

...BRIEFLY

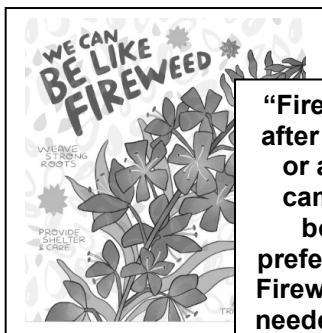
Be Bold: Nonviolence Works

Vol. 79 Spring 2023

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PPF IN PERSON in Kansas City – A Regathering of Peacemakers

Theme: We Can Be Like Fireweed



Myrna, with her Granddad Bill Galvin and Mom Christa Galvin, made 3 generations!

“Fireweed is a plant that comes up after a fire. It could be a natural fire or a human-made fire. Fireweed came up in Britain after the fire-bombings of WWII. Fireweed prefers to grow in disturbed places. Fireweed knows that plant roots are needed to hold together whatever is left of the topsoil and nutrients. Fireweed knows that food will be needed ---and she offers herself. Fireweed also offers medicine to soothe the skin and relax the body. She knows that survivors need reminders of beauty. In the midst of devastation, fireweed resets the conditions for thriving. We can be like fireweed.” --Rev. Anne Dunlap, Gathering Preacher, Faith Coordinator for Showing Up for Racial Justice. Fireweed poster by Katie Blanchard



PPF gathers in person for the first time since the pandemic. See report on p. 4



Jeff Wild (WI) leads Guns to Gardens, *above*, as Judy Lee (WA) hammers on a gun barrel.



“Apathy is not a Christian virtue. God takes sides.... The work of changing hearts is a tough job. Find your people and strengthen their hope. How many of us need to hear that good is stronger than evil? That light is stronger than darkness. That life is stronger than death. Be encouraged. Even though the remnant is not the majority, the remnant knows what God is doing.”

--Dr. Reggie Williams, *above*, Preacher, Professor of Christian Ethics, McCormick Theological Seminary. On the screen, Zoom participants from PPF joined in from around the USA.

Left, Colleen Earp (VA), Doug Hunt (CA) and David Ensign (MD), PPF's Interim Executive Director, rejoice in reunion. They all wore the same t-shirt: *For Creation!*

Together Again!

Arriving in Kansas City, I knew that PPF, like everyone, bore loss during the pandemic. Time together at the SOA Watch vigils, fellowship and advocacy at General Assemblies, events like walking from Louisville to St. Louis for a Fossil-Free PC(USA). Gone. From Covid, age and illness, we lost many PPF saints. Due to other commitments, our Co-Moderators and Executive Director stepped away. We missed hundreds of donors.

And yet, here we were—a small group of re-energizing Presbyterian peacemakers, gathering in the middle of the nation in the middle of a crisis for the soul of the nation. We were small. But each of us represented many of you who could not come, but who are ready to dismantle what is oppressive and violent in our time. Ready to build up our PPF vision of “a world where all God’s creation can thrive.” Where you there in spirit?

We felt your presence urging us on. Those of us in KC made new friends, learned new skills and committed ourselves to the work of a new vision. We affirmed new Co-Moderators and set into motion the search for a new Executive Director. We started moving forward.

For me, Presbyterian pastor Eric Garbison of Kansas City’s Cherith Brook Catholic Worker House summed it up: “Presbyterians have lost many congregations. But that may be a benefit in making us a less Constantinian community.” He meant that our post-pandemic time calls for re-gathering the church as Jesus envisioned us. Before we endorsed the Emperor Constantine’s violence and war. Before we blessed structures that dehumanize and destroy. Can PPF move in that direction? We started!

--Jan Orr-Harter, Co-Editor, Aledo, TX

BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

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A Peacemaker’s Calendar

June 2-4 Gun Violence Awareness Sabbath

Wear Orange to Remember Victims. wearorange.org

June 10-11 Guns to Gardens Safe Surrender Days

with events all week from CA to CT. See page 6.

June 15 Noon ET PPF Development Working Group

Join by Zoom to help support all of PPF’s work. Contact timothywotring@gmail.com

June 22- July 20 Guns to Gardens Action Circles

For one hour each Thursday, join with other congregations on Zoom to learn how to create, promote and sustain your own Guns to Gardens Safe Surrender ministry. There will be a daytime cohort at 11 am ET and an evening cohort at 7:30 pm ET. Pick one. Space is limited. Sign up now! Learn more and register at presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence

June 28 11 am ET PPF Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

– Join by Zoom to plan the work of ending gun violence. Contact janoh4@aol.com

July 6, 1 pm ET PPF Peace Church Working Group

Contact marwhite@igc.org for the Zoom link

July 14-16 – PPF Sponsorship of the Wild Goose Festival in Union, NC.

Join this progressive faith gathering as PPF’s Gun Violence Prevention Ministry takes Guns to Gardens on the road to demonstrate gun Safe Surrender steps and to recruit more congregations to participate. See wildgoosefestival.org

July 20 Noon ET PPF Development Working Group

Contact timothywotring@gmail.com

July 26 11 am ET PPF Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

Contact janoh4@aol.com

July 27- Aug. 24 Guns to Gardens Action Circles

See p. 6

Aug. 6 & 9 Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days

Sept. 4–Oct. 1 Season of Peace and the Presbyterian Peace and Global Witness Special Offering
specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/peace-global-witness/

Sept. 15 – Oct. 9 International Peacemakers Tour

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program hosts Peacemakers from Cuba, El Salvador, Greece, Poland, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, Palestine, South Sudan, or Ukraine. Presbyteries, congregational clusters and educational institutions may invite a peacemaker. See presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/international-peacemakers/

Jan. 1, 2024 PPF’s 80th Year!!!

June 25-July 4 226th General Assembly, Salt Lake City

New PPF Co-Moderators

Meet Christine Caton & Annica Gage

Briefly Interviews PPF's Co-Moderators-Elect, Rev. Christine Caton (CT) and Rev. Annica Gage (KY)

Briefly: Congratulations to both of you! How did each of you come to PPF?

Annica: I came to PPF through its General Assembly presence in Portland, OR in 2016. I was living in Portland, trying to discern a call to seminary, and my friend Aric Clark was part of PPF. He asked me to be a General Assembly intern. I was really impressed with these folks in PPF and by what they were doing and how they were holding their faith in the midst of the world. I wanted to emulate these folks.

Christine: I first came as a Young Adult staff member well over 20 years ago when PPF had just decided to "youthen" itself. I got to know Len Bjorkman, Rick Ufford-Chase, Marilyn White, MaryAnn Harwell, Phin Washer, Lois Baker and so many others. Lois was a role model for me. Age was not a factor for her. For her 80th birthday, she hiked the Appalachian Trail to raise funds to clear a minefield. She had an amazing personality, emanating joy. She was in WWII as an army medical therapist. It turned her into a pacifist. Every year she went to the protest at the School of the Americas in Georgia. She was committed to nonviolence. She was genuine.

Briefly: What do you hope to offer as co-moderators?

Christine: I hope I can be a calming, uniting presence. I'm excited to work with Annica. She is part of the younger PPF and now I am part of the older PPF. Having us together is good. I will do most of the moderating of meetings, which I've learned to do as a pastor, working with sessions. I've also learned from many past PPF moderators, such as Roger Powers and Clint Marsh.

Annica: Yes, Christine and I will split up tasks. I'm good at settings agendas and discerning what is worth spending time on. I hope to smooth our way to make our time more fruitful



Christine, left, and Annica will be PPF's first all-female moderator team since Meta Ukena and Marilyn White served in 1998.

Briefly: What are your hopes for PPF?

Christine: I hope that we continue to be a strong witness to a different way of living: a life of nonviolence, a life where we deal with conflict in a different way and we communicate in a way that is deeply meaningful to others. And I hope we can stop the gun violence.

Annica: The Activist Council gathering in Kansas City felt like a continuation of the searching we have been doing. Things are not totally clear, but finally we were able to be together in person and offer mutual re-encouragement to one another. Peacemaking work is already somewhat isolating. Covid made it even harder. What we are pushing against is Big. But that is not new. We have been here before and we keep on. I do feel that the larger Activist Council members are not yet all re-connected and I want to say to folks: I see you in your exhaustion. There's a lot that can feel overwhelming right now. If and when you have capacity to tap in again, you are always welcome. PPF is a group doing this work. You don't have to start from scratch and you don't have to do it alone.

Briefly: Do you see any positive hope for nonviolence in the world right now?

Annica: I see generational thinking. A lot of young adults right now are not content with the world as it is, where we have "peace" only at the threat of violence. There is a lot of energy among young people and I would love to build some solidarity there ---where there is power to change some of the structures and rebuild what is better.

Christine: Our hope is in Jesus. There is not much peace in the world anywhere. Just because the world is crazy, does not mean we should stop working for a more peaceful world. Everything I've learned about nonviolence has come from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. I hope it's a witness to my faith. As Christians, we hope to be like Jesus. We fail, but we keep trying. I stay active in PPF because this is where I find Jesus ----here and Montreat!

Annica and Christine will lead PPF's Executive Committee. Other EC members: Geoff Browning (WA), Bill Galvin (MD), Brian Merritt (NY), Margery Rossi (NY), Betsy Simpson (PA), Marilyn White (TX)

Report from Kansas City – Training for Organizing

On May 7-10, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship got the band back together! Gathering in person for the first time since COVID-19, about 30 PPFers made the trip to the Heartland Center in Kansas City and many others joined by Zoom. It was a time of training for new skills, reflection, wonderful worship, action planning and the sheer joy of being together. There was a Guns to Gardens demonstration by blacksmith/retired Lutheran pastor Jeff Wild (WI). There were morning meditations in the beautiful Missouri countryside, as well as a late night PPF party that ended with everyone getting tattoos – **Be Brave! Rise Up!** Well, they were just physically temporary. Inside, in the heart land, they remain with us.

Participant Dexter Kearny (WA) (*right*) became involved in PPF's Fossil Free and Abolition Working Groups in 2020. That meant that he had never met anyone from PPF in person until the May gathering. At the event he led a training workshop on "Telling Your Story" as a way to organize for change. "Stories," said Dexter, "are a better way to share our vision than statistics or arguments because stories help us connect with others on a deeper level."

Key points:

- Write down and then outline your story, like an "elevator speech," that includes your personal connection to the issue, whether gun violence, climate change, or another issue. What is your unique motivation for involvement?
- Weave in your values because empathy and shared values can connect us to others.
- Identify the "villain" in your story --- what is it that is blocking us from where we need to go?
- Conclude your story with a positive call to action --- *this* is where we want to go.



Dexter with a Guns to Gardens trowel



Anne Dunlap led a workshop on "Abolition." Other workshops on "One-to-One Organizing" and "Ladders of Engagement" were led by Ashley Bair (NJ) and PPF Manager of Communications and Digital Organizing Lucy Waechter Webb (MI) (*left*). Rick Ufford-Chase facilitated a session for "bubble up" action ideas that arose from our reflections together. Participants met in pairs for role playing on how to use a one-to-one conversation to engage another person in action.

Key points:

- Organizing conversations are 70% listening and 30% sharing and guiding the conversation.
- The first step is sharing the purpose of the conversation --- reach out and invite someone to meet with you, in a comfortable public spot, to talk about an issue of concern to you.
- The next step, in the conversation, is to explore, to share your stories, as they relate to the issue. Don't rush this step. •Then take time for exchange. This might be when you share your story.
- Close with a specific "hard ask" --- will you go with me to register voters? Will you lead a new PPF Working Group on Alternatives to War?
- What if they say No to your ask? That could be "not now." If so, suggest another time ---we can register voters on a better day for you. No could mean "not that." Suggest another task ---if you can't lead a new Working Group, would you be part of one? Great! Do you know anyone else who might join or be a good leader? Or the No might be "not ever." Then you say thank you for meeting and sharing. And you move on.

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"Change happens when something is disrupted and we are asked to make a decision about the way forward."

--Alicia Garza, Co-Founder of Black Lives Matter, on the "Building Power" podcast that PPFers listened to for the KSC gathering. We asked: "Can we learn to use power well in PPF?" See @findingourwaypodcast



PPF Executive Director Search!

For information/suggestions for PPF's Executive Director Search, contact christine.caton@gmail.com or david@presbypeacefellowship.org



Deanna Hollas, PPF Gun Violence Prevention Coordinator, takes a break to inform PPFers that they are all getting tattoos.



Peace Church Working Group – The Nonviolence of Jesus



Curriculum for **Peace Church Discernment** in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Developed in collaboration by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s
Peacemaking Program and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship



The Peace Church Working Group of PPF seeks and supports congregations that align themselves with the nonviolence of Jesus. In the PC(USA), these are called “Peace Churches.” So far, there are 5 Peace Churches: Faith Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX; First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, CA; Church of Reconciliation, Chapel Hill, NC; Rutgers Presbyterian Church, NY,NY; Montclair Presbyterian Church, Oakland, CA

Along with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, PPF’s Peace Church Working Group offers a five session curriculum for churches to explore becoming a Peace Church. See www.presbypeacefellowship.org/peace-church

The first two sessions look deeply at the teachings and example of Jesus in Biblical passages. Other sessions study Nonviolence in the Epistles and Nonviolence in the Early Church. The final 60 minute session focuses on the question, “Can War Be Just?”

For congregations to dig even deeper, there is an excellent set of film, online and written resources. Topics range from “Nonviolence: The History of a Dangerous Idea” to “The Unseen Scars of those Who Kill Via Remote Control.”

To explore becoming a Peace Church for your congregation, see www.presbypeacefellowship.org/peace-church/

New Peacemaking Resource: “Connecting the Dots” Webinar Series

The “Connecting the Dots” webinar series examines militarism from a variety of intersectional perspectives through the lens of the Christian faith. Presented by the PC(USA) Militarism Working Group and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, the webinars may be viewed at:

presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/connecting-the-dots-webinar-series/

Topics include:

- From National Security to Genuine Security, with partners from Colombia and Korea
- Gun Violence and Militarism
- Violent Conflict, Climate Change and Community Well-Being, with speakers from Fiji and Ukraine
- Militarism and the Actions of the 225th General Assembly
- Militarism and Moral Injury
- Peace Church, featuring representatives from four PCUSA Peace Church congregations
- Militarism in Our Daily Life

More webinars are planned. Watch the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Facebook page for dates and times! [@presbypeace](https://www.facebook.com/presbypeace)



Geoff Browning, *above*, serves on the Peace Church Working Group. At the PPF Gathering in Kansas City, he dramatized the story of a violent encounter on a Tokyo subway that was transformed by a nonviolent initiative.

Guns to Gardens Movement is Growing

As gun violence escalates, more and more congregations are exploring **Guns to Gardens** as a form of direct action to prevent gun suicides, family gun violence, mass shootings related to gun theft and unintentional shootings. In photo, *right*, Ashley Bair (NJ) and Jeff Wild (WI) work by moonlight to hammer a gun barrel into a garden trowel. Thank you to Jeff for coming to the Kansas City gathering to share Guns to Gardens.

June 10-11 Safe Surrender Days

PPF's Gun Violence Prevention Ministry supports the 3rd nationwide Safe Surrender days on June 10-11. From CA to FL, "graduates" of our Guns to Gardens Action Circles will host events. Most are drive-through events in church parking lots, but in Albuquerque, NM the event will be at the RFK Charter School. Denver's event will be held in a public garden.

RAWtools 44K May 30 - June 30 44,000 Minutes for 44,000 Lives

Mike Martin and **RAWtools.org** will mark their 10th year of decommissioning and transforming guns with a Guns to Gardens 44K marathon. Every day, somewhere in the USA, their network will cut up guns and forge parts into tools. Each of the 44,000 minutes represents the approximately 44,000 Americans who died from gun violence in 2022.

Next Action Circles:

June 22 - July 20 Thursdays at 11 am ET or 7:30 pm ET

July 27- Aug. 24 Thursdays at 12:30 pm ET or 7:30 pm ET

Expanded Action Circles are scaling up our capacity to serve more congregations and clusters of congregations. Special thanks to Action Circle graduates who are leading more Circles, with daytime and evening options. In these one hour sessions, meet with other congregations on Zoom to learn how to host, promote, fund and spiritually sustain a Guns to Gardens ministry in your congregation or community. Space is limited to 25 folks per cohort.

Learn more and register at www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence

Progress! Congratulations to MD and MN for passing new gun safety laws and to ten states that have banned the sale of semiautomatic assault weapons: CA, CT, DE, HI, IL, MD, MA, NJ, NY, WA and the District of Columbia.



Members of PPF's Gun Violence Prevention Working Group, Harry Eberts (NM) and Cheryl Hunt (CA), role play one-to-one organizing skills.



Pastor Andrew Fiser of Greenland Hills United Methodist Church in Dallas, TX watches as the gun owner unscrews the scope from a rifle. The scope parts can be used in a microscope. Deanna Hollas, PPF Gun Violence Prevention Coordinator, cuts the rifle into parts to be made into garden tools, jewelry or art. The house and people pictured are *reflections* in the glass doors. The unloaded gun is pointed toward the empty church building, while the congregation watches from outdoors. The "Healing from Gun Violence" event marked 15 days since a shooter in nearby Allen, TX used a semiautomatic gun to kill eight people and wound seven in four minutes.

Community Peacemaker Teams Restarts Delegations

By Ruth Noel (MD) Photo: Ruth, *right*, helps Jeff Wild beat gun parts into garden tools

As we in PPF turn our focus towards the work of abolition of violent systems here in the US, I know many of us continue to be concerned and involved in issues of violence around the world and we continue to collaborate with other organizations. As our representative to Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT --formerly Christian Peacemaker Teams), I invite you to join one of their delegations. CPT Field Teams accompany local people and organizations by building partnerships that work to transform violence and oppression, including in Colombia and Palestine. Several PPFers have gone on prior delegations and found them impactful and life transforming. Timothy Wotring says:



“My Peace Delegation with CPT to Iraqi-Kurdistan had a deep impact on me. CPT’s faithful and committed work of creating relationships, amplifying voices silenced by oppressive forces, and treating everyone with dignity helped shape my everyday life. It opened me to even more curiosities and a desire to listen to the stories of my neighbors. It gave me the courage to take more risks. I still think and pray for those who I met in Iraq-Kurdistan and I hope to always be in solidarity with them.”

If you want to understand conflict through visits with grassroots leaders, community members, human rights workers, legislators and officials, if you want to encourage individuals and communities experiencing violence, if you want to challenge violations of human rights, if you want to promote active nonviolence as a means of settling disputes, if you want to support movement towards nonviolent social change through listening, public witness, prayer vigils, dialogue, if you want to reduce violence through a presence in affected communities/areas and/or connect your own communities with the work of nonviolence, *then please join one of the upcoming delegations:*

Colombia: June 24 - July 3

Lesvos: September 6 - 13

Turtle Island: August 14 - 25

Palestine: September 27 - October 9 or November 3 - 15

For more info go to <https://cpt.org/delegations>

PPF Development Team – “Where is Everybody?”

The Timothy Wotring mentioned above is also the convener of the Peace Fellowship’s Development Working Group. That team is responsible for raising funds to meet PPF’s financial needs each year. Timothy reports that, on a recent Development Zoom call, he found himself asking: ***Where is everybody?***



The Development Group meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 12 noon ET by Zoom. New members are urgently needed! Are you a good writer? Are you good at planning? Are you willing to work so that PPF can do its work? Perfect! Timothy has a spot for you!

It has often been said that, compared with the costs of many ministries, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship delivers more positive impact per dollar than any other ministry we can think of. We do it through volunteers, through our shared giving and through our Development Team, as it encourages us all to support this work.

In our world today, the work of nonviolence deserves everything we can bring to it. Can you give of your time to serve on the PPF Development Working Group?

Please contact Timothy Wotring at timothywotring@gmail.com for details.

Photos: Timothy (PA) leads singing at the Kansas City gathering. Christa Galvin, (NJ) PPF’s Finance/Administrative Staff, with Myrna, gives logistics for the airport. Thank you to Christa, Lucy, David, Deanna, Timothy, Colleen, Ashley, Dexter, Rick, Anne, Reggie, Jeff, Christine, Annica, Ruth and all who helped and all who participated. Be Bold! Nonviolence Works.





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**“Apathy is not a Christian virtue.
God takes sides.”**

PPF Report from Kansas City



Guns to Gardens is Growing! P. 6

#NoDraft Video/Essay Contest for Students Grades 9-12

The Center on Conscience and War (CCW) invites students in grades 9-12 to submit your short video and brief essay telling the world why you oppose the draft and Selective Service registration. Every entry can help raise awareness of the injustice of drafting young people to fight and kill in war.

Top entries win cash prizes up to \$1,000! Deadline 6/30/2023



Let's spark a real conversation and inspire a movement to end Selective Service and the draft once and for all. Recent efforts in Congress to expand the draft to women have failed. Let's spread the word that decades of requiring young men to register with Selective Service has also been a failure and must end.

To enter, submit your short video and brief essay telling the world why you oppose the draft and why you think the US should repeal Selective Service, ending decades of draft registration and overturning damaging penalties against those who do not register. Learn about Selective Service and the draft. Talk about how it impacts your faith and your life or

the lives of your loved ones and friends. Share what you think can be done about it.

The original media you create will help educate and motivate others to take action to end the draft once and for all. CCW will award cash prizes to the best entries, while we take this opportunity to amplify the voices of the next generation of war resisters and peacemakers. Deadline to enter is June 30, 2023, 11:59pm Pacific Time. Winners will be announced on Saturday, September 16, during a special online presentation on the anniversary of the Military Selective Service Act becoming law.

Full details, contest rules and everything you need to know can be found on our website:

<https://centeronconscience.org/nodraft-video-contest>

Please share this with the young peacemakers and war resisters in your life! Questions: Call 202-483-2220
Email ccw@centeronconscience.org