

# the Olive Branch

The Newsletter of the Community for Peace and Nonviolence

Summer 2015



## SB150 Stories of Peace: All Hands on Deck!



We're collecting stories... *and we need your help!* We've received stories about protests, dialogue, and changed lives. Have you tried to build peace in your community? In your church or family? Have you offered forgiveness to someone or intentionally brought people together across traditional dividing lines? **Share your story!** Submit a written story (up to 500 words) or record a story (use your smart phone or head to the library's free Studio 304) to share. We also accept photographs with captions, or if you'd like someone to interview you we can arrange that too! **We need 150 stories and are only 20% to our goal!** **BE A PART OF PROMOTING THE REAL STORIES OF PEACE THAT HAVE SHAPED SOUTH BEND!** We encourage submissions by *August 15*. More information can be found

on facebook: [SB150 Stories of Peace](#), on our website, [www.cpnv.net](http://www.cpnv.net), or by emailing: [sb150peace@gmail.com](mailto:sb150peace@gmail.com).

## New Date for St. Marcellus Day: October 29

We are excited for this year's St. Marcellus Day events! Our annual recognition of this third century martyr who died because of his refusal to fight "in the armies of this world" recognizes the rich tradition of Christian nonviolence. The events will take place on Thursday, OCTOBER 29 this year at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame. Events will include a pilgrimage, meal at Olivet AME Church, and service and keynote presentation by Father Emmanuel Katongole at the Basilica, with more details yet to be confirmed. Fr. Katongole is a renowned theologian and peacebuilder with deep experience integrating faith and practice as a professor and practitioner, particularly in Uganda, Rwanda, Europe, and the U.S., now based as a professor at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame. Save the date and start promoting this within your congregation or other community group!



## A Year in Review (July 2014-July 2015)

**Second Saturdays:** *InnerChange in East London* (Peter & Liz Anderson), *Use of Military Equipment in Law Enforcement* (SJCPD Asst. Chief Bill Thompson), Peace Groups 'Summit' (10 area groups participated), *Challenges of Employment after Incarceration* (panel presentation of local experts); *Launch of the SB150 Stories for Peace project*.

**Events:** Community Peace March and Rally, Interfaith Service of Prayers on the International Day of Peace, Martin Luther King Jr Day, Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath and Forum, community discussions on Michelle Alexander's talk and book: "The New Jim Crow," Taste of Peace. We hosted a record **St. Marcellus Day** event in October with over 200 people participating, and a great keynote speech from Zoughbi Zoughbi, Palestinian peacebuilder with Wi'am.

We also furthered community and congregational conversations on gun violence, economic justice, racial justice, and restorative justice through our email notices and collaborations with efforts and groups like the Community Forum for Economic Justice, Group Violence Intervention, Moral Mondays, and the On Site Prayer Ministry.

# Reflections from the Program Director



I agreed to provide leadership for CPNV in the midst of committing my full-time work to community-based peacebuilding in the United States, work deeply influenced by segregation and discrimination along economic class and racial lines. My leadership in CPNV has reflected this dedication in my first year in the role, as you see in our list of

this year's activities. CPNV will continue to support the important national and international witness for peace and nonviolence, standing against the evil of war, and raising awareness of global crises. However, we have refocused intentionally on local challenges of violence, and many of our activities will reflect this. Last year our board (representatives from member congregations) met and discerned two focus areas for CPNV: 1) to equip, resource, and support churches' efforts for peace, justice, and nonviolence and 2) to be in solidarity with efforts to reduce violence in South Bend. Over the last year, as CPNV has built relationships, listened and participated in local dialogues, and considered the work needed to reduce violence in South Bend, **I've sensed the emergence of two imperatives: to ACT and to develop a "collective sense of WE."**

The first need is to ACT. This last year has brought an enormous groundswell of media coverage on race relations in the U.S., prompted by the deaths of unarmed black and brown people at the hands of police, and the recent violence at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. As a descendant of European settlers and immigrants in the U.S., my people have had the privilege (and curse) of staying silent in the face of injustices committed against those who weren't fair-skinned and therefore deemed inferior, from the horrendous treatment of indigenous American Indians/Native Americans, to the evolving "color-blind" racism against brown and black people. If you are part of the privileged class, whether that's due to your economic status or your color of skin, becoming aware of how our system currently rejects "the least of these" is part of following the example of Jesus – who was also aware of the people society discarded. However, **Jesus wasn't just aware of the outcasts, he challenged the very system that named them outcasts.** Following Jesus' example is just as radical today as it was when he walked this earth. This is the journey to which I'm committed, and I invite you to

join as we discover the path for us in South Bend together.

The second need I've recognized is to develop what I call a "collective sense of WE." There are several parts to this calling. My duties as Program Director for CPNV are to support and encourage the work of this network of congregations committed to justice – not leading an individual cause and begging others to join. My work with CPNV is to support your *existing* and *emerging* efforts to follow Jesus' way of righting wrong and bringing peace. For us to do this work, **we need to cultivate a collective sense of WE, not just as member congregations and individuals connected to CPNV (which is essential), but as members of the Michiana region.** As members of the wider Michiana region, we stand against injustice and in solidarity with OUR community that suffers pain – whether it's a drug overdose by teenagers in Granger, shooting victims in South Bend's west side, or people struggling without permanent housing in downtown South Bend or in Bremen. When we begin to see each death, each struggle, as suffering that is part of OUR community, we can begin to cultivate a necessary ingredient for change: *collective responsibility*. Restorative justice principles ask us "How do we respond when someone in our community has been harmed?" As Christians and seekers for justice, how do we respond? What is *our collective responsibility* to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly"?

In the next year, I'll continue to build relationships with congregations across the city in all different colors and economic backgrounds, but need YOUR help to ensure the strength of this network continues to rest in the relationships developed across congregations, *partnering together*. What can you do?

- **Come to Second Saturday gatherings and CPNV events** – as a pastor recommitting to partnership with other faith leaders, or as a church member or individual committed to cross-faith relationships. And if the times (or the topics) aren't helpful for you – send us feedback!
- **Find ways to engage these issues** in your congregation and community, and invite other member churches to join and support your efforts. Consider partnerships with congregations across race lines, and invite CPNV to support your efforts.

I invite you to *join together* as members of CPNV and this community to stand for the justice Jesus brought and exemplified.

-Sharon Kniss



## Congregational Updates

*First Unitarian Church* (801 E. Washington St) noted that their national assembly passed several Actions of Immediate Witness: supporting the Black Lives Matter movement “in order to become closer to a just world community,” supporting climate justice campaigns, and a call to end immigrant child and family detention. Locally, First Unitarian continues their book collection drive for local prisons, will host a one-year update of the local Moral Mondays movement on August 20, and have received a grant from Solar Uniting Neighbors for solar panel installation on the church.

*Kern Road Mennonite Church* (18211 Kern Rd.) hosted four Congolese brothers and sisters from their sister congregation in Kinshasha, DRC during July. The visitors worshipped at Kern Road and participated in service activities at the local Mennonite church camp, the Center for the Homeless, and at the Catholic Worker community. Kern Road also received approval for installation of solar panels through the Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light project. This year is unique for Kern as regional, national, and international Mennonite assemblies are all taking place this summer, with the international gathering meeting in the U.S. Finally, “Bridgefolk,” an ecumenical gathering of Catholics and Mennonites will host its annual conference in August in Elkhart (more information at [bridgefolk.net](http://bridgefolk.net)). *Catholic Peace Fellowship* and other CPNV members will be represented at the conference.

*Little Flower Catholic Church* (54191 Ironwood Rd.) encourages Olive Branch readers to consider the challenge that around 500 persons, mostly men and people of color, are released from Indiana prisons back to their home county, St. Joseph, each year. Many find that securing any kind of employment, with their felony record, is next to impossible. Housing can be a huge problem, along with transportation to the mandated parole office visits. Mentoring, job training, and life skills education are all in short supply. Deacon Greg Gehred from Little Flower encourages all of us as people of faith and good will to consider this challenge.

*New Birth Christian Ministries* (747 Harrison St) is celebrating their ninth year church anniversary! They are preparing for a block party carnival-style community cookout on August 29, from 11am-3pm, with fun times planned including food, games, and prizes. All are welcome! They continue to develop their local ministry development and outreach into the surrounding neighborhood.

*Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren* (53105 N. Ironwood Rd.) is hosting one of the Church of the Brethren’s six national Junior High Work Camps July 22 – 26. The work campers will explore the theme of poverty and privilege in the Michiana community. The group will learn how the cycle of poverty is disrupted by local organizations through collaborative, inter-racial, and interdenominational initiatives where children, new immigrants, and elderly citizens are educated to flourish and live into their fullest potential. They will be working with the Center for the Homeless, the Robinson Community Learning Center, and Unity Gardens. Five members of the Prince of Peace Junior High Youth Group will participate in the work camp along with 6th – 8th graders from other parts of the country.

*South Bend Friends* (802 Lincolnway West/Charles Martin Youth Center) hosted forums in June with Erin Polley, the American Friends Service Committee’s Indiana Peacebuilding Program Coordinator. Erin met in South Bend and Elkhart with the South Bend Friends Meeting and Elkhart Quaker Worship groups, to join in conversation about her work with Indiana Moral Mondays and organizing efforts around Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

St. Augustine Catholic Church (1501 W. Washington St.) will celebrate the feast of their patron, St. Augustine, on Sunday, August 30. The celebration will include a "St. A's family" homecoming: inviting former parishioners, friends and visitors to mass (8:15am or 10:30am) and a parish picnic from 1-4pm at St. Patrick's Park. All are welcome!

St. Paul Bethel Missionary Baptist Church (621 Lindsey St.) has continued to offer their Summer Park Lunches for area youth Monday-Fridays, including activities, along with their usual hot lunch on Saturdays. Following the shooting in Charleston, SC, Dr. Richmond Calvin helped facilitate a congregational discussion on June 21. St. Paul has also continued to host H.O.T. (Hear Our Tears)'s monthly meetings for support and education against abuse, violence, and bullying. During the last week of July, they are hosting a week-long youth camp, "Alternative Methods," dealing with issues of conflict, social strife, and personal enrichment.

St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker (518 S. St Joseph St) is celebrating 12 years of hospitality and ministry in South Bend this year! Work continues strong at the houses and at Our Lady of the Road, a day drop-in center, where workers are looking forward to dedicating a new chapel this winter. This summer, the Catholic Worker hosted "Camp St. Joseph" again, teaching peace and building community with neighborhood area youth ages 5 to 18 for two weeks.

Zion United Church of Christ (211 S. St. Peter St.) is proud to announce that this summer's annual assembly marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the national United Church of Christ being a Just Peace Church. They renewed their commitment to the position which "focuses attention on alleviating systemic injustice of all types using non-violence and calls us to offer the message, grounded in the hope of reconciliation in Jesus, that "Peace is possible."" More on the Just Peace position and related resources can be found on the CPNV.net website.



## Financial Support – New Fundraising Campaign

As we have worked this last year to establish and re-establish relationships with congregations and other stakeholders across our area, the financial support from our core member churches has not been enough to sustain the added efforts of our Program Director, working now at 40 hours/month instead of 20 hours/month. We encourage you to give an additional donation this year, or recurring donation, to help sustain the work of CPNV as a network and community for faith-based peacebuilders and peace-building congregations in the Michiana region. The goal for our fundraising campaign is \$5,000. Checks can be made payable to CPNV and sent to P.O. Box 1584, South Bend IN 46634 or online via paypal, found from our website, [www.cpnv.net](http://www.cpnv.net). For further questions about financial support or to receive our fundraising letter, please email Jan Brown, Interim Board Chair, at [info@cpnv.net](mailto:info@cpnv.net).

### ***Have ideas? Want to be more involved? – Contact Us!***

Email: [info@cpnv.net](mailto:info@cpnv.net)

Website: [www.cpnv.net](http://www.cpnv.net)

Facebook: [communityforpeaceandnonviolence](https://www.facebook.com/communityforpeaceandnonviolence)

Twitter: [CPNVpeace](https://twitter.com/CPNVpeace)