

2021 CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN DISTRICT CONFERENCE REPORT

Greetings!

The Church of the Brethren is called a *historic peace church*. On Earth Peace sees the possibility of our beloved denomination claiming a call to be a *living peace church* - a people spiritually formed and practically equipped to respond with agape love, power, and creativity to the crises and opportunities in our times. This update invites you and your congregation to this vision and lets you know how you can get involved.



The entire Christian story is one of breaking through barriers - between people and God, and between people and other people! Sometimes those barriers are in the heart - hardness of heart, prejudice, hatred, apathy. Sometimes they are practices or policies that continue to leave some at the side and prevent full flourishing for all people (in our congregations, and in the communities where we do ministry). A church alive in Christ's power knows it has the call and power to dismantle barriers and open way for all of God's people to experience agape love and flourishing life.

A church that comes alive in Christ's way of peace with justice. . .

- equips people spiritually and biblically to hear and act on God's call to seek peace
- handles conflict and decisionmaking in healthy ways
- develops leaders who are ready for the task of community engagement
- analyzes and addresses the ways it informally or formally discriminates or otherwise prevents full participation of all people
- works to include and celebrate all people, on their own terms
- connects faithful discipleship to active engagement with the problems of the world
- inspires members to acts of transformational love

Are you interested in this vision?

What value or resources does On Earth Peace offer my congregation or district?

- We provide training and leadership development in an approach called **Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation**, which offers a connection to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Our interns support and develop **Learning Action Communities** on a variety of justice issues. (Find them on Facebook by typing "OEP" into the search bar.)
- We **consult with congregations & districts** to build capacity to work for peace and reconciliation
- We provide **community engagement mini-grants and webinars** for youth groups
- Since the pandemic started, we've published more than **70 Read Aloud videos** which families and churches are using to support children's peace formation
- We provide many **community-building and educational events** - see current and past events listed at www.OnEarthPeace.org/events



Quick Facts

What is On Earth Peace?

OEP is a 46-year-old 501c3 nonprofit ministry that equips and walks with individuals and communities who work for justice and peace.

Who works with OEP?

We have 4 long-term staff and about 20 interns; a board of 12 members, of whom 25% are elected through the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference; and an internal Anti-Racism Transformation Team which helps us grow toward being a fully multi-racial and multi-cultural organization.

What is OEP's relationship with the Church of the Brethren?

We are an agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. Through our agency responsibilities and opportunities, we seek to embolden the Church of the Brethren to become a living peace and justice denomination.

What do you do?

We work with **churches and community groups**, and **youth and young adults**. We work with both individuals and groups to develop leadership and support/inspire/equip for faithful, effective work that builds a reconciled world and seeks justice for all people.

What does that look like?

Here are some examples from 2021 so far:

- Leaders in 8 countries are developing skills in through our Kingian Nonviolence Level One Trainer Certification program.
- Youth groups in three states are developing projects and building skills through our Community Engagement Mini-Grants
- Brethren and Quaker racial justice workers in a 12-week racial justice accountability program practiced new skills and made plans for their community work

What do you mean by Kingian Nonviolence?

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "There is a power in love that our world has not discovered yet. Jesus discovered it centuries ago....that love has within it a redemptive power." His six principles of nonviolence and the six steps of a campaign were grounded in the love Christ embodied. Many are choosing to act out of that transformative love by learning more about Kingian Nonviolence. Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation helps individuals and groups address issues of conflict, violence, and injustice with lessons from the black-led freedom struggle. It builds from the work of the Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his many colleagues in the movement for civil and human rights. This approach has a particular Brethren connection: David Jehnsen (Living

Peace CoB, Columbus, OH) is co-author of the curriculum.

What is your funding source?

We receive the bulk of our funding from individual donors. We also receive funding from congregations who add us to their annual budget or send periodic special offerings. Please consider becoming an individual or congregational supporter.

To learn more about how you can support or be involved in our work, contact Matt Guynn, director of church and community organizing, at mguynn@OnEarthPeace.org