

PPF Offers General Assembly “Peace Camp” June 20-27 Week of Learning, Prayer & Action

Dear GA Participants & Our PPF Community,

Peace be with you in the time of Covid-19. We are witnessing a global moment of unprecedented loss, sickness, and possibility; nothing is or will be left unchanged, including the Presbyterian General Assembly this June 19-27, 2020.

While GA will only meet online for a small amount of institutional business, Presbyterians know that the calling of the church remains the same: to be peacemakers and preach the Gospel by practicing justice in our families, communities, and world.

That’s why the Peace Fellowship community began to wonder: ***What could we offer to complement this business meeting? Could we provide some of the joy, community and important issue advocacy that is the heart and soul of a General Assembly gathering of the Presbyterian family? And an idea was born!***

During time slots when the online GA is not meeting, please join us virtually on June 20-27 for:

Presbyterian Peace Camp A Virtual Week of Learning, Prayer & Action

Who is Peace Camp for? GA commissioners and advisory delegates who have waited years for this GA...the GA-curious....elders, pastors, church members, presbytery and synod leaders...those who have joined in social movements in the PCUSA for a long time or those who are freshly-minted Presbyterians. And of course our PPF community.

Each day of Peace Camp will begin with an emailed devotional to all who are registered. You are invited to participate in teach-ins on the pressing issues that were to be discussed at GA. You will find ways that we can move forward on those issues through actions that we

can take in our own communities. You can view video profiles of our Peaceseecker awardees for ideas and inspiration to use in your congregation.

Look for virtual vigils, music and prayer to mourn the loss the pandemic has wrought on our world and imagine the new world breaking through. As we connect the connectional church, we will practice joy and care, even from a distance.

Special guests will include leading PCUSA voices and Bill McKibben, one of the world’s top climate change experts and activists and founder of 350.org

“We want to do something creative to give people hope right now,” said Timothy Wotring, Moderator of PPF’s GA Working Group. “Through Peace Camp, let’s amplify that Presbyterians care deeply about peace and justice issues. Plus, the Peace Breakfast will be free and not at 6 AM!”

Join Peace Camp for as much or as little as you choose. Registration is free, including **The Peace Breakfast on Wed. June 24**, sponsored by PPF and always one of the highlights of any GA, *below*.

Register for Peace Camp & The Peace Breakfast at
[Bit.ly/ppf-peacecamp](https://bit.ly/ppf-peacecamp)

The Peace Breakfast Wed. June 24 11 AM, EDT

**Keynote: Rev. José González-Colón, Pastor,
Environmental Justice Activist and Past Moderator
of the Synod of Boriquén, Puerto Rico**

2019 Peaceseecker Award to Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church & First United Church of Oak Park (Chicago) for Gun Violence Prevention Witness

2020 Peaceseecker Award to Michelle Muñoz-Vega, Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Presbytery of San Juan

Peacemaking in Place

What are PPFers doing in the time of Covid-19?

Margery Rossi in Peekskill, NY continues the regular “Night Runs” into New York City to deliver food and hygiene kits for those who are homeless.

Daniela Ochoa Gonzalez of Washington DC is coordinating composting for urban gardens.

Katie Blanchard in Minneapolis, *below*, participated in a “honk-in” #FreeThemAll to call for the release of as many people as possible from detention centers and prisons due to Covid-19.

Doug Hunt in Stockton, CA researched & encouraged his church to install solar panels on their 97 year-old building.

PPF’s Gun Violence Prevention Ministry provided congregations with tools to prevent gun accidents, suicides and domestic violence in the home.

PPF’s Accompaniment Program created an online book club to discuss *Undoing Border Imperialism* by Harsha Walia.

PPF’s Peace Church Working Group is calling us all to support the Covid-19 Global Ceasefire. See p. 6.

Other PPFers are helping their congregations with virtual worship and fellowship...stopping evictions in their neighborhoods...supporting PPF’s financial needs...growing food...making masks...The best? Colleen Earp in Virginia reads bed time stories to chickens as part of a virtual children’s program!



From Our Director

It was Tuesday, March 10 when Alison Wood, PPF Accompaniment Coordinator, and I decided to cancel the Learn & Discern event the next week. We weren’t sure we made the right decision. But by Thursday everything was shutting down and those of us who are not essential workers were trying to get what we needed to shelter in place. Others continued at those essential jobs—the often underappreciated work that we all depend on—with heightened fear and risk.

PPF took some time at a slower pace to adjust to this new reality of living in a global pandemic. We know that taking care of ourselves and each other is an essential part of the work we do together. We assembled a team of Activist Council members and staff to make “care calls” to all of the 158 Activist Council members we could reach. Our calling as peacemakers includes building a strong community of care. Covid-19 is a time to care deeply for one another in our grief, anxiety, fear, and uncertainty.

It’s that uncertainty that feels especially difficult. I imagine it will not go away for a while. But here are the two things I’m holding on to right now: First, **I am certain that our calling to work for peace and justice through nonviolence remains as clear and strong as ever.** And second, with uncertainty comes also the possibility for new systems and models, new ways of being, based more on mutual aid and support than capital gain and exploitation that are at the root of so much violence in our world.

What is uncertain—at least in part—is whether we will step into this moment and push hard, together, with many others for the kinds of changes we have worked for seven decades to create: an end to war and violence against people and planet.

As we discern where and how God is calling us in this moment, I hope you’ll stay connected and lend your voice and ears and love to that discernment. This newsletter is full of new ways to connect now.

I especially want to invite you and all 224th GA participants to join us for Peace Camp June 20-27. We promise to make it fun and fundamental!

It’s a joy and a privilege to be in this with you, even amid the loss and sadness that this pandemic brings. As our partners in Colombia say, ***seguimos adelante --“We go forward together.”***

In Christ, Rev. Emily Brewer, Executive Director

BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the

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Gun Violence Awareness Days June 5-7, 2020 Wear Orange!



Post Photos
to
#WearOrange
PPF
See Action Ideas
on p. 7

A Peacemaker's Calendar

May 20-July 29 Virtual Accompaniment Training.

May 25, 3-4 PM ET PPF

Pentecost Bible Study with Dr. Robyn Henderson Espinoza, *right*, author of *Activist Theology*. Reflections on the familiar texts of fire, passion and action and how they invite us to action even in a time of social distancing.

Register at presbypeacefellowship.org/events/pentecost-bible-study-2020



May 27 & June 9 *Standing Our Holy Ground* Webinars on Gun Violence Prevention. See p. 7

June 5-7 Gun Violence Awareness Days. See p. 7

June 20-27 **PEACE CAMP** See. P. 1 Sign up at Bit.ly/ppf-peacecamp

Aug. 6 & Aug. 9 Hiroshima & Nagasaki Days

Aug. or Sept. Watch for next PPF Book Club

Sept. 25-Oct. 19 International Peacemakers Tour with global mission partners from S. Sudan, Fiji, Honduras, Palestine, Malawi and more. See presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking

Welcome to the World: Nico William Wilson of the PPF Wilson-Galvin family!

**“Peace, in all times,
in every way”
—even virtually! (2 Thess 3:16)**

Register for Peace Camp
at Bit.ly/ppf-peacecamp

FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT & Your Presbytery

by abby mohaupt, Moderator of Fossil Free PCUSA

In 2020, Fossil Free PCUSA and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship believed that the General Assembly would vote to support categorical divestment from fossil fuels. Many presbyteries have been calling for this step for 8 years now.

And then the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and the Committee on General Assembly decided to postpone all overture business, including the overtures for categorical (complete) divestment and the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) report calling for partial divestment.

As we are all learning with Covid-19, sometimes we have to pivot. And so our work to divest from fossil fuels as Presbyterians pivots from calling for GA action to calling for divestment by our presbyteries.

At every level of the PCUSA, Presbyterians and all people of faith are always called to serve the earth. This is God's call to us from the very beginning (Genesis 2:15). Fossil fuels have allowed us to create a better world for many. But now we know that the impact of fossil fuel use on creation is threatening future generations and life itself.

As we confess that failure, let us now help our presbyteries listen to and engage with the people in frontline communities who are experiencing climate change now, to better understand the human toll climate change has taken and will continue to take on God's children.

Join us during the PPF Peace Camp for teach-ins to learn more about climate change, environmental justice/racism, and divestment from fossil fuels.

You'll meet Michelle Muniz Vega, *right*, recipient of PPF's 2020 Peaceseeeker Award for her work as Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Presbytery of San Juan, Puerto Rico, helping us to understand the connection between climate change, hurricanes, human survival and justice.



For a toolkit to organize your presbytery to divest from fossil fuels, see fossilfreepcusa.org/organize

Accompaniment News

by Alison Wood, Tucson, AZ,
Accompaniment Coordinator

Since 2006, PPF has coordinated the Accompaniment Program, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia and the PCUSA. We also have a program in Agua Prieta on the US/Mexico Border. Accompaniment is a direct action to intervene in violence by sending our North American eyes, ears and hearts to be present with church and human rights workers who live under threats.

Agua Prieta on US/Mexico Border

In Agua Prieta, the team at CAME (Centro de Atención al Migrante Exodus) continues to work. They have had to close their doors to new arrivals because of Covid-19. There are 12 families staying in quarantine in the shelter. The general situation there is a little tranquil, while everyone is implementing protocols to endure and manage the pandemic. Recently, CAME held a party at the shelter to celebrate the Day of the Child - reminding us that they are kids first, migrants second.

The border is closed to asylum petitions, and no one knows when the US government is going to resume this critical process. Due to this closure, the families at CAME and other families in transit in Agua Prieta and all along the border have to "shelter in place" with no idea when the wait time will end. Migration is "essential travel" that the government should permit. Please join in praying for our friends at CAME, for all defenders of migrants' human rights, and for everyone in transit. Please also call your government representatives to ask that the US government restart the asylum process, so that our neighbors are not trapped in indefinite wait along the border.

Colombia Update

Colombia remains in lockdown across the country. People who don't have places where they can comply with the mandatory shelter order, especially those involved in informal businesses to support themselves, are suffering from reprisals from the police. Many groups have seized this moment to be even more bold about the way they are targeting social leaders and human rights defenders.

And yet, the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia (Presbyterian Church of Colombia) continues to minister to the people in their churches and communities. IPC leaders are caring for their congregations and accompanying communities at risk. We are planning a ZOOM call with Germán

Zárate, so he can share more detailed updates directly with the PPF network - please stay tuned to the PPF Facebook page for the announcement when it is scheduled! In the meantime, as you endure your own quarantine, please pray for communities in Colombia under threat both of coronavirus and violence, and for all those who are walking the road of peace in this time of pandemic.

Online Accompaniment Training!

From May 20 – July 29, PPF is piloting its first round of online Accompaniment training. To explore becoming or supporting a future Accompanier, see presbypeacefellowship.org/accompaniment or contact alison@presbypeacefellowship.org

Activist Council News



PPF Activist Council members and participants in the Accompaniment Program Cheryl and Doug Hunt of CA work closely with partners in Colombia. Cheryl reports that "The pandemic has been catastrophic for our friends in Colombia, especially in Uraba. In an

unexpected blessing for us, and thanks to WHATSAPP and ZOOM, we have virtually accompanied the churches who, at great risk and sacrifice, have been delivering food to hundreds of families and seniors in lock down (*above*). And through the support of generous friends and family of our church and presbytery in Stockton, CA, 15 congregations of mostly day laborers are able to pay the minimum salaries of pastors whose emotional strength and courage will continue to be vital in the weeks to come. We are grateful to see the faces of these resilient people in worship services and community meetings."

Join the PPF Activist Council

The ABCs of the Activist Council are: Affirm the nonviolence of Jesus, Be active in PPF, Contribute each year as generously as you are able.

The AC gathers virtually and in person to encourage one another in the work of nonviolence in our local churches and communities and to set the direction of PPF's work.

More info at presbypeacefellowship.org/AC



Endowment 75 Campaign Victory!

What's more unlikely? That PPF would declare a victory in the face of Covid-19 or that a peace organization would even still be here after 75 years? Well, we've done both! Thank you to everyone who has supported and helped the 75th Year Endowment Campaign, which the PPF Executive Committee has declared completed and a huge accomplishment for a nationwide community of peacemongers.

Our goal was to raise \$400,000 to celebrate PPF's 75th year, which would lift the current endowment fund over the \$1 million mark. We were about \$35,000 shy of this goal when the pandemic hit hard and PPF concluded that it was not an appropriate time to continue to raise money for the endowment fund. Rather, we are celebrating this victory now and will make up the \$35,000 by new endowment fundraising over the next years.

But that's not the whole story. The whole story is 219 PPF households joining our dollars together as a peace legacy. It's gifts and pledges from 35 states and the District of Columbia, from Maine to Oregon, from Wisconsin to Texas. It's multiple generations digging deeply and sacrificially. It's many young adults who supported an endowment for the first time. Many retired PPFers, giving from IRA funds or by other means to leave a lasting legacy for peace. School teachers, pastors, students. It was gifts from three estates of PPFers: from campaign committee member Bill Coop, from Ruth Mehl of Arizona and Marie Galda of Nebraska. It was learning that

Marie Galda was part of the Hussite Presbyterians with an ancient Bohemian legacy of following the self-sacrifice and nonviolence of Jesus. We also lost campaign supporter Ruth Morgan of TN. All of them: **¡Presente!**



The story was also a story of celebration of the PPF 75th anniversary. Emily Brewer became a travelling 75th birthday party, showing up with cake, candles and a song by Carolyn Winfrey-Gillette wherever she went. The campaign benefited from a concert at the First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, NY, a campaign poem by Barrie Shepherd and a 75th year poster created by Emma Warman, *left*. The campaign communications celebrated the long-term commitment to peacemaking across the PPF community. Thank you to all who lent their voices, photos and creativity.

Like all of PPF's fundraising, it was a "kitchen table campaign." Instead of hiring a glossy campaign company, it was committee members and PPF staff working from their own homes to create and promote the project. Special thanks to: our Honorary Campaign Co-Chairs Susan Andrews of MO, Jim Atwood of VA, Areta Crowell of CA and Barrie Shepherd of ME; our campaign committee and PPF staff, Katie Blanchard, Emily Brewer, Christa Galvin, Art Hunt, Bruce Gillette, Melinda Thompson, Jan Orr-Harter, Whitney Palmer, Rick Ufford-Chase, Alan Burton from Hope Manifest and our guiding spirit, Bill Coop. Thank you to Stony Point Center for forwarding the endowment mail to us every week so that it could be invested and start earning income that very week.

That income is essential to PPF. Over the last six years, the endowment has provided \$191,099 for use in PPF's annual budgets, with \$37,202 to support for PPF action in 2020. By endowment standards, ours is a small fund. But we use it extremely well and we also make it a persistent witness within the Presbyterian Foundation for Occupation-Free and Fossil-Free investing. Like everything else, the fund at the Presbyterian Foundation's New Covenant Trust Co. has been impacted by the drop in the stock market, but we expect it to recover. We have been far more protected than investors in fossil fuels.



So thank you to all! For the 61 of us who are paying our pledges out over time, PPF will work to create a sense of community and forward progress as we work our way through these pledges over the next three years. Stay tuned for news on how PPFers are getting creative to make pledge payments. Again, thank you for celebrating 75 years by preparing for peacemaking to come. May the Prince of Peace use these gifts to the glory of God's vision for life on this increasingly small planet. Alleluia, Amen!

You can still support the Endowment 75 Campaign or make pledge payments anytime at presbypeacefellowship.org/endow75

Or mail checks marked "Endowment" to PPF at 17 Cricketown Rd. Stony Point, NY 10980. Thank You!

Peace Churches Support Global Ceasefire

By Geoff Browning, Campbell, CA

On March 23, 2020 UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for a global ceasefire saying:

"There should be only one fight in our world today, our shared battle against COVID-19." As of this writing, the ceasefire call has been endorsed by an ever-growing number of Member States, some 70 so far, regional partners, non-State actors, civil society networks and organizations, and all United Nations Messengers of Peace and Advocates for the Sustainable Development Goals. Pope Francis has also endorsed this ceasefire.

The Peace Church Working Group of PPF is asking all PPF members and Presbyterians everywhere to sign a petition urging our Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Director of the Office of Public Witness to publically endorse this call for a ceasefire, based on decades of Presbyterian commitment to peacemaking.

You can sign this petition at presbypeacefellowship.org/ceasefire-petition

While the leadership of our denomination is hard at work to create a virtual General Assembly during this pandemic, we have no doubt that they are also deeply committed to the cause of justice and peace in the world. It is particularly urgent for the PCUSA leadership to publically endorse and support this call for a Global Ceasefire by the UN Secretary General because the United States has just blocked a vote by the UN Security Council to endorse this ceasefire. Once they do that, Presbyterians all over the country can be encouraged to join our ecumenical partners in pressuring our national leaders on both sides of the aisle to support this ceasefire in word and deed. Please sign the petition today.

The Victims of Violence during Covid-19 – More than 70 Million Refugees

As we know only too well, it is those who are most vulnerable who will suffer the most, those who have no home where they can safely "shelter in place." This includes refugees, women, children and the disabled. And this includes those who are internally displaced within their own countries due to war and conflict. It is scarcely imaginable the toll this pandemic may take on those who are fleeing for their lives, living in squalid refugee camps without access to potable water much less proper medical care.

The UN Refugee Agency calculates that there are more than 70 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. And that number is from 2018, the latest totals available. It is certainly an undercount now.

There needs to be a concentrated call by all who care about the health and welfare of those on the margins to endorse and pressure our leaders throughout the world to enact this ceasefire. And this call should begin with every religious organization that can then pressure our leaders to enact this one, simple humanitarian act for the benefit of all. This includes our own Presbyterian Church (USA) which has yet to take this step.



Child in Yemen Camp, Photo: UNHCR/Essam Adduais

The Peace Church Working Group of PPF helps to cultivate and coordinate Presbyterian congregations that recognize the nonviolence of Jesus as the heart of their witness and mission. For more information on the Global Ceasefire petition or the Peace Church Working Group, contact Geoff Browning at browninggeoff@gmail.com

Stay tuned and stay well.

Let's Imagine

by Laura Haney, Presbyterian Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) in Tucson, AZ,
PPF 224th General Assembly Intern



How do we change the world?

In *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, adrienne maree brown makes a wonderful point about the ways we can use science fiction writing as a way to imagine what the future world could be like. What we could change to create the world we want. She sees science fiction writing as an act of resistance.

I love this idea! And I love spending time daydreaming about what the future could be. My future, the world's future. Being focused on what's next is part of my nature as a 7 on the Enneagram.

My world has slowed down during this pandemic, giving me lots of time to think and dream. My thoughts have been very focused on what the world will look like after this pandemic passes, whenever that may be. Many people are asking how to get back to normal, but what even is normal and why do we want that?

What I see as normal, thanks to watching many videos and reading articles (listed below) to educate my opinion, was completely broken to begin with. This system of capitalism, competition, and corporations isn't helping people. Many people work tirelessly to make ends meet and when they don't meet because of so many things working against lower and middle class people, it is the people that have failed, not the systems.

But the systems are failing. They have been failing many people for a long time, but the Coronavirus has amplified these failures.

Systemic failure is why a disproportionate number of black and brown people are dying from the virus. It is why there isn't enough PPE in hospitals. This broken, capitalistic system is why there is even talk of "restarting the economy" when it isn't safe to leave your house without a mask on your face. Because capitalism tells us that profits matter more than people. It has always been this way, but that is at the forefront of conversations recently.

So, I have no desire to return to that version of normal. Because none of that should be normal.

Instead I am going to do daydreaming about changes that can happen. I hope these changes include Universal Healthcare and paid sick leave. Better transportation systems that help the earth live. Business practices that are focused on people instead of how to make the most money.

This world also needs to include liberation from the power of white supremacy and colonialism. A world without borders of empire. That's one of my favorite thoughts. A great quote I heard today: "Equality says we should all get a piece of the pie. Liberation says we need a new pie."

I think it is evident that big change is necessary. But what does a better world look like? A more liberated one? This is a great time to imagine what we want to return to and what is best left out.

How do we change the world? We can start by imagining what is possible. So let's imagine together!

Some resources for further education that helped form my ideas:

- **How to Beat Coronavirus Capitalism** – An online teach-in with Naomi Klein, Astra Taylor, and Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor discuss the evils of capitalism and how the "normal" we have been living in is a crisis
- **Decolonizing the Mind** – Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown share ideas of using science fiction as a way to radically re-imagine and change the world, and they discuss their book *Octavia's Brood*
- **A World Without State Borders** – Harsha Walia, Author of *Undoing Border Imperialism* challenges the idea of state imposed borders
- **Prepare for the Ultimate Gaslighting** – Julio Vincent Gambuto shares ideas of how the trauma caused by this pandemic may be down played in the future to protect the systems in place that are failing

Gun Violence Prevention Study & Action

1. New PPF Curriculum on Gun Violence Prevention Coming! Plan Now for Fall & Winter Six-Session Study Groups for adults/older youth. presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/resources

2. Gun Violence Awareness Days June 5-7 – While mass shootings have been down in the USA under Covid-19, gun murders, accidents, suicides and domestic gun violence increased 6% from March 1 to April 19 over the prior 3 years. Join millions of Americans by wearing, displaying or posting orange. Why orange? Orange is a color of warning. It represents the value of human life, worn by hunters in the woods to prevent an accidental shooting. It says: “I do not want to be the next victim of gun violence.” Let’s all wear orange June 5-7.



a. Find local June 5-7 events at momsdemandaction.org

b. **Virtual Orange!** Post pictures with **#WearOrange** and **#WearOrangePPF**

c. **IDEAS:** Orange masks, stoles, cookies, t-shirts, hats, banners. First Presbyterian Church of Eau Claire, WI will tie orange ribbons around trees at the church, hang orange “end gun violence” signs and use the church sidewalk for orange chalk messages. Plus, members will to do so on their own driveways.

Previously, Fox Valley Presbyterian Church in Geneva, IL and First Presbyterian Church in Sterling, IL received grants from the Synod of Lincoln

Trails and Blackhawk Presbytery for a regional Gun Violence Prevention event with Rev. Sharon Risher, author of *For Such a Time as This: Hope and Forgiveness after the Charleston Massacre*. Now it is virtual national event on Friday, June 5 at 7 PM CT. Info at act.everytown.org/event/moms-demand-action-event/33541/

3. Standing Our Holy Ground Webinar Series – May 27, 5-6 PM ET –“One Step at a Time: The Trauma Recovery and Rebuilding Process in the Wake of Gun Violence” and **June 9, 1-2 PM ET** “Too Close to Home: Guns and Domestic Violence.” Register, find recordings and Study Guides for this superb Presbyterian webinar series at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/standing-our-holy-ground/



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**General Assembly Edition
for Commissioners, Advisory
Delegates & the PPF Community**

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**Gun Violence Awareness Days
June 5-7 Wear Orange**