

## Linda Eastwood Receives 2020 Barstow-Driver Award

More than 100 friends from around the world gathered by Zoom on October 8 for the presentation of the 2020 Anne Barstow and Tom Driver Award for Excellence in Nonviolent Direct Action to Linda Eastwood. Named for long-time nonviolence advocates Anne Barstow and Tom Driver, the annual award recognizes the unique contribution that elders can make to a more just and peaceful world. Among Linda's many contributions to peacemaking was her service as the Colombia Accompaniment Coordinator from 2010 through 2013. She continues to support the Accompaniment Program as a volunteer and member of the leadership team. Linda trained and supported dozens of accompaniers, and led a delegation to Colombia. She worked closely with Germán Zárate and others in the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia to foster equitable and just relationships, focusing on following the leadership of the Colombians and disrupting patterns of colonialism and US superiority in our relationships.



Many colleagues spoke at the award ceremony to offer congratulations to Linda and express gratitude for her work.

Germán Zárate brought greetings and words of appreciation from the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia:

*"We've always been inspired by Linda's humility and her capacity for dialogue, interacting with the highest dignitaries and public leaders such as the director of the Truth Commission in Colombia, established by the peace accords reached between the Colombian government and the former guerillas of the FARC. She has also engaged with humble campesinos, displaced by the violence in our country. Linda has developed bonds of affection wherever she finds herself – as a professor teaching theology in our Reformed University or preaching in our local churches, and in her solidarity with victims of violence, accompanying them together with members of civil society, always with the conviction that peace with justice will come to be a reality.*

*"Linda is a scientist who has made important contributions to the world but she continues to be the person who, in Colombia and in so many parts of the world, we love dearly for her passion and love for those who have suffered the injustices of a society with so many social, political, cultural, and racial inequities.*

*"The Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia is proud of this recognition which is bestowed by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship which we think is completely right and well deserved. What better recognition than the Anne Barstow and Tom Driver Award? Anne and Tom are friends who are here tonight who are also builders and dreamers of justice and peace. We thank God for your life, Linda. May God continue to bless you."*

## A Peacemaker's Calendar

**November 29 – From Turtle Island to Palestine: Unite to Decriminalize Indigenous Struggles.** Online rally and twitter storm sponsored by Friends of Sabeel North America and Christian Peacemaker Teams. 4:00 p.m. EST. Register at [fosna.org/unite/](https://fosna.org/unite/)

**December 4 – Advent and Apocalypse: Beginnings and Endings.** Join PPF in the kick-off of our Advent season with a Coffee Hour Bible Study with Cláudio Carvalhaes. Theologian, liturgist, preacher, and artist Cláudio Carvalhaes, a native Brazilian and an ordained pastor in the PC(USA), has been an Associate Professor of Worship at Union Theological Seminary in New York City since 2007. 1:15 p.m. EST. Register to get Zoom link at [presbypeacefellowship.org/events/](https://presbypeacefellowship.org/events/)

**January 13, 2021 – The History of Presbyterians and Abolition.** From John Rankin and Gideon Blackburn through to Angela Davis' legal defense: a conversation with David Stanianas from the Presbyterian Historical Society, looking 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. 2:00 p.m. EST. Register to get Zoom link at [presbypeacefellowship.org/events/](https://presbypeacefellowship.org/events/)

**2021 – Presbyterian Peacemaking Travel Study Seminars.** Seminars scheduled for 2021 include the Mosaic of Peace Conference in Israel/Palestine, April 5-16; Native Lands of the Southwest: The Doctrine of Discovery and its Legacy Today, April 20-29; Philippines and Hong Kong: Root Causes and Current Challenges of Forced Migration and Labor Trafficking, June 4-18; Puerto Rico In the Aftermath of Catastrophe: The Political, Social and Racial Dynamics Revealed by Multiple Catastrophes and How the Church Is Responding to Them, August 16-23. Register at [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/travel\\_study/](https://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/travel_study/)

**Catch Up – International Peacemaker Virtual Symposium.** Every year, the PC(USA) Peacemaking Program brings partners from around the world to visit with our mid-councils, colleges, seminaries and congregations. In 2020, the program has shifted from in-person visits to online conversations. Sixteen past peacemakers from 2012-2019, including Germán Zárate from the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (IPC), have joined us for this virtual symposium, an opportunity to catch-up with them, be updated on their work and hear from them on the challenging topics of our day. The interviews, panel discussions and presentations are available for you to view at any time at [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/2020-international-peacemaker-virtual-symposium/](https://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/2020-international-peacemaker-virtual-symposium/)

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## Leadership Transitions

The PPF Activist Council held its annual business meeting on Zoom on September 25. The agenda included reviewing and discussing plans for a deep focus on Defunding the Police, including an anti-racist book study and online action circles. New officers and committee members were elected. Gratitude was expressed to outgoing Secretary Rick Ufford-Chase and Co-Moderator Shannan Vance Ocampo. Newly elected Executive Committee members Geoff Browning and Annica Gage were introduced. abby mohaupt and Aric Clark were elected as Co-Moderators, as were volunteers who have agreed to serve on the Personnel Committee, Endowment Fund Committee, and Nominating Committee. A complete list of leadership committee members and staff can be found at [presbypeacefellowship.org/about-us/our-leadership-and-staff/](https://presbypeacefellowship.org/about-us/our-leadership-and-staff/)

Fossil Free PCUSA, a project of PPF, has selected Liv Thomas to be a Co-Moderator, joining abby mohaupt in that position. PPF also welcomes Ashley Bair, who has joined the staff as Coordinator of the Defund the Police Campaign, and Sarah Prager, who has returned to serve as Communications Associate, replacing Katie Blanchard. Our thanks and best wishes go to Katie who has accepted a full-time position with TakeAction Minnesota.

THANK YOU to all who have responded to the call to leadership with PPF as staff, officers, committee members, and working group volunteers!

# It's Past Time for a New Way

By Ashley Bair, Minneapolis MN

That was the message my neighbors and I carried when we met on a lawn in late May. We were there out of necessity. George Floyd had been murdered by the Minneapolis Police Department. And while Black organizers in our city gained national attention by leading an incredible, historic, powerful uprising against the violence of the MPD, our streets and alleys had been taken over by white nationalists looking to co-opt the movement.

They swarmed the Twin Cities. We felt terrorized because they came into our alley at night to shoot guns and fireworks. They destroyed small businesses on my street. They threw firebombs on my neighbor's front porch. Our governor, Tim Walz, called in the National Guard, and the next thing I knew, 60 tanks were lined up in front of my apartment building.

My neighborhood Facebook chat group kept growing, and we decided to meet on a park lawn to talk about how we could get through the coming days. We started listing things we had in our storage units and in our garages. We named the skills we had to share and signed up for shifts during the night to watch over the streets and alleys. It turns out that many neighborhoods in the Cities were doing the same. Police officers were not responding to our calls. When the gas station on the corner was set on fire, the Fire Department didn't show up for almost two hours. We needed to take our care into our own hands.

When tension between people on the ground and government officials reached an ultimate high, organizers with Black Visions Collective and Reclaim the Block led the way for a similar lawn meeting to take place with the Minneapolis City Council. They urged the Council (and all of us) to listen and respond to the call to defund the violent police department. The council said "yes" to this call. It was an historic moment of incredible achievement. Then, with national pressure growing, the officers who killed George Floyd were arrested. The path to justice was looking clearer than it had before.

Two months later, the City Charter commission decided we needed more time to study possible outcomes before voting to defund the police. And then MPS Officer Derek Chauvin was the last of the four officers to be released from prison.

Now, we are carrying both the realities: that it is POSSIBLE to create a collective vision for safety and care in our community AND that white supremacy continues to be as dangerous as ever as it plagues our institutions.

Uprisings like I witnessed in Minneapolis have been happening in cities all over the U.S. – maybe you've followed Black organizers in your city, too.

Maybe you've witnessed that with Black leadership at the forefront and collective people power, we can build something great – something beautiful, something shared, something that gives life rather than take it away. Your neighborhood knows its own needs best. Think about what your community would look

like if it took proactive care of EVERYONE. What do you see? Health care needs being met; education that is accessible to all; energy that doesn't harm or consume our natural resources; housing for everyone; people having the money they need to live. The call to defund the police is a call to reinvest our city money into these things that take care of us. I am in this work because I have witnessed first hand a neighborhood caring for itself by participating in mutual aid and collective visioning. It's something that we can do!

And while we do this, we have to remember that white supremacy culture is active and dominant in so many of our systems and it keeps hindering the work. Attributes of white supremacy culture that show up in our systems and organizations include: perfectionism, defensiveness, worship of the written word, only one right way, either/or thinking, power hoarding, a fear of conflict, and the right to comfort. The Minneapolis Police Department (like all police departments) is a manifestation of white supremacy culture and the entities like the City Charter commission act as white gatekeepers. A white gatekeeper is someone who stands at the gate of whiteness, hearing people trying to get in, but protecting those on the inside so they can make decisions that only benefit themselves.

We need to build a vision for community care that also dismantles the white supremacy that's rooted in policing.

As a community of faith, we have to admit that one of the systems that acts as a gatekeeper to white supremacy and policing is the white church. And the whiteness that we protect is blocking the true liberation for all that Jesus called upon us to ensure. Healing for the sick, sharing what we learn, caring for creation, sheltering the unhoused, eliminating poverty. In order to do this, we have to take each other by the hand, unlock the gate, and throw away the key forever. Investing in each other is a spiritual practice. Defunding the police is a spiritual practice.

It is critical for us to begin co-creating a system that brings care and safety to everyone. As a network of peacemakers, we have helped lead the PC(USA) to take bold stances in the face of violence. And now is an opportunity to do so again. If we are committed to the work of antiracism then the safety, care, and thriving of Black people must be at the center of our work.

PPF can use our strength as a risk-taking community to risk making changes within our organization that will deepen our commitment to a world without violence.

PPF can learn the practices of abolition to build a vision of abundance that reminds us that we already have everything we need to start and stay in the work.

It's time for a bold stance in the face of violence. It's past time for a new way. I'm with you in the hard stuff.

*Ashley Bair (ashley@presbypeacefellowship.org) is Campaign Coordinator for PPF's Defund the Police focus.*

## Political Violence Continues in Colombia

By Emily Brewer, New York NY

We received the tragic news that a partner of the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia, Albeiro Suárez, was assassinated in October. Albeiro was an ex-combatant of the FAR and a leader of a community of ex-combatants. He was deeply committed to the peace process in Colombia, “renouncing war and walking in the way of peace in search of a better world,” said Rev. Luis Sanmiguel of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (IPC) when he shared the news with PPF. “Even the president of Colombia had affirmed that Albeiro Suarez was an example, but the balas [bullets] silenced him.”

Albeiro’s community of La Pista (often referred to as La Julia, a nearby town) is connected with an interfaith peacebuilding project, Teusaquillo, in Bogotá that Presbyterian pastor Rev. Luis Sanmiguel is deeply involved in. When a delegation from PPF traveled to Colombia in January 2019, they had the opportunity to attend a Tesaquillo gathering where various faith leaders and ex-combatants shared visions and plans for building peace.

I met with Albeiro during a visit to Colombia in January 2020 to talk about the possibility of accompaniment of the community of La Pista. The conversation about the need for international accompaniment came about because of the increasing numbers of social and political leaders who are being assassinated in Colombia since the signing of the Peace Accords in 2016. Albeiro and the community had received death threats and intimidation from unknown armed actors multiple times and wanted to explore the possibility of having international companions present, in addition to the presence of Colombian companions from Bogotá and other places.

During that meeting about the possibility of accompaniment, I expressed to Albeiro that part of PPF’s commitment to nonviolent accompaniment, decided in partnership with the IPC over our 15 years of accompanying together, requires that there be no armed guards of the community present when the international companions are present. It’s not uncommon for communities of ex-combatants to contract with security guards for their protection since so many have been targeted and assassinated in recent years. I was surprised when he so quickly responded with “Of course. If there were international companions, I would send away the armed guards. We would be safer with unarmed international companions than we are with armed guards.”

PPF and the IPC were beginning to take next steps to evaluate whether we could provide the accompaniment La Pista needs when the coronavirus pandemic cut short Rev. Linda Eastwood’s visit there. All in-person accompaniment has been suspended since then. The IPC continues to provide internal accompaniment, and conversations with the community of La Pista continue.

The assassination of Albeiro makes clear, once again, what our partners in the IPC continue to tell us: “peace signed is not peace realized,” and the work of peacebuilding is crucial right now. Accompaniment is a part of that peacebuilding work, as is

the mass mobilization to protest the right-wing Colombian government’s resistance to fully implementing the 2016 peace accords, including their failure to support the communities of ex-combatants or curb the escalating violence against social leaders.

This news follows the sadness of learning about the death of IPC Pastor Elkin Pereira, who died of coronavirus earlier this month. The pandemic has been devastating in Colombia, especially in rural communities like those in Urabá where many companions worked with Pastor Elkin. We continue in relationship and prayer with our partners in Colombia during these hard times and will assess the possibility and need for in-person accompaniment as soon as it is safe again to do so.

*Emily Brewer (info@presbypeacefellowship.org) is Executive Director of PPF. For information about Colombia, contact Accompaniment Coordinator Alison Wood (alison@presbypeacefellowship.org).*



Albeiro Suárez

## Nuclear Weapons: TPNW Ratified

On October 24, 2020, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons reached the required 50 state threshold, after Honduras, Jamaica and Nauru submitted their ratifications. In 90 days, the treaty will enter into force, cementing a categorical international ban on nuclear weapons, 75 years after their first use.

This is a historic milestone for this landmark treaty. Prior to the TPNW’s adoption, nuclear weapons were the only weapons of mass destruction not banned under international law, despite their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Now, with the treaty’s entry into force, we can call nuclear weapons what they are: prohibited weapons of mass destruction, just like chemical weapons and biological weapons.



# Gun Violence and Police Violence

By Deanna Hollas, Dallas TX

The Gun Violence Prevention working group has been doing a deep dive the past few months into learning what it means to be anti-racist and police abolitionist, as police violence is often gun violence. According to The Washington Post, which has been tracking police shootings since 2015, police have shot and killed 785 people so far this year. While half of the people shot by police are white, Black Americans are killed at twice the rate as white Americans. This is because 32 Black Americans per million are killed by police compared to 13 white Americans per million.

The intersection of gun violence, police, and race has a long history in the United States. This is a country founded by white colonizers and slaveholders and the gun is the primary tool used to uphold white supremacy. The framers of the constitution thought the ability to commit mass genocide on the native population and enslave people was a right second to only one – the right to free speech. Current supporters of gun rights declare the necessity of the Second Amendment to protect citizens against a tyrannical government but fail to locate this claim in its proper historical context. When the Constitution of the United States was being ratified in 1788, prominent Virginia slaveholders threatened to vote against the Constitution because they feared the newly formed federal government would abolish slavery. They also wanted assurance they could continue their own armed militias as slave patrols to prevent slave insurrections. Virginia Governor Patrick Henry wrote, “Have they [the new Congress] not the power to promote for the general defense and welfare? May they not think these call for the abolition of slavery? They have the power in clear, unequivocal terms, and will clearly and certainly exercise it.” For a compromise, James Madison, also a slaveholder, agreed to change the wording of the future Second Amendment to “a free state” from “country” to secure Virginia’s passage of the Constitution. This allowed for continuing armed slave patrols in southern states, which were the precursor to police forces in the 19th century.

The United States was founded by white men who valued their own wealth and property above all other life. It is important that we see this history clearly so we can make better decisions in the present that truly value all life and not inadvertently continue to support white supremacy. While the founders may not have valued all life equally, they did understand that solving their problems with bullets rather than ballots was no way to live. One of the biggest obstacles I hear to defunding the police is concern over guns in the hands of private citizens. This is why we must call for an end to the open carry of firearms in public. Not only does the presence of firearms serve to intimidate and terrorize, it also heightens aggression, making it more likely disagreements will turn into deadly conflict. Currently it is legal in 41 states for civilians to openly carry loaded, semi-automatic rifles in public without a permit. In two-thirds of these states, the person openly carrying an AR15 may have never passed a background check or received training with the weapon, as no license is required for long guns. Join me and others in demanding our newly elected officials restore public safety by requiring a background check on all gun sales and ending the open carry of long guns in public.

*Deanna Hollas (deanna@presbypeacefellowship.org) is PPF's Gun Violence Prevention Ministries Coordinator.*

## PPF and Defund The Police

We follow the leadership of our allies and support addressing systemic problems in poverty, mental health care and policing in America. Rather than spending over \$100 billion dollars each year on police, we support spending more on what communities across the U.S. need, like healthcare and education, clean streets and housing, jobs and opportunities. Yes please, Defund The Police! Fund our communities!



# Honoring Those Who Stand for Peace

By Ken Burrows, Colorado Springs CO

Michael D. Knox, an antiwar activist, psychologist, and author, is on a mission. He believes there has never been a proper recognition of the important role antiwar activity plays in policy, society and culture, and he wants to rectify that.

He has created tools to bring about that recognition. They are components of a larger project that includes the ambitious goal of building a physical US Peace Memorial, ideally in the nation's capital, to honor and celebrate antiwar activists, comparable to the way existing memorials venerate wars and the military.

A Professor Emeritus of the University of South Florida's Department of Mental Health Law and Policy, Knox explains the basic rationale of his effort this way. "In Washington, DC, viewing the various war memorials leads one inescapably to conclude that war efforts or activities are highly valued and rewarded by our society. But there are no national monuments here to convey a message that our society also values peace and recognizes those who take courageous action to oppose one or more U.S. wars. We should be as proud of those who strive for alternatives to war as we are of those who fight wars. After all, just as with war, peace advocacy includes dedication to cause, bravery, serving honorably, and making personal sacrifices. The honor that antiwar activists merit—and a healthy respect for peacemaking efforts—are long overdue."

## A Peace Memorial in the Making

To pursue his goal, Knox organized the US Peace Memorial Foundation. It currently encompasses three distinct operational components. They are:

1. Publish the **US Peace Registry** - An online compilation listing people and organizations that have engaged in specific actions to advocate for peace and oppose war.
3. Award the annual **US Peace Prize** - To recognize outstanding Americans who have publicly advocated diplomacy and global cooperation to solve international problems instead of military solutions. The 2020 US Peace Prize was awarded to Korean activist Christine Ahn, Executive Director of Women Cross DMZ.
5. Ultimately design, build, and maintain the **US Peace Memorial** - This structure will present the antiwar sentiments of many American leaders and document contemporary U.S. antiwar activism. Projected completion tentatively set for July 4, 2026.

"One of the most effective 'antiwar' strategies," Knox believes, "is to more formally and visibly exhibit and esteem 'pro-peace' activism." Because by recognizing and honoring peace advocacy, antiwar activism becomes that much more respected and more energetically engaged in.

"War is a part of our culture," he said, confirmed by our instinctive high regard for those in uniform and our frequent engagement in war around the world. "But at the same time our overall awareness of warmaking impacts is deficient. We rarely learn about the imperialism, militarism, and in some cases genocide that accompanies our war activity. Our own U.S. children are not taught to debate these impacts or consider alternatives to war.

"We have the power to bring about change by changing our culture so that more citizens feel comfortable speaking out. We can encourage peacemaking behavior, identify role models to emulate, reduce negative reactions to peace advocacy and replace that with positive reinforcement. That's one of the key missions of the US Peace Memorial Foundation."

For more information on the US Peace Memorial project and how to support it, see [uspeacememorial.org](https://uspeacememorial.org)

# Post-Election Reflections

*Briefly...* goes to press as it becomes apparent that Joe Biden has won both the popular vote and the Electoral College majority to become President-Elect of the United States. A large group of PPF supporters gathered by Zoom for a post-election coffee hour on November 6 to discuss dreams and concerns for the days and months ahead. We asked them and others to share their thoughts with us about in a moment that is hopeful, uncertain, and challenging, especially for those seeking the wisdom to be peacemakers

A lot of healing needs to happen and also a lot of education. It blows my mind that people in this country don't understand the danger of ideas like Trumpism. Many of us are very isolated right now. We need to find ways to support each other.

*Peggy Howland, Orlando FL*

Unfortunately, I am quarantined in assisted living in Blacksburg VA and unable to do much except on computer, which IS better than nothing. As people of faith, we are called to put our trust in God and do as we are called as the Body of Christ in the World, in love for equality, justice, and peace.

*Phyllis Albritton, Blacksburg VA*



I don't think I have any words of wisdom, although I appreciate the encouragement to ponder next steps. It is so clear to me that while we have made a little progress, it is only a very little. There is so much more work to be done, and a question of how to do it with love when there remains so much division and anger. The scripture that keeps coming back to me is Jeremiah 29:11 "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah was speaking not for an immediate future but for the long haul. I think that is where we are too.

*Rebecca Segers, Philadelphia, PA*

How do we make peace with our neighbors? How do we bridge the chasm that seems to divide Republicans and Democrats? What common ground can we find? PPF can support us with continued prayers for peace.

*Kitty Rawson, St Petersburg FL*

The next 12 months are especially important to show that we care about the pain of our neighbors, all of them. We need to listen deeply to the anger and grief, and offer to our hope to come together to work on increasing equity and justice for everyone who has felt ignored. All of us want a country that makes every effort to meet the needs of those who have been left behind.

*Betsy Simpson, PA*

I have come to realize that what happens at the national level of our country is largely out of my control. I find that I have to take a break from the doom scrolling and acid producing news cycle and focus on what I can do. I can work to serve my local community, I can show up at city council meetings, I can work on loving my neighbor who is right in front of me. As the prophet Micah tells us, "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God." May it be so.

*Geoff Browning, Olympia WA*

Our congregation renewed our Commitment to Peacemaking and took the additional step of renouncing violence and becoming a Peace Church last year. I pray that we can meet again in person next year and resume our conversations about how to be a Peace Church in our community by resisting war and seeking security without relying on guns or a militarized police force.

*Will White, Austin TX*

With a pending new administration and with the hard work we still need to do on the two historic senate run-offs in Georgia, the heart of America is self-correcting. Now our task as prophetic and practical activists is to help our country to both heal and grow, moving forward common sense, actionable steps on climate change, gun violence prevention, overcoming our racism and ending police brutality. The challenge is: how can people of faith help do this in ways that bring most Americans together rather than further dividing us?

*Jan Orr-Harter, Aledo, Texas*

While this election result is far from what I was hoping for, I see it as another in a long line of wake-up calls in 2020. As Kitty and I leave Stony Point Center for a period of discernment about what will come next for us, I am clear that the work of protecting Black Lives, addressing the climate crisis, and pushing for sane and reasonable immigration policy is the work that I am called to. I am glad to be a part of this season of discernment in PPF and find myself rethinking all kinds of things I took for granted about what public safety means and what it should look like. Any illusion that Biden/Harris and the Democrats were going to step up to the plate and take on all these issues is kind of gone for me as I contemplate what a likely Republican Senate Majority under Mitch McConnell's leadership will allow. Grass-roots waking up and organizing - that's what it is all about.

*Rick Ufford-Chase, Stony Point NY*



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**FALL 2020**  
**Defunding the Police - p. 3**

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As we listen to the call of Black leaders right now to defund the police, we ask ourselves: What is the role of the Church in this? Several PPF leaders, including PPF's staff organizer Ashley Bair, have been working on a project that we hope you'll connect with: Abolition and Advent. This is an emerging project that we have been working on with partners in More Light Presbyterians, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and others, but we believe we are building toward a campaign for congregations in 2021 that we will be excited to share more about when the time comes. In the coming weeks, we want to explore the radical themes of Advent and Abolition to prepare our hearts and minds for this work, to connect with each other, and take action together. As this newsletter goes to print, much of those details are still forming, but we're so excited about it we wanted to make sure you know how to connect and find out more as this develops. So follow us on social media and, better yet, go to our website and sign up for our E-news to stay up to date ([presbypeacefellowship.org](http://presbypeacefellowship.org)) about this and other fast-emerging ways to be engaged in this work.