



For such a **time** as this

Peace Sunday 2017

CPT partnership

Christian Peacemaker Teams continues our valued partnership with the Peace and Justice Support Network for this year's Peace Sunday. Milena Rincon is a Colombian Mennonite who joined CPT to put her faith into action for peace. She has coordinated CPT teams in Colombia and Iraqi Kurdistan, and recently became the program director for all CPT teams.

Key texts

Esther 4:13-14
Luke 19:5-10
Psalm 146:3-10

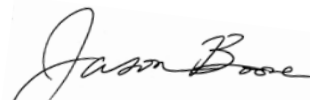
Along with Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Church USA celebrates Peace Sunday the Sunday closest to the International Day of Prayer for Peace, which is Sept. 21. **Please feel free to use these materials in their entirety or as individual elements on Peace Sunday 2017, or any other time.**

Introduction

Peace Sunday is observed on the Sunday preceding the United Nations' International Day of Prayer for Peace on Sept. 21. The Peace and Justice Support Network creates worship materials that congregations may use on this or any Sunday throughout the year. Peace Sunday is an annual opportunity to acknowledge and respond to the violence that continues to be our culture's all-too-frequent response to conflict.

In these fractious times in our nation and across the globe, there is no better group to partner with on these materials than Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). CPT's long history of Jesus-centered, nonviolent response to conflict offers wisdom and inspiration to the church. Our faith can and should make a difference in the world. CPT can show us how.

I encourage you to observe Peace Sunday this year on Sept. 17 and engage with these worship materials developed by CPT. May they inspire you and your church to take new, bold steps on the path of peacemaking.



Jason Boone

Coordinating Minister, Peace and Justice Support Network

Support from the global church for such a time as this in the United States

By Milena Rincon

As the program director at CPT, I coordinate with our teams around the globe: in Palestine, Colombia, Iraqi Kurdistan, and North America. In the last year, we've seen more and more requests from all over the United States for support and trainings in conflict transformation, peacemaking, and justice work. We in the wider Mennonite Church and the wider world see you. We hear you asking, "What can we do in this moment? How do we show support and love for people of color, and immigrants in our churches and communities? How do we transform the conflicts in our own communities?"

This Peace Sunday, I extend support and solidarity from my home in Colombia and from Christian Peacemaker Teams around the world as you work to discern your calling for such a time as this. We are with you.

One place we find inspiration for following a challenging call from God in contentious times is the book of Esther. Her husband, the king, had been convinced that Esther and all the Jewish people were barbaric and untrustworthy, that they were bringing crime to the land and destroying others' way of life. Mordecai, Esther's adopted father, asked her to change her husband's mind. She was afraid because the king was known to be an egotistical, fickle and violent man. But Mordecai implored her not to be silent and to take action: "You may have come into your position for such a time as this," he said. Esther prayed and fasted, gathered her courage, and took action to ensure that the Jewish people were allowed the same rights as everyone in her husband's empire.

Together this Peace Sunday, let us listen for God's call to us for such a time as this. Who in our communities are being treated as the Jewish people in Esther's time? How can we be church together in a way that ensures we each have an equal voice and equal rights? How can our churches be places of refuge from the world that divides us and sees some among us as enemies of the state, enemies of morality, enemies of its own citizens? Let's explore together our options for taking concrete action. Perhaps it's time to institute that weekly dinner supported by donations and free to any in the community that we've been talking about. Maybe it's time to look into becoming a sanctuary congregation, to send a member or two on a delegation with CPT, to host an event with CPT or Mennonite Mission Network.

Let us pray together. Let us worship together. Let us discern together how to respond to Christ's calling at such a time as this.

Worship materials

Gathering hymns

"I Bind My Heart This Tide" *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 411

"For the Healing of the Nations" *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 367

Confession/words of assurance

Leader: In our church, we gather in community. In our nation, we are divided into groups: right and wrong, Republican and Democrat, entitled citizens and undocumented people. To be church in this nation divided is to take the risk of opening our doors as a place of refuge for those targeted for violence and humiliation, those considered deserving of less, and those made invisible in our nation. We must follow the example of Esther in her boldness as she made demands of the king to grant life, rights and privileges to her people. We must follow the example of Jesus of Nazareth as he stood with the most marginalized.

ALL: *In confession, God, we are learning we cannot be silent nor close ourselves off to those in need. You have, indeed, shown us what you call us to do. May we be willing to open our churches to be a courageous community.*

Children's story

Adapted from eyesonbullying.org

While planning, think about your childhood experiences. Can you remember times when you were repeatedly teased, humiliated, or shut out of a group? When you were forced to do something you didn't want to do by someone you considered more powerful than you? When YOU intentionally hurt someone who was vulnerable, or witnessed this happening to someone else? If you are like most people, you remember, and these memories can last a lifetime.

Story swap

This activity will:

- Let children know that bullying affects everyone, and that they are not alone.
 - Help children understand that bullying is not acceptable.
 - Establish the groundwork for future conversations about bullying.
1. Share your story with the children in your care, and explain how it made you feel then and now.
 2. Ask them how it felt to hear the story. How did they feel about the person bullying, the person being bullied, and the witness/es (if any)?
 3. Ask children to share their own bullying story. (When in a group, have children substitute fictional names for real ones.) Acknowledge that children might feel embarrassed or afraid to recount their experience in front of others.
 4. Brainstorm suggestions for things children can do to stop or prevent bullying, using the stories they told as examples. What are things they could say/do if they see bullying? Examples:
 - “Stop that!” (to bully)
 - “Are you OK? Do you want to come play with me?” (to victim)
 - Tell a trusted adult.

Scripture reading

Esther 4:13-14

The Inclusive Hebrew Scriptures

Mordecai replied, “Don’t fool yourself into thinking that just because you are in the imperial palace, you will be the only Jewish person to escape. If you insist on remaining silent at this time, vindication and liberation will come to our people through another source, but both you and your family will surely die. Who’s to say?—you may have come into your position for such a time as this.”

Luke 19:5-10

When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Psalms 146:3-10

Leader: Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.

**Together: *When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.***

Leader: Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob
whose hope is in the Lord their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;

**Together: *who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the unseeing.***

Leader: The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.

Together: *The Lord watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.*

Leader: The Lord will reign forever;
Your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Together: *Praise the Lord!*

Hymns

“As Tranquil Streams” *Sing the Journey*, No. 51

“Holy Spirit Come With Power” *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 26

Sermon suggestion

Homilies that reflect on discerning calling would be appropriate—the stories of Esther and Zaccheus, one called as a Jewish woman being targeted by those in power, and one called as an enforcer of power targeting the people. What do we hear Jesus calling us to do in a time such as this, with division and mistrust in our communities?

Sermon response

Litany of Resistance, CPT

Leader: We do not put our trust in the rulers of this world, following instead the example of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we were born into this community.

ALL: *For such a time as this.*

Leader: Let God’s will be done.

ALL: *Not ours.*

Leader: With the help of God’s grace,

ALL: *Let us resist evil everywhere we find it.*

Leader: With the forces of fear,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With the politics of violence,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With laws that betray human rights,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With the bombing of civilians,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With the expulsion of our undocumented brothers and sisters,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With the ravaging of our earth,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With the raping and abusing of women, of men, and of children,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With governments that deny health care to the least of us,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With an economy that impoverishes and dehumanizes,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With the manipulation and control of public information,

ALL: *We will not comply;*

Leader: With deception and lies,

ALL: *We will not comply.*

ALL: *This we commit to you, O Lord, who has called us to community, to stand up for and with our people, to make amends for our mistakes. May we build a refuge place together in your name.*

Leader: With the help of God's grace,

ALL: *We will struggle for justice.*

Leader: With the compassion of Christ,

ALL: *We will stand for what is true.*

Leader: With God's abiding kindness,

ALL: *We will love even our enemies.*

Leader: With the love of Christ,

ALL: *We will resist all evil.*

Leader: With God's unending faithfulness,

ALL: *We will work to build the beloved community.*

Leader: With Christ's passionate love,

ALL: *We will carry the cross.*

Leader: With God's overwhelming goodness

ALL: *We will walk as pilgrims of peace.*

Leader: With Christ's fervent conviction,

ALL: *We will labor for truth.*

Leader: With God's infinite mercy,

ALL: *We will live in solidarity with all people.*

Leader: In the end there are three things that last:

ALL: *Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.*

Leader: Let us abide in God's love.

ALL: *Thanks be to God.*

Prayer

Adapted from Diann Neu's "Prayer for Healing"

God of all,

Help us keep our eyes on the goal.

Give us courage to address the issues that have been left to fester,

And humility to model love and compassion.

In a polarized community in desperate need of healing,

Bring people of all beliefs together,

That we may work for peace and justice for all.

Response: *In your mercy, grant us healing.*

Holy Spirit,

Guide us to trust in you.

Soften our hearts to hear the cries of those in pain.

Strengthen us to be the church needed in such a time as this.

Embolden us to be a refuge for those seeking peace.

Help us find our path,

That we may travel well together, though the journey be long.

Response: *In your mercy, grant us healing.*

Son of God,

Call out to us to follow you.

Wake us to resist the way of division and hate.

Lead us instead in your way of truth and life.

You who healed the sick, fed the hungry, clothed the naked.

Peace and Justice Support Network

For peace and justice resources, or to join the Peace and Justice Support Network, visit www.PJSN.org, or check us out on Facebook.

For more information about PJSN, or to offer your responses to the Peace Sunday material, contact Peace@MennoniteUSA.org.

Your financial gifts are crucial for continuing to strengthen the vision of peace and justice in Mennonite Church USA. Thank you for your support.

Help us to see those around us in need.
Let us sing out your justice and love across the land.
Response: In your mercy, grant us healing. Amen.

Hymn

“Lord Hear [Our] Prayer” *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 348

Benediction

Colossians 3:3:15-17

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him.

Benediction song

“In Christ There is no East or West” *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 306

Put your faith into action for peace with Christian Peacemaker Teams

Litany of resistance

Request the Litany of Resistance for your congregation. Recently adapted by CPT, and originally written in 1991 by Jim Loney. (Loney was a CPTer taken captive in Iraq in the midst of his peacemaking work in 2006.) This litany includes biblically-based call and response texts for times of violence and discord. Contact peacemakers@cpt.org, subject line: Litany of Resistance. Simply say, “We’d love the Litany of Resistance,” and include your mailing address.

CPT speaker

Are you interested in CPT peace teams around the world, or perhaps in learning how to engage in peacemaking and community building in your home community? Request a speaker, and let us know if there’s something in particular you’d like to learn about. Contact outreach@cpt.org, subject line: Speaker Request. Just say, “We’d love a speaker at [name of congregation].” Let us know if you have specific dates in mind, or we can work to schedule with you.

CPT delegation

Travel with CPT to learn from our partners on the ground. Request a delegation starter pack by e-mailing delegations@cpt.org, subject line “Starter Pack.” We’ll send you materials explaining your travel options and how delegations work. We’re happy to work with congregations and communities who would like to travel together on special delegations, or annually sponsor a delegate’s travel.

Peace, pies, and prophets

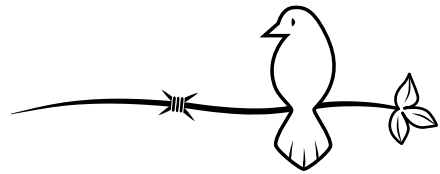
Hold a community gathering with Mennonite performer Ted Swartz. A fun interactive event with a pie auction, a performance by Ted, and participation in a show about peace and prophets, all while raising money to support peace around the world and in North America. Contact peacemakers@cpt.org, subject line “Peace, Pies, and Prophets.” Let us know you’re interested in the possibility of holding an event in your community, and we’ll work with you to schedule and to identify individual and organizational supporters in your community.



**Mennonite
Church
USA**

Peace and Justice
Support Network

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christian peacemaker teams

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