

Preventing Gun Violence without Police

By Deanna Hollis, Dallas TX

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is excited to announce our endorsement of the De-Policing the Gun Violence Prevention Movement Policy Playbook. The Policy Playbook is the combined effort of several youth-led GVP organizations (Youth Over Guns, March For Our Lives CA, and Team Enough, to name a few) that came together under the leadership of Not My Generation (NMG).

It all began in February of 2020 when NMG refocused its energy towards building an understanding of how the GVP movement unintentionally perpetuated harm and violence against the communities it claims to protect. After months of abolitionist trainings and personal reflection, NMG realized the national GVP movement has long left low-income and black and brown communities – the communities most disproportionately impacted by gun violence – out of critical policy decisions. PPF endorses the Policy Playbook as the work these young people have done and are doing aligns with the goals of the GVP working group to be more accountable in our work to communities of color. One way we have begun to do this is with the overture that was submitted to the 224th General Assembly that calls for a reevaluation of the PC(USA) GVP policy, Gun Violence Gospel Values, so that racial, gender and class justice are fully integrated into the policy. Not only does endorsing the De-Policing the GVP Movement Policy Playbook align with PPF's value of being antiracist, it also aligns with our history of encouraging, supporting, and empowering those most impacted by violence, including youth.

The Policy Playbook imagines an approach to justice, safety, liberation and gun violence prevention that is built on four pillars: community empowerment, creating counter structures to police and prisons, healing from pain, and social, political and structural accountability. Recommended actions are: pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, invest in our public school system's mental health services and after school programs, create comprehensive threat assessment programs in schools, invest in programs that teach conflict resolution skills, strengthen federal safe storage laws, raise the age to purchase firearms to 21 years old, prohibit all online firearm and ammunition sales or transfers (including gun parts), and invest in state and local level gun buy-back and disposal programs.

The Policy Playbook differs from the mainstream GVP movement by acknowledging the unequal balance of power some GVP policies produce for the state, as happens with Extreme Risk Protection or "Red Flag" laws which rely on police enforcement. With an understanding of how Black and low-income communities are both overly policed and disproportionately incarcerated, the Policy Playbook calls on the GVP movement to refocus our efforts on preventative measures which ensure that gun regulations fall on manufacturers and sellers rather than marginalized individuals.

To learn more about de-policing the GVP movement and download the playbook, visit depolicingvp.com

“WE KNOW THAT GUN VIOLENCE... IS NOT AN ISOLATED POLICY ISSUE, BUT A SYMPTOM OF WIDER AMERICAN SYSTEMIC INJUSTICES AND FAILURES DATING BACK TO THE FOUNDING OF OUR NATION.”

**DE-POLICING
GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

A Peacemaker's Calendar

April 9 – Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia. Sign up for notifications about this and other PPF-sponsored events by selecting the “Get Involved” tab at presbypeacefellowship.org

April 7-9 – Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Days.

The theme of this virtual event is “Imagine! God’s Earth and People Restored.” Register at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington/advocacy-training-weekend/

April 18-21 – Ecumenical Advocacy Days. EAD 2021 will be a virtual event focused on Climate Justice. Join us to learn how addressing the history of colonialism and structural racism is key to achieving climate justice. Register at advocacydays.org

April 22 – Earth Day. See page 4 for resources.

August 16-23 – In the Aftermath of Catastrophe. Presbyterian Peacemaking Program Travel Study Seminar to Puerto Rico, focusing on the political, social, and racial dynamics revealed by multiple catastrophes and how the church is responding to them. Register at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/travel_study/

March 20 - April 1, 2022 – Mosaic of Peace 2022. A Presbyterian Peacemaking Conference in Israel/Palestine, focusing on witnessing for peace and wholeness in a land called ‘holy.’ Register at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/travel_study/

Imagine! God’s Earth and People Restored

VIRTUAL ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS APRIL 18-21

Join us for EAD 2021 to advocate for Climate Justice! EAD 2021 is an opportunity to support this global movement centered on and led by the people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts due to historic racial and colonial inequities. Together, we will passionately advocate and reimagine a world that lives out the values of justice, equity and the beloved community.

Around the world, we again bear witness to protests for racial justice, this time set amidst unprecedented climate-induced disasters, an economic crisis, and the deaths of more than one million people globally from the pandemic. For example, Amazonian indigenous communities face the existential threats of COVID-19, wildfires, and brutal mining operations. East Africans are affected by hunger and malnutrition due to the coronavirus

restrictions and to crop failures from flooding and locusts. We have an opportunity to reflect on this moment as Christians. Together we can seek the balm to heal God’s Earth and all humanity.

Addressing the history of colonialism and structural racism is key to achieving climate justice. Together, we will rise up with the climate justice movement against these systemic wrongs and respond in hope. Join us in 2021 as we gather virtually for worship, workshops and advocacy to “Imagine God’s Earth and People restored.” Register at advocacydays.org

Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Days

April 7-9 | Virtual Event

Join us to learn, organize and advocate around environmental justice! Presbyterian Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Days will feature Claudio Carvalhaes and Harry Pickens, along with our partners from the most impacted communities in the United States and around the globe. We will have several sessions to delve deep into the issues of the day as well as address our current brokenness and how we lay the groundwork for justice and reconciliation. Register at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington/advocacy-training-weekend/

...BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

17 Crickettown 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

Sarah Prager, Communications Associate sarah@presbypeacefellowship.org

Deanna Hollas, Gun Violence Prevention Ministries Coordinator

deanna@presbypeacefellowship.org

Alison Wood, Accompaniment Coordinator alison@presbypeacefellowship.org

Ashley Bair, Campaign Coordinator ashley@presbypeacefellowship.org

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

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

...BRIEFLY is funded entirely by gifts from our readers, members & friends.

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

Biden Asked to Suspend Military Exercises with South Korea

Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea

Civil society organizations in South Korea, the United States, and around the globe have issued a joint call to President Biden to suspend the annual US-South Korea (ROK) combined military exercises. The signers comprise 110 U.S., 197 South Korean, and 79 international organizations, including the Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea, organized in 2017.

According to the statement, “suspending these costly and highly provocative war exercises will be a crucial step toward re-starting genuine diplomacy with North Korea (DPRK). It will remove a formidable obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the ongoing 70-year-old Korean War and allow all parties to focus on other intractable global issues facing our nations today, such as creating a nuclear weapons-free world and resolving the current COVID-19 pandemic.”

The call concludes with a plea for intensified diplomacy: “We want peace talks, not war drills and military confrontation. We urge the Biden Administration to resolve the root cause of the conflict between the United States and North Korea — the unresolved Korean War — which has driven a dangerous arms race, harmed the most vulnerable people through punishing sanctions, and enforced the tragic separation of hundreds of thousands of Korean families. Continuing to rely on isolation, pressure, and threats to force North Korea’s unilateral denuclearization is a recipe for failure.”

Follow the Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea on Facebook.

Planning Begins for 225th GA

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly is working with the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA), to implement a vision for the church of the 21st century and that includes looking at a new way to host our biennial gathering.

The General Assembly in 2022 will be a mix of in person and online gatherings. While many details, including dates are still being finalized, COGA has pulled together four working groups to plan and implement this historic change.



Accompaniment Update

By Alison Wood, PPF Accompaniment Coordinator

While we still cannot be physically present with our dear friends in Colombia and Agua Prieta, we are still in touch to send support and care.

A COVID surge in Colombia in December meant that holiday celebrations were all virtual. The coronavirus pandemic only complicates the already tense situation. Folks there have shared concern and anxiety over the massacres that have been increasing in some regions, with a government response of sending armed forces to "see what has been happening." The involvement of the government brings more uncertainty and danger. We ask for continued prayers for our friends in the IPC (Presbyterian Church of Colombia) and for all human rights leaders and defenders of peace in Colombia.

In Agua Prieta, our friends at CAME (Center for Migrant Care "Exodus") share that they are hosting fewer asylum seekers, but are seeing large groups of people being deported to Agua Prieta again – often more than 50 people daily. You can find updates from CAME directly on their Facebook page, and updates from the Migrant Resource Center (where accompaniers in Agua Prieta have also served) on their page. We are working to discern how we can continue to support humanitarian aid in Agua Prieta even during this pandemic. In the meantime, please pray for the folks there, both those working to support people in transit and those who find themselves in Agua Prieta after interactions with the U.S. government.

One development on the border on January 21 was the announcement from the Department of Homeland Security that no new people will be enrolled in the "Migrant Protection Protocols" and returned to Mexico to wait for their asylum case to be reviewed in dangerous conditions. This is something to celebrate, even as we get back to work! We expect that there will be many more advocacy opportunities in this first season of a new US Presidential Administration. Those opportunities, including virtual marches supporting asylum seekers and Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia, will be shared as they develop. Thank you for continuing to care, pray, and pay attention in love.

How to Celebrate Earth Day 2021

Faith Climate Action Week: April 16-25

Organized by Interfaith Power and Light, Faith Climate Action Week is ten days in April during Earth Month when congregations focus on how we can all take action to protect our climate. The 2021 theme is Sacred Ground: Cultivating Connections Between our Faith, our Food, and the Climate. Download the organizer's kit at www.faithclimateactionweek.org/2021-organizers-kit/

The kit includes: Organizer's instructions; Sacred Ground Guide – learn how healthy soil can help solve the climate crisis and support food justice, plus suggestions for action for congregations and individuals; Garden Blessing Ceremony; Postcards to the Secretary of Agriculture; Shoppers wallet guide to help you select food grown in healthy soil; Links to the nationwide Climate Prayer, with more online worship resources; and Climate change fact sheet.

Consider meeting by conference call with your congregation, each of you standing in your own garden for a blessing ceremony. Or view "Kiss the Ground," a new film about how regenerating the world's soils has the potential to rapidly stabilize Earth's climate, restore lost ecosystems, and create abundant food supplies. This film explains why transitioning to regenerative agriculture could be key in rehabilitating the planet, while simultaneously invigorating a new sense of hope and inspiration in viewers. The film will be available for free online screening from April 10 - 26 on the Faith Climate Action Week web site, along with a discussion guide.

Minute for Mission

Earthjustice has released a powerful 1 minute, 46 second video of Standing Rock images and a call to add your name to the opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline with a simple text message. See the video and learn more at earthjustice.org/video/standing-rock-dapl-thokata-he-miye-my-name-is-future

Green Your Presbytery

Presbyterians for Earth Care have been holding video conferences on Greening Your Presbytery on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm (ET), focusing on topics such as Solar Energy for Churches. Contact them at pec@presbyearthcare.org or follow them on Facebook for announcements about upcoming topics.



Divest from Fossil Fuels

Fossil Free PCUSA and PCUSA Moral Investments organized an email campaign as part of a global action through Greenfaith's "Sacred People, Sacred Earth" event. The emails were sent on March 11 at 11 a.m. local time to the Executive Team of the Board of Pensions asking for and demanding divestment from fossil fuels.

Even though the General Assembly has adopted many resolutions and reports in favor of greener energies, they still represent less than 1% of total investments. The value of BOP investments has increased by about \$1 billion in each of the last two years, representing a huge missed opportunity to increase investments in sustainable energy.

It's not too late to add your voice to the call for divestment with your own email to the executives of the Board of Pensions: fspencer@pensions.org mfallon@pensions.org phaines@pensions.org ljacobsen@pensions.org jmcfayden@pensions.org kriley@pensions.org dwalker@pensions.org

Other actions to take are adding your presbytery's concurrence to the Fossil Fuel Divestment overture which has been referred to the 225th General Assembly or asking your presbytery to divest its own funds from fossil fuels. For more information, see www.presbypeacefellowship.org/fossil-free/

“Forever Wars” Continue in Biden Administration

Only a bit more than a month into his presidency, Joe Biden ordered his first bombing campaign, targeting facilities in eastern Syria used by the Iran-backed militias responsible for rocket attacks against US troops in Iraq earlier this year. We join the peace groups and foreign policy analysts who condemn this action:



“We knew Biden would continue the U.S. War on Terror, despite decrying ‘forever wars’ in the presidential debates, because war is a bi-partisan effort in the United States. The U.S. Led Coalition — started by Obama and carried forward by Trump and Biden — is responsible for over 13,000 civilian casualties across Iraq and Syria. [The] targeted air strike from the Biden administration is a continuation of our proxy war with Iran: last year, Donald Trump ordered targeted strikes against Qassem Suleimani and members of Kataib Hezbollah. Our political analysis is the same: No war with Iran. No war with Iraq. No war with Syria.”

– War Resisters League

“U.S. air strikes in Syria are the latest example of military action without congressional approval. We cannot allow violence to be the default response in U.S. foreign policy.”

– Friends Committee on National Legislation

“Each individual action or reaction has some kind of plausible justification. But when you add them up to the aggregate, you get a kind of collective madness, which is us at war for 20 straight years.”

– Chris Hayes, MSNBC

“While Biden’s intent to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) seems unquestionable, good intentions and good strategy are not the same thing. Rather than bringing diplomacy back, Biden appears to be falling back into old patterns where appearing tough trumps being smart and where diplomacy is merely a slogan sprinkled on policies centered on coercion, not a genuine give and take.”

– Trita Parsi, The Guardian

“Why is this administration bombing the sovereign nation of Syria? Why is it bombing ‘Iranian-backed militias’ who pose absolutely no threat to the United States and are actually involved in fighting ISIS? If this is about getting more leverage vis-à-vis Iran, why hasn’t the Biden administration just done what it said it would do: rejoin the Iran nuclear deal and de-escalate the Middle East conflicts?”

....Americans should remind President Biden that he promised to prioritize diplomacy over military action as the primary instrument of his foreign policy. Biden should recognize that the best way to protect US personnel is to take them out of the Middle East. He should recall that the Iraqi Parliament voted a year ago for US troops to leave their country. He should also recognize that US troops have no right to be in Syria, still ‘protecting the oil,’ on the orders of Donald Trump.”

– Medea Benjamin and Nicolas J. S. Davies,
CODEPINK

“I am very concerned that [this] strike by U.S. forces in Syria puts our country on the path of continuing the Forever War instead of ending it. This is the same path we’ve been on for almost two decades. For far too long administrations of both parties have interpreted their authorities in an extremely expansive way to continue military interventions across the Middle East region and elsewhere. This must end.

– Senator Bernie Sanders

Briefly . . .

Abolition Resources

PPF Praxis Circles have been bringing together small groups of people to learn and practice together, reflecting as we take action. The groups use the PPF Abolition Reader, a collection of articles and essays on abolition, dismantling white supremacy, transformative justice, and related topics — sprinkled with bite-size action items that invite each participant to move deeper into their practice of antiracism.

If you are not currently in a praxis circle, you are welcome to use the Abolition Reader in your own context as a study and activism guide. Download it at

www.presbypeacefellowship.org/abolitionreader

The Praxis Circles are using another excellent resource, The Community Safety for All #DefundPolice Congregational Action Toolkit, from the organization Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).

This toolkit is designed for faith/spiritual communities and institutions ready to take action to stop relying on police and build alternatives. The toolkit includes a 4-movement model to support your congregation in moving to action, including assessment tools, political education suggestions, and action ideas. Request it at showingupforracialjustice.org/community-safety-campaign.html

Engaging Our World

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has issued a second edition of Engaging Our World, a study of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The resource gives us a snapshot into each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), some of their targets and the ways in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our global partners have been working — and continue to work — to achieve this sustainable development agenda. The six sessions give participants the opportunity to become more familiar with this important agenda. Download the study guide at www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/engaging-our-world/

View on Demand!



David Staniunas shares his research on Presbyterians and abolition movements.

On January 13, PPF hosted an online program on The History of Presbyterians and Abolition. From John Rankin and Gideon Blackburn through to Angela Davis' legal defense, the conversation with David Staniunas from the Presbyterian Historical Society looked back at the ways that Presbyterians have participated in various abolitionist movements (or haven't!) and how the light of those stories might illuminate contemporary abolitionist movements in new ways for the Church.

Did you miss it? It continues to be available for viewing on the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Youtube channel!

Faith Groups ask Congress to Cut Military Spending

More than 30 faith groups, including PPF, sent a letter to Members of Congress on February 18 to demand cuts in the military budget and to direct funds instead to diplomacy, addressing climate change, and human needs. The letter suggests that “Conflict can be solved in nonviolent ways when we address the root causes like global hunger and poverty, and use all of our nonviolent, sustainable foreign policy tools like diplomacy and peacebuilding. Congress must reduce the bloated Pentagon budget, and invest instead in real solutions for communities experiencing conflict.”



The Inventory of Conscience Survey:

A New Tool for Discernment about War and Violence

By Geoff Browning, Olympia WA

Have you ever stopped to consider what you believe about war and violence? We are all bombarded (pun intended) with the use of violence on television, in movies and on the news. Most of us have just absorbed these images without really thinking too much about them.

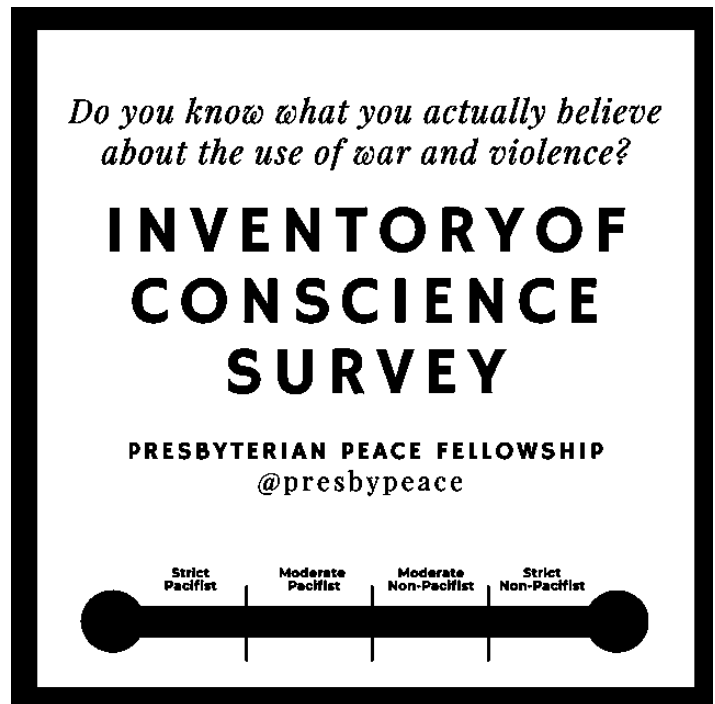
Violence has become like the water we swim in; we rarely stop to ask if this is normal or right. It has become so pervasive that most people cannot fathom an alternative. But let's be clear, the use of violence can be devastating, not only for the victims, but also for the perpetrators. Many young people are recruited into the armed forces without ever stopping to consider what they actually believe about the use of violence. Many veterans suffer not only from the physical effects of war, but also from the trauma of the violence they perpetrated or witnessed.

The Inventory of Conscience survey emerged from my engagement and work with high school & college age young men who are required by law to register for the draft. After 9/11 the Bush administration pushed through aggressive military recruitment requirements for all public schools called "No Child Left Behind." The ostensible intent of that legislation was to improve curriculum and funding for schools which they claimed to be that no children would be left with poor public education. What was obvious to those of us in the peace movement was that they wanted every child to be exposed to the pressures of recruitment into the armed forces and hence, "no child left behind." And indeed, there are many examples of aggressive recruitment such as landing a Blackhawk helicopter on school grounds and ignoring the requests by parents to not contact their children.

Young people are still being recruited into the armed forces without ever considering what they actually believe about the use of violence and war. And it is very likely that young women will soon be required to register for the draft just as young men are now. This survey is designed for them and others who wish to discuss and explore these issues. It is not intended to be a complete measurement of all the justice issues that we face at this time. It is not perfect, but I trust it offers a starting point for discussion.

We hope you find it to be a useful tool and welcome your comments.

The Inventory of Conscience may be found at presbypeacefellowship.org/peace-church/ioc-survey



PPF Endowment Tops One Million Dollars

By Jan Orr-Harter, Aledo TX

On December 4, 2020, PPF Treasurer Whitney Palmer announced that "As of today, the market value of the Peace Fellowship endowment is \$1,043,056.77! Congratulations to everyone on your hard work." While the daily value of the fund varies with investment values, donations and the budget needs of PPF, getting over that one million mark has been a long-term goal. Achieving this goal increases the dollars available for action each year, including funds like those PPF shared in 2020 with Black Visions Collective. It also decreases our investment fee rate at the Presbyterian Foundation New Covenant Funds.

This accomplishment belongs to everyone who has supported the PPF endowment fund since its birth in 2006. Thank you to all. Rather than a legacy from one wealthy donor, our endowment comes from the generosity and sacrifice of hundreds of grassroots donors – many of us still working on our 75th Year Endowment Campaign pledges!

In addition to helping fund PPF, the endowment bears witness that nonviolent investments work. In a 2020 review of the fund with staff at the Presbyterian Foundation, the Foundation acknowledged that our divestment from fossil fuels has actually contributed to the growth of PPF's fund to over one million dollars. Bravo!

*Presbyterian
Peace Fellowship*

17 Cricketown Road
Stony Point, NY 10980

FIRST CLASS PRSRT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6
VALLEY STREAM NY 11580

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

www.presbypeacefellowship.org
@presbypeace



Winter 2021

Earth Day Ideas - p. 4

Good News for All of Us

By Aric Clark, Portland OR

God intends to destroy the patriarchy, white supremacy, settler-colonialism, and capitalism. This is profoundly good news for everyone.

Men, the destruction of the patriarchy is good news for us. It means release from the straitjacket of narrowly defined masculinity. It means we can stop bullying and being bullied by one another. It means we can not only admit our helplessness and despair, but finally be shown a way out.

White folks, the destruction of white supremacy is good news for us. It means an opportunity to recover our heritage apart from brutality and greed. It means living in a richer, more vibrantly colorful world where everyone's gifts are celebrated. It means being set free from the fear that is choking us to death.

Settlers, the destruction of colonialism is good news for us. It means an end to exile and the revelation of the true meaning of home. It means waking to an enchanted world where everything is alive, everything is in relationship, and everything is sacred. It means hope for our descendants.

Wealthy people, the destruction of capitalism is good news for you. It means liberty from the demonic possession of wealth which distorts your perception and inhibits empathy. It means joining a safer, more joyful, more beautiful world where just distribution of resources enables everyone, including you, to flourish more than ever. It means knowing at last why your life is a gift.