



Cultivating Justice,  
Nonviolence & Well-being

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Newton, KS 67114

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A nonprofit organization

## Store Hours

Monday-Thursday  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Closed Fridays

Closed Saturdays in Feb. & March

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January-February-March 2013

# PEACE CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

## Bringing peace home

by Marva Weigelt



*What is the essence of Peace Connections? What is the legacy of the Newton Area Peace Center? What are the threads of continuity woven through the last three decades? What are the emerging directions?*

These are the questions I asked myself late last year as I began digging into the history of Peace Connections and the Newton Area Peace Center in preparation for the 30th anniversary.

I found myself instantly inspired by visionary leaders from a diverse sampling of local churches – Bethel

College Mennonite, Faith Mennonite, First United Methodist, New Creation Fellowship, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Peace Lutheran, and St. Matthew's Episcopal – who put hands, feet and a heart into their vision for a united peace witness in Newton in the early 1980s.

### Taking on the world

I could almost smell the donuts as I imagined the rooms over Druber's that were the first office of the Newton Area Peace Center (NAPC). I marvelled that ordinary citizens of a relatively small Kansas town could care so extraordinarily about issues much bigger than themselves: human rights violations across the globe, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the destructiveness of violence in any form.

I'd like to think I might have had the courage to participate in weekly vigils on the Harvey County courthouse lawn advocating for nonviolence in 1991, but I wonder. Would I have held fast to my side of the "Let us love one another" sign as law enforcement officers lost control over angry counter-demonstrators?



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Again and again as I researched, I was touched by the passion and integrity of the early leaders. There were many, and that too, is a wonder: how did the organization survive 13 directors in 16 years and still keep the doors open? The answer must surely be, at least in part, the faithfulness of quiet advocates who provided unflinching financial, emotional and spiritual support over the years.

Some of the earliest champions can still be found advancing the mission, if you know where to look. One who sat on the NAPC board in the 1980s is now an Ally in Circles of Hope. Another has served on the board of directors since 1997, providing gentle continuity and perspective. Out of respect for their humility, I leave these individuals unnamed, but some of you will guess their identities.

### What is peace?

What I noticed as I traced the organization's evolution is that the vision for world peace kept coming closer and closer to home. That is what 103 individuals from 13 churches said they wanted when Myrna Krehbiel took over as director in 2000 and went on a "listening tour" with this question: "What comes to mind when you think of peace?"

Personal and local peace took overwhelming precedence over national and global issues, with nearly 60% responding that personal peace was the top priority. Peace on earth, as I often remind myself, begins in our own living rooms, or not at all.

Among the recurring themes that came up in those 103 conversations were concern about the inequitable distribution of resources; neglect of children; domestic and school violence; and any form of discrimination, especially racism.



The top two peace priorities identified in 2000—personal peace and local peace—come together every week through Circles of Hope, which simultaneously address poverty at the individual and systemic levels.

### Peace Priorities Identified in 2000



Thirteen years later, it is easy to see how those seeds of interest and intention have manifested fruit. What has risen to predominance at Peace Connections in its third decade are Circles of Hope and Kids Summer Food & Activity. These two local initiatives address to at least some degree each of the primary issues identified a dozen years ago. What's more, they offer more people more ways to be engaged in creating the kind of community in which we want to live.

Poverty is a universal social justice issue that Peace Connections is addressing at a very personal level, bringing peace home to Harvey County, Kansas. After all, can you name anything more central to promoting peace and building global community than facing the inequality present in our own living rooms and neighborhoods?

Peace on earth begins in our own living rooms,  
or not at all.

# Director's anniversary reflections



I am so grateful for the challenge and opportunity of visioning peace as the Director of Peace Connections for 13 of its 30 years.

Not long after accepting what was initially a quarter-time position in 2000, I had a realization that remains a guiding principle for my leadership. I found I did not have the energy to be against anything, but I could certainly sustain a passion for peace, especially as that translated into specific resources for building peace among children, families and our local community.

Cherished memories include: the daily surprises of who might walk through the doors with what request; shepherding development of the Main Street location, with space to welcome individuals and groups; and the courage of the Board of Directors in making the decision to become the first Circles® site in Kansas.

Peace Connections and Circles of Hope are blessed to have competent and caring staff members, now and in the past. I owe my length of stay and much of what has happened here to them. I've also had the privilege of being inspired and challenged over the years by board members who each bring unique perspectives and gifts.

I am deeply appreciative of the diverse segments of the community who have partnered with Peace Connections and Circles of Hope to invest in community building, most especially long-term, hands-on partners like USD 373 administration and staff, First United Methodist Church and Newton Ministerial Alliance.

I am looking forward to celebrating Peace Connection's 30th anniversary this year and am also curious about what the future holds. As was the case when I began in 2000, the organization is nearing the end of some cycles and the beginning of others. (See "SWOT's Happening?" in the "2012 Year in Review" insert for a look ahead.)

Please join me in imagining and praying for grace, momentum, resources and wisdom for all who are involved in guiding Peace Connections into the future.

## Creating space for new ideas

In the book, "Clutter Busting: Letting Go of What's Holding You Back," author Brooks Palmer defines clutter as "anything in your life that no longer serves you." Palmer advises his clients that eliminating clutter creates space for new ideas to thrive.

In 30 years, an organization inevitably accumulates clutter, both physical and ideological, so "clutter busting" is one way of looking at what needs to be done so that Peace Connections continues to be effective as an organization.

It will also be useful, after a year and a half of being up in the air about the ownership and lease arrangement for the store and offices at 612 N. Main, to get clarity about the future of Peace Connections' physical location and what kinds of spaces and uses best fit current and future needs.

Cathy Anderson, when she led a board planning session in November, used a lively and graphic metaphor to help the board sort priorities. "If a big bus were bearing down on Peace Connections, what would you try to save and what would you be willing to sacrifice?"

How would you answer that question? What matters most to you at Peace Connections? What matters deeply enough that you are willing to be an active stakeholder? We would love to hear from you! Come by for a visit or attend our annual meeting on Thursday, March 14, 7-8 pm at Cornerstone Law.





# Board Notes

## Leadership Transition: Jeanette Stucky steps into the role of chair

After two years as Chair of the Peace Connections board, Margaret Goering is stepping aside and Jeanette Stucky is taking on the role. Margaret will continue to serve on the Board in the position of Board Development Committee Chair. We are grateful for her faithful service to the board, especially her enthusiastic involvement with Circles of Hope and service as liaison to the Guiding Coalition.

Jeanette has served on the Peace Connections board since 2010. For the last year she has been the Chair of the Fund Development/Finance Committee and served on the Executive Committee. She is a retired school teacher and an Ally in Circles of Hope.

With a variety of transitions on the horizon, Jeanette hopes for continued prayer and financial support so that Peace Connections and Circles of Hope can continue to be of service to our community.

## New Board Member: Don Swender

My first introduction to Peace Connections occurred during a time when I was a member of the Newton Ministerial Alliance. In that nine year period, I had the opportunity of getting acquainted with Myrna Krehbiel and some of the ways in which individuals and communities could become partners in living out the mission and vision of Peace Connections.



After being away from Newton for six years, my wife Sue and I returned in 2009, which brought us in closer proximity to our daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren! Upon our return, I had the opportunity for a second introduction to Peace Connections via Circles of Hope. After hearing much about Circles from friends, Sue took the training to become an Ally, and a year ago I did the same. We both are currently matched with wonderful Circle Leaders and other Allies. We both embrace the unique approach that Circles offers to persons desiring to walk over the bridge out of poverty. I have come to appreciate the opportunity that Circles provides in building a partnership and friendship with my Circle Leader. In addition to fostering relationships, I also appreciate the effort of Circles to address the systemic causes of poverty.

I believe that the work and witness of Peace Connections sheds a light on God's yearning dream for a creation which is for wholeness, harmony, well-being and justice – economic, nonviolent and peaceful. Making that dream a reality was Jesus' passion. And as a follower of Jesus, I believe that the invitation extended to me to become a Board member of Peace

Connections gives me the opportunity to join with faithful and dedicated partners – past, present and future – in sharing Jesus' passion and participating in God's dream of Shalom!

## We are grateful to the following people for their gifts of time and talent during October, November and December:

- ◆ Cathy Anderson, Christy Brenneman, Stan Bohn, George Dyck, Arnita Haury, Ruby Moore, Gloria Rediger and Marlene Smucker for help in the store and office.
- ◆ Stan Bohn for his faithfulness in organizing the annual Phonathon effort.
- ◆ Cynthia Wyss for coordinating the Circles of Hope entry in the United Way Chili Cookoff, along with the help of a number of volunteers.
- ◆ Roger Voth for helping with preparing the fall newsletter for mailing.
- ◆ Dorothy Nickel Friesen for her leadership of SWOT analysis sessions for Peace Connections and Circles of Hope and for helping the board interpret the findings.
- ◆ Cathy Anderson for leading our Board Retreat in November to assist in identifying top priorities for moving into the future.



# BOOK & GIFT SHOP



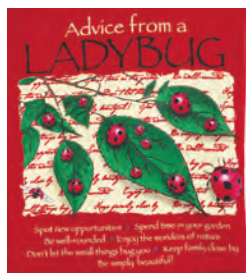
**Winter Puzzle Clearance  
Buy 1 - Get 1 Free.**

Clear off your card table and make way for some old-fashioned fun with our assorted jigsaw puzzles. **\$9.99 - \$15.**

**Greeting Cards for all occasions.** Now is a great time to stock up on thoughtful cards. Choose from a great selection of congratulations, friendship, sympathy, get well and blank photo cards for only **99¢**, as well as many other thoughtful offerings in a range of prices.

**Leanin' Tree card collections.** Enjoy the delightful variety, convenience and value of a greeting card portfolio filled with an assortment of 20 colorful greeting cards and designed envelopes! Each comes with a variety of verses, including some with blank cards for your own note or greeting. Various designs. **\$16.95**

**Advice from Nature sweatshirts.** Winter is a great time to treat yourself or a loved one to the gift of a warm, whimsical and thought-provoking sweatshirt that declares your love of nature. Heavy 50/50 cotton/polyester blend. **\$25**



**Mother Earth pillows.** Need some comfort for aches and pains during the chilly winter months? Check out our therapeutic flax pillows in a variety of shapes and sizes, as well as scented and unscented: large and small triggerpoint neck pillows, flat pillow, heartbeat pillow and eye pillow. They can be warmed in the microwave or chilled in the freezer. **\$18 - \$46**

**Children's books: We Are One and No Mirrors in my Nana's House.** From Ysaye Barnwell, of the revered



African American women's a cappella group Sweet Honey In The Rock, who will be in concert at Bethel College on February 2, come these two self-affirming book/CD combinations for children. Enjoyable for all ages! **We Are One/\$17.95; No Mirrors in my Nana's House/\$8.00**

**Music: Winter Wonderings/Sara Thomsen and Paula Pedersen.** This new album is an

introspective wandering through the season of winter, a time of nostalgia and reflection. "Thomsen's soulful voice, poetic lyrics and unforgettable melodies cut through to the heart and the soul of human experience." -Minnesota Women's Press. **\$17**



## Experimental Saturday store closing in February & March

When was the last time you shopped in the Peace Connections store on Saturday? If it has been a long while (or never), you are not alone! Based on sales figures, November and December are the only months of the year when we get much business on Saturdays.

In response to the low traffic and the challenges of finding volunteers to staff the store, the Board of Directors decided at the January meeting to close the store during February and March on an experimental basis.

Do you have concerns or questions about this decision? Would you like to volunteer? We welcome your comments at 316-284-0000, by email to [info@peaceconnections.org](mailto:info@peaceconnections.org) or in person at 612 N. Main, M-Th, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Peace, to have meaning for many who have only known suffering in both peace and war, must be translated into bread or rice, shelter, health and education, as well as freedom and human dignity.

-- Ralph Johnson Bunche

# WINTER CALENDAR

*All events are held at Peace Connections unless otherwise noted*

## JANUARY

**Occupy Art: Protest and Empathy for the Worker**, temporary exhibit at Wichita Art Museum curated by former Peace Connections board member Rachel Epp Buller, will be open through March 17. Admission to the museum at 1400 W. Museum Blvd. is free on Saturdays (10 am – 5 pm).

**Circles community meetings** continue to be held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30–8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. The first Tuesday of each month features an educational topic, and the fourth Tuesday is the Big View meeting, which explores and works on barriers that keep people right here in Harvey County from having enough resources. Anyone is welcome to attend the first & fourth weekly meetings. (The second Tuesday is reserved for Ally and Circle Leader meetings and the third Tuesday is reserved for the Guiding Coalition meeting.)

**The Season for Nonviolence begins January 30 and runs through April 4.** This is a national 64-day grassroots campaign “dedicated to demonstrating that nonviolence is a powerful way to heal, transform, and empower our lives and our communities.” Stop by Peace Connections for daily suggestions of how to practice non-violence or visit [www.64-days.org](http://www.64-days.org).

## FEBRUARY

**The Peace Connections store will be closed on Saturdays** during February and March on an experimental basis. The store will continue to be open Monday-Thursday, 10 am – 5 pm.

**My Name is Rachel Corrie**, one-woman play with Renee Reimer, **Feb. 1, 7:30 pm**, Krehbiel Auditorium in the Fine Arts Center at Bethel College. The performance is free, with donations accepted. Rated R for language and not suitable

for children. “This is one way I hope to plant seeds of peace in people and get them motivated to talk about peace and to take action,” says Reimer.

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**30th Anniversary Kickoff.** Peace Connections supporters are invited to an intimate reception with the members of **Sweet Honey in the Rock**, Grammy award-winning African American female a cappella ensemble, who will be in concert, **Saturday, Feb. 2, 7:30 pm** at Memorial Hall, Bethel College. The event will take place immediately after the concert in the Bethel College Library Lounge.

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**Circles community meetings** are held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30–8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. See info. under January.

**Peace Connections Board meeting** will be **February 11, 7 pm**. Meetings are open to the public.

**Make your Valentine cards** at Peace Connections! Valentine stamps and materials will be out & available **Mon., Feb. 4 – Thu., Feb. 14** (closed Friday). A small donation for materials is suggested.

## MARCH

**Circles community meetings** are held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30–8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. See info. under January.

**Peace Connections Board meeting** will be **March 11, 7 pm**. Meetings are open to the public.

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** Peace Connections Annual Meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 14, 7:00 – 8:00 pm** at Cornerstone Law, 725 N. Main Street, Newton. Please join us for an annual update, conversation and refreshments.

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## Sweet Honey in the Rock

Saturday, February 2, 2013, 7:30 p.m.  
Memorial Hall, Bethel College

Rooted in a deeply held commitment to create music out of the rich textures of African American legacy and traditions, this Grammy winning women's a cappella ensemble possesses a stunning vocal prowess that captures the complex sounds of blues, spirituals, African chants, hip hop, ancient lullabies, jazz and more. Tickets are \$23 & \$27, on sale at Bethel College or Hesston College or online. Student and senior discounts are available.

A reception for Peace Connections donors and volunteers will follow the concert in the Bethel College Library Lounge.





# Fresh start in the new year

We are in the process of trying to contact many of our newsletter recipients by telephone to check on the preferred method of receiving the newsletter. We are more than happy to continue mailing a hard copy, but if there's any chance you'd be willing to switch over to a full color electronic copy delivered by email (or if you'd prefer to be removed from the mailing list), we appreciate the chance to reduce our printing and mailing costs.

If you haven't heard from us yet and would like to make a change, please give us a call at 316-284-000 or drop us an email at [info@peaceconnections.org](mailto:info@peaceconnections.org).

## How Giving Makes a Difference

**\$15/month** (\$180) covers 20% of the annual water costs for the volunteer-run **Giving Garden** where fresh produce is grown for families in need.

**\$30/month** (\$360) pays for one individual from low resources to complete the **Circle Leader training class** and set goals for a better future story.

**\$60/month** (\$720) allows 9 local children to participate in the **Kids Summer Activity** program during June and July.

**\$90/month** (\$1,080) provides **coaching support** for 3 Matched Circles each year as they work together to achieve goals set in the training class.

**\$120/month** (\$1,440) covers the cost of providing **child care** so parents can participate in Circles of Hope.

## Ways to Give

**Monthly giving** is truly a sustaining grace. Call or come by for details on how to set up a convenient monthly automatic withdrawal plan.

**Secure online donation** through Paypal is available anytime through our website at [www.peaceconnections.org](http://www.peaceconnections.org)

**Earmark** your donation, if you wish, for a particular initiative: Circles of Hope, Kids Summer Food & Activity or the Giving Garden.

**Volunteering** is a wonderful way of giving. Our volunteers provide very close to half of the value of all other donations combined.

**Thoughts and prayers** are always welcome!

If you donated \$100 or more to Peace Connections in 2012, you already have or will soon receive the **Peace Connections 30th Anniversary Calendar**. A few additional copies are still available for \$10 each in the store.

This full-color calendar celebrates three decades of caring in action with historical highlights, a special focus on each of the current initiatives, as well as colorful glimpses into memorable efforts, activities and participants. What a way to honor the peace legacy, those who birthed it and those who've kept it growing!





612 N. Main  
Newton, Kansas 67114-2230

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter,  
check here ( ) and place in return mail.

**Vision: Thriving communities sustained by social justice and compassion.**

Peace can become a lens through  
which you see the world.

Be it.

Live it.

Radiate it out.

Peace is an inside job.

--Wayne Dyer

**Peace Connections partners with others to:**

- ▶ **build resources within families and communities**
- ▶ **teach and practice nonviolence**
- ▶ **nurture personal and spiritual well-being**

This newsletter is published four times per year by Peace Connections, an ecumenical non-profit.

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The Board of Directors meets monthly at 612 N. Main, Newton, KS. Meetings are open to the public.