fundamental response to these challenges.

HOW do we do that? We call our nation to find ALTERNATIVES TO WAR. As the Church of Jesus Christ, we call our nation to seek nonviolent alternatives with as much investment, energy, intelligence, and commitment as we have put into weapons of mass destruction and the creation of ever more death-dealing arms. We are not suggesting we disband the military or disarm the police. As followers of Jesus, let us tell the world that GOD CALLS US to find OTHER WAYS to solve our differences and live together in this world. God calls us to lead our nation in seeking A BETTER WAY, with God's help."

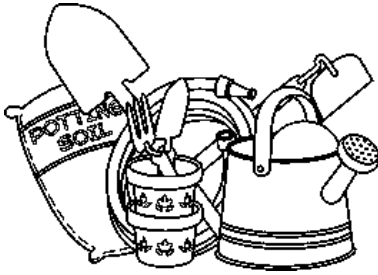
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

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Remembering Tom Driver, Lois Baker, and Peggy Howland p.6-7

We Pray for Afghanistan's People Today

CRADLE SONG 11.11.11.11 ("Away in a Manger")

We pray for Afghanistan's people today:
for those who are fleeing — who know they can't stay,
for those who face terror by day and by night,
for those who can't leave and whose dreams can't take flight.

We pray for the people who fear what's in store,
for dreamers and poets who grieve a closed door.
for those who are hiding so no one will see
the people they are — or who they hope to be.

We pray for girls facing a world they don't know,
who still long to read and to learn and to grow.
We pray for young women who live with the fear
their bodies, their voices, may soon disappear.

We pray for young children whose first lullabies
were bombs and explosions and wounded ones' cries —
and for those who served there, who see how it ends,
who ponder their service, who grieve for lost friends.

We weep for the places where war leads to war.
We pray for your hand there to heal and restore!
Bless all who seek justice and peace as your way.
We pray for Afghanistan's people today.

Tune: William James Kirkpatrick, 1895 ("Away in a Manger")
(MIDI)

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns:
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