

Peace & Justice

SUPPORT NETWORK

Jamie Rye of Millersburg, Ohio, shares ideas with Melissa Florer-Bixler of Raleigh, North Carolina, during a churchwide gathering, *Journey Forward: Peacemaking*, at the Kansas City Convention Center preceding MennoCon2019. Photo by Laurie Oswald Robinson.

Journey Forward: Peacemaking



As minister of peace and justice for Mennonite Mission Network, I was honored to work with Sue Park Hur of Mennonite Church USA and Jes Stoltzfus Buller of Mennonite Central Committee on organizing *Journey Forward: Peacemaking*, a peace gathering before the start of

MennoCon19 in Kansas City.

It had been many years since peacemakers from across the church had gathered. We felt the time was right as the church looks ahead to the *Journey Forward*. But we also felt this gathering needed to be different. Previously, the direction and scope of peacemaking flowed from church institutions and was adopted by local conferences, churches and peace groups.

Now we find a different layer of peacemaking working together—collaboration. Church institutions have gifts and resources to bring. So, too, do local church and constituent peace groups. The direction our peacemaking takes doesn't emanate from the top down, or from the bottom up. Instead, it springs from multiple sources. We should all seek to follow Jesus in a world that longs for peacemakers. Jesus leads us along beautiful and diverse paths—to new places and new relationships.

This new reality emerged clearly at *Journey Forward: Peacemaking*. The number of interests, issues and passions represented was inspiring. From issues like militarism to ecological justice, homelessness to complex geo-political

conflicts, it's clear that Mennonite peacemaking has expanded dramatically.

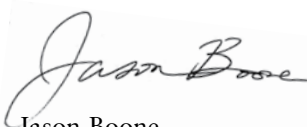
The question that the Peace and Justice Support Network has been asking the past few years is, "What does a peace church look like in the 21st century?" What we saw at the gathering is, I believe, at least part of the answer.

A peace church in the 21st century should be built on symbiotic relationships. There should be no anxiety about establishing a homogenous approach to peacemaking. Every part of the larger church has a part to play. Even though the parts may have different focuses and methods, it will be permeated with a sense of community and closeness.

We will seek to continue and expand the conversations that started at *Journey Forward: Peacemaking* in the months and years ahead. I'm proud that PJSN was able to be part of making the gathering a reality.

And I'm thankful to you all for your support of PJSN that allows us to continue supporting and encouraging peace and justice across Mennonite Church USA.

Peace.



Jason Boone
Coordinating Minister
Peace and Justice Support Network



"Lost" by Randall Stoltzfus was one of the art pieces displayed at the PJSN art auction in Kansas City.

PJSN holds art show and seminars at MennoCon19

In addition to *Journey Forward: Peacemaking*, PJSN had a very busy, very productive time at MennoCon19.

We offered two seminars for young people about military recruitment. We had about 60 youth attend! They had great questions and were very engaged.

Another seminar featured Duane Beck discussing ways to communicate in our polarized political environment and his work with our friends at Better Angels.

PJSN helped report back to the delegates on the progress of the Israel-Palestine resolution passed in 2017. PJSN chairs the Israel-Palestine working group and was thrilled to report much has been done in implementing the resolution!

A new initiative was an art show/silent auction. We asked for pieces of art that would inspire our peacemaking. We got that, and more.

We're so grateful to the talented artists who gave pieces to the show. And thanks to those who bought or bid on the artwork.

Contributing artists:

Carmela Certa, Lauren Eash Hershberger, Cynthia Friesen Coyle, Jesse Graber, Stan Harder, Veronica Horst, Anita Lehman, Joanne Hostetler Murray, Randall Stoltzfus, and Martha Becker Yoder

Peace & Justice SUPPORT NETWORK

DoveTales is a publication created by the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA to resource individuals and congregations in their pursuit of Christian peacemaking and justice seeking. Ideas, articles and reports can be submitted to the editor. **PJSN advisory council:** Dominique Chew, Goshen, Indiana; Jeff Hochstetler, Berlin, Ohio; Dave Hockman-Wert, Corvallis, Oregon; Erica Littlewolf, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach, Washington, D.C.; and Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Harrisonburg, Virginia. **Editor:** Jason Boone, coordinating minister for the Peace and Justice Support Network, PO Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370; 1-866-866-2872, ext. 23065; Peace@MennoniteUSA.org. **Copy editor:** Karen Hallis Ritchie. **Designer:** Cynthia Friesen Coyle. **PJSN website:** www.PJSN.org. Opinions expressed in *DoveTales* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of Mennonite Church USA or the Peace and Justice Support Network.

Selective Service Administration considers female registration

Even as our peacemaking grows and responds to new areas of violence and injustice, problems related to militarism still exist. PJSN works and will continue to work on how we as Mennonites can respond to militarism. Here's how we have been working on this issue the past few months:

A U.S. government commission held meetings last year to review Selective Service Administration practices. Among other topics, they wanted to get feedback on things like expanding Selective Service registration to women, and ideas on increasing public service.

The commission is still active. Earlier this year they released an interim report. (You can find links to

this report and other related documents at [PJSN.org/resources/military](https://pjsn.org/resources/military)). The commission is considering ways to implement “universal service.” This could take many different forms and have a variety of implications—some of them good, some of them not good.

In June, PJSN attended a gathering of Anabaptist groups and denominations to discuss the commission's interim report. The work that began there is continuing this summer. We will keep you updated on the progress of the commission, and how we are responding, through future issues of *DoveTales*, PJSN.org, and through the Mennonite press. Be on the lookout for ways you can make your voice heard!



Reducing political polarization

In our last *DoveTales*, we introduced Better Angels, a movement to reduce political polarization in the United States by bringing liberals and conservatives together to understand each other beyond stereotypes. They form red/blue community alliances, teach practical skills for communicating across political differences, and make a strong public argument for depolarization.

PJSN offered a workshop at MennoCon19 introducing depolarization skills. Download the handouts at [PJSN.org/resources/politics](https://pjsn.org/resources/politics). See the box at the right for an example of the skills we covered.

As we enter what will be a fractious election season, we will be bringing you more depolarization skills from Better Angels and others.

Three conversation skills

Paraphrase to make sure you understand and that the other person feels heard. Listen for a “Yes, that’s what I’m saying,” but be willing to be corrected.

Ask real and honest questions of understanding rather than loaded “gotcha” questions.

Listen for underlying values and aspirations and acknowledge them.



DoveTales

Peace and Justice Support Network
Mennonite Mission Network
PO Box 370
Elkhart, IN 46515

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE

PAID
PERMIT NO.7
SOUTH BEND,
INDIANA



Peace Sunday

This year, Peace Sunday falls on Sept. 22. Mennonite World Conference has produced materials on the theme of “A Peace that surpasses all understanding.” Download these materials from PJSN.org and join with others around the world in observing this special day.

Peace and Justice Support Network is a partnership with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Mission Network.