Newsletter of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship presbypeacefellowship.org @presbypeace

BRIEFLY

Be Bold: Nonviolence Works

Vol. 79 Summer 2023 Annual Report Issue

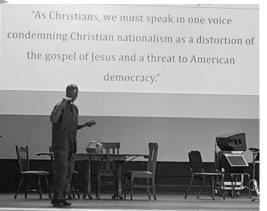
On the Road Again!

In-Person Events Begin to Flourish – and PPF is There!



Everywhere I go, it feels like something is trying to emerge, to be born in our world. As PPF sits on the cusp of a new generation of leadership, I have the strong sense that something is emerging in our midst, too.... (Cont. p. 4)

-- David Ensign, PPF Interim Executive Director









Photos: Starting top left, Scotty Utz represents PPF at the Wild Goose Festival in Union NC; Jimmie Hawkins, PC(USA) Director of the Office of Public Witness preaches at the Synod School of the Lakes and Prairies; Deanna Hollas, PPF Coordinator of Gun Violence Prevention, led a class on gun violence prevention at the Synod School and made a new friend for PPF, Temple Hiatt from First Presbyterian Church in lowa City, Iowa. Temple is the Iowa State Lead for the BeSMART secure gun storage program; Scotty leads a Guns to Gardens demonstration; PPFer Scott Marrese-Wheeler, lower right, joins the Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort, at the WI Capitol to support new anti-violence legislation.

General Assembly June 25-July 4 Who you? A GA Commissioner?

Yes! With the new 226th GA format, we need more PPFers to be in Salt Lake City. How? Ask your presbytery now to nominate <u>you</u> as a GA commissioner! See pc-biz.org

Briefly Noted...

PPF thanks Rev. Lucy Waechter Webb

Lucy completed her work in June as PPF's Manager of Digital Organizing & Communications. She will follow her new call as a Somatics coach, pursuing social change by grounding transformation in our bodies. Godspeed, Lucy, and thank you!

Sarah Prager, PPF's longtime friend and the first person to hold this position, will step into this work as an interim. Welcome back, Sarah, and thank you!

PPF Seeks New Executive Director



Initiated at the PPF
Kansas City gathering
in May, an eight person
Search Team is
receiving applications
for the full-time position
of Executive Director.
We are looking for a
proven leader who can
guide PPF into its 9th
decade with courage,
skill and a shared
vision for a world

where all God's creation can thrive. To apply, see www.presbypeacefellowship.org/blog/

40 Years – Commitment to Peacemaking

Celebrate 40 years of the PC(USA) "Commitment to Peacemaking." Daily reflections arrive in your inbox beginning Sept. 3, some by members of PPF. See: presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/sea son-peace/

BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship 17 Cricketown Road Stony Point, NY 10980 presbypeacefellowship.org 845-786-6743

info@presbypeacefellowship.org Christine Caton & Annica Gage, Co-Moderators Whitney Palmer, Treasurer

David Ensign, Interim Executive Director david@presbypeacefellowship.org

Christa Galvin, Finance/Administration christa@presbypeacefellowship.org
Deanna Hollas, Gun Violence Prevention Ministries Coordinator deanna@presbypeacefellowship.org

Sarah Prager, Manager of Communications & Digital Organizing sarah@presbypeacefellowship.org

Colleen Earp & Dexter Kearny, Fossil Free PCUSA Co-Moderators

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

A Peacemakers Calendar

<u>Sept. & Oct.</u> PPF Gun Violence Prevention Working Group For dates & link, contact janoh4@aol.com

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

Sept. 7- Oct. 5 Guns to Gardens Action Circles
For one hour each Thursday, join with other congergations on Zoom to learn how to create, promote and sustain your own Guns to Gardens Safe Surrender ministry. Choice of noon ET or 7:30 pm ET. Learn more: presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence

<u>Sept. 15 – Oct. 9</u> International Peacemakers Tour
The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program hosts
international Peacemakers for Presbyteries,
congregational clusters and educational institutions. See
presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/inte
rnational-peacemakers/

Sept. 17 NY, NY March to End Fossil Fuels See p. 8.

<u>Sept. 20-23</u> Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference See p.8.

<u>Sept. 21 Noon ET PPF Development Working Group Contact timothywotring@gmail.com</u>

<u>Sept. 21, 1 pm ET PPF Peace Church Working Group</u> Contact marwhite@igc.org for the Zoom link

<u>Sept. 25, 5pm ET, 2pm PT</u> Presbyterians for Abolition meeting. For link, contact dkearny3@gmail.com

Oct. 12, 8 pm ET/5 pm PT Presbyterians for Abolition Open House: Bible and Abolition with Dr. Chris Burton Save the date! See p. 3.

Oct. 20-22 Jesus & Justice Young Adult Advocacy Conference, PC(USA) Louisville, KY See: https://form.jotform.com/231654587701157

Jan. 1, 2024 PPF's 80th Year!!!

<u>Jan. 16-18</u> Matthew 25 Summit, Atlanta, GA presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/

<u>March 4-15</u> Mosaic of Peace in Israel/Palestine presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/mosaic/

June 25-July 4 226th General Assembly, Salt Lake City Deadlines: This fall, become a Commissioner! Talk to your Presbytery now; April 26: Overtures with financial implications and first concurrence; May 11: all other overtures and concurrences. See pc-biz.org

New Book by Medea Benjamin & Nicolas Davies

War in Ukraine: Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict

The founder of CodePink, and a past PPF keynote speaker, Medea Benjamin unpacks the complexity of the war and suggests steps to end it. See codepink.org

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Presbyterians for Abolition News

As a member of Presbyterians for Abolition, I'm thrilled to be a contributor to *The Word Is Resistance* podcast from **SURJ Faith** (Showing Up for Racial Justice). Join us for our podcast series on lectionary selections from Paul's letter to the church in Rome. We are endeavoring to wrestle a different meaning from Paul and Romans, because it has been used as a primary text to undergird many harmful theologies. *Can we tell a different story?* Can we reclaim the ways Paul is calling people of faith (like us!) to resist empire in the how we engage the world? Can we tell a better story? We think we can. We think Paul does. Find the series **#WrestlingWithRomans** at **https://bit.ly/TWIRromans** or wherever you get your podcasts. Share it with your faith communities and let us know what you think! --Liz Kearny (she/her) WA

Presbyterians for Abolition invites you to an **Open House on Oct. 12 at 8-9pm ET** on Zoom, with Dr. Chris Burton to discuss how the Bible advocates for an abolitionist lens. From Exodus to Jesus, we will explore the myriad ways that God's shalom requires the ending of carceral systems and the building of healing relationships. Learn what abolition is, how scripture connects to it, and how you might get involved! All are welcome. See **presbypeacefellowship.org/events**

Gun Violence Prevention News

On the Road! Outreach & Growth

PPF's Gun Violence Prevention Ministry has been reaching out to create more activists to save lives. Events included the Wild Goose Festival in Union, NC with a Guns to Gardens team of Scotty Utz (NC), Keith Curl-Dove (NC), Harry Eberts (NM) and PPF Interim Executive Director David Ensign (VA). This annual event draws almost two thousand progressive Christians for speakers, workshops and training. Scotty kept the forge hot and we met lots of new people.

PPF's Coordinator of Gun Violence Prevention, Deanna Hollas, led a 5 day course on "What We Can Do about Gun Violence" for participants the Synod School of the Synod of the Lakes and Prairies in Storm Lake, Iowa. A keynote speaker at the event was Jimmie Hawkins, Director of the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness and Ministry at the United Nations. A week later, Deanna was invited to join Hawkins and others for a webinar on "The Intersection of Faith and Gun Violence Prevention." You can view that webinar at https://vimeo.com/849247962/849247962

Other outreach included a feature article in the June issue of *The Presbyterian Outlook* by Deanna and a Zoom presentation by Jan Orr-Harter (TX) for the Church Women United Summer Celebration. The **17** members of PPF's Gun Violence Prevention Working Group did their own outreach through advocacy, preaching, networking and more.

June "Wear Orange" & Guns to Gardens Days

In early June, Americans wore orange to remember victims of gun violence. Niagara Falls, the White House and the Empire State Building were lit with orange, while public figures --from the hosts of *The View* to 65 professional sports teams-- joined millions of Americans in the 9th Annual Wear Orange for Gun Violence Awareness Days.

From June 3 to June 11, the color orange was joined with the sounds of chop saws and blacksmiths for the 3rd national Guns to Gardens Safe Surrender Days. Often in church parking lots, faith-based Guns to Gardens events were hosted in Albuquerque, NM; Fremont, OH; Greensboro, NC; Denver, CO; Louisville, KY; Shepherdstown, WV; Salt Lake City, UT; St. Louis, MO; two in Madison, WI; Oakland, CA; Concord, NH; and Euclid, OH. A few days earlier, churches sponsored events in Dallas, TX; Cleveland Heights, OH; Tucson, AZ; and Ashville, NC. Many of the congregations "graduated" from the Peace Fellowship's Action Circle training groups. Altogether, they dismantled 450 firearms, including handguns, hunting rifles and semiautomatic assault-style rifles. Additional non-church events drew in even more weapons, such as the gun Buy Back sponsored on June 10 by the city of Houston, TX, which collected 1,400 guns. Interested? Read on:

Next Guns to Gardens Action Circles: Sept. 7- Oct. 5 Thursdays at noon ET or 7:30 pm ET

Sign up Now!

Guns to Gardens training has been active all summer, thanks to new leaders. 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 church or community. Space is limited. Learn more and register at **www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence**

New Resources: Gun Safety Cards & the Congregational Toolkit Update

Thank you to Chandra Mills Cooper (KS) for overseeing printing and shipping of the new **Gun Safety Cards**, a project given to PPF by the former Ohio group God Before Guns. A direct action to intervene in gun violence, the cards promote safe storage of guns and other ways to protect children from gun violence. Order at **presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence** A new edition is underway for the PPF **Congregational Toolkit** to support the Presbyterian Decade to End Gun Violence. Since 2017, this PPF resource has been accessed by over 2,000 activists in all 50 states. Stay tuned!

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Annual Report 2022 Donors – THANK YOU!

Emerging

I have been spreading the good news of peacemaking in lots of places this summer. I've visited North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New York, and a few others either in person or virtually, to share PPF's vision and history with various groups of Presbyterians and others.

Everywhere I go, it feels like something is trying to emerge, to be born in our world. As PPF sits on the cusp of a new generation of leadership, I have the strong sense that something is emerging in our midst, too.

On behalf of PPF's leadership and staff, I want to thank each one of you who contributed financially to our work in 2022 and other years. As you can see in this Annual Report, our work is powered by faith and gifts that emerge from Oregon to Florida, from Maine to Idaho. Bless you and thank you all!

So join me in reflecting about what is emerging. I invite you to pay close attention to how the Spirit is moving in your own life. What is trying to emerge in you that will become vital in building up a more

just and peaceful world?

In particular, I hope you pay deep attention to how you might be called to action with PPF this fall. Lots of things are happening from Guns to Gardens to abolition work to climate justice action and more. Oh, and there's a General Assembly just around the corner.

PPF has always been a great incubator for leaders, and I am convinced that will not only continue in the season just ahead, but expand dramatically. Indeed, PPF is looking for new and emerging leaders both on our staff (as noted elsewhere) and in our officer leaders. If you're interested in serving, send me a note and I'll share it with the nominating committee.



Right to left: David Ensign, Keeran Woode and Ashley Bair, PPF's Team at the 2022 General Assembly in Louisville, KY

So, as the gospels urge throughout, stay awake! Something is emerging.

--David Ensign (VA), PPF Interim Executive Director david@presbypeacefellowship.org

Thank you to each 2022 donor for your support -673 households giving together!

Please forgive and advise PPF on any mistakes or omissions. All 2023 donors will be included in next year's Annual Report.

In each annual report, we honor those in our nation-wide community who have died each year. Just as our partners in Latin America call out the names of the saints, we mark them as *¡Presente! In life and in death, we belong to God. To share names of others, please contact Christa@presbypeacefellowship.org

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As Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II completes his work as Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), the **Presbyterian Peace** Fellowship thanks him for countless acts and words of courage in speaking out on behalf of **Presbyterians** against war. violence, racism and abuse. We salute him for speaking for a gospel of peace and justice, nonviolence and hope. Blessings and thank you!

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Annual Report to Donors

PPF On the Road Again! P. 1

Fossil Free PC(USA): Could 1,000 Grandmothers Be Wrong? Nope! Sept. 17 – March to End Fossil Fuels – NY,NY

Join Fossil Free PC(USA), Greenfaith, the Sunrise Movement, the NAACP, the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Sierra Club, CodePink, 1,000 Grandmothers for Future Generations and many other groups on Sept. 17 in New York City. The event? A massive human presence at the UN Climate Ambition Summit where leaders of the world will join to

set climate goals. The purpose? To call on President Biden to stop fossil fuel expansion and extraction, as a timely leverage ahead of the 2024 election. Buses and organizing "Hubs" are forming across the nation for this historic event. Volunteers can help from their own homes now. Rutgers Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, one of PPF's Peace Churches, will be a Faith HUB. Pre-event worship details coming soon at https://bit.ly/Faith-Sept17. Volunteer from home or contribute at www.endfossilfuels.us



Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference Sept. 20-23



The Climate Crisis & Empowering Hope

Join Presbyterians for Earth Care at their national conference, online or in person at the Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA. Speakers, worship, workshops, training on how to involve your congregation in Earth Care, See **presbyearthcare.org/2023-conference/**