

Our Peacemaking Journey in 2022... and into 2023

It's been an amazing, frequently surprising, and often challenging year – in the world, and for LPF.

Violence in **Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen, Ethiopia** and elsewhere has resulted in countless deaths, and millions of refugees. **Mass shootings**, 600 in the U.S. this past year have again pushed gun violence into public discussion. Each raises questions about the Christian's role in the world and the necessity for active, creative, and persistent **nonviolence** in our response.

Climate change and **conflict** threaten food supplies, hurting millions from **Sudan to Syria**, and raises issues about hunger and climate change while exposing serious vulnerabilities in today's global food production system. The impact is so very shocking:

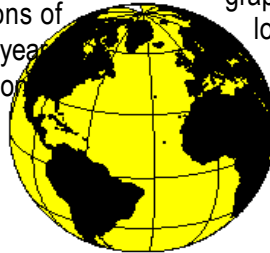
The 20 countries most affected are home to 10% of the global population but account for 89% of those **in need of humanitarian aid** worldwide! An unexpected underlying cause has been **climate change**.

It raises central issues of the biblical vision regarding the responsibility of citizens and governments to **address need** and **inequality** and for Christians to move beyond that to compassionately engage in **solidarity with the poor**.

LPF members helped challenge **LGBTQ** discrimination in a number of states, taking the next few steps in the struggle to end gender intolerance. And **nonviolence** education, strategy, and action continue to be crucial priorities for LPF.

LPF members are active in each of these arenas, encouraging action and frequently offering leadership in congregation, synod, & community efforts across the U.S. LPF notably helped organize support for a Truce and peace talks in **Ukraine**, and urgent calls to push our government to act decisively and soon on **Climate Change**. We shared links to some dramatic examples of activism in each.

LPF members around the nation have helped organize and lead **forums and workshops** in dozens of congregations, synod events, conferences, and communities. They encouraged creative exploration of topics like *The Biblical Basis of Peacemaking*. . . **Nonviolence in the Real World**. . . **To Be a Bridge in a World of Walls**. . . **Hunger Amidst Plenty**. . . **International Conflict**. . . Hosts across the country called them “**very effective**,” “**unusually creative**,” “**well-received**,” and “**the year's best forum!**”



LPF's **Facebook page** and **blog** offered postings on 30 issues and shared dozens of links, videos & resources on many of today's most urgent issues. We're also seeking to update a number of our most widely-used resources, most of them on our website. And we're looking to support our affiliate, the Peace & Justice Resource Center as it seeks university Peace Studies and library collaborations to expand its reach.

Our **Advent** member letter featured some writing and graphics by **Dan Erlander**. Dan was a widely-known and loved writer, artist, and pastor who moved many LPF members with his powerful, engaging, and richly-illustrated books on faith in action like “**Manna & Mercy**” and “**Baptized We Live**.” He was active in LPF, generously sharing his work. A dramatic example is his “Welcoming Table” graphic that has enhanced several popular LPF brochures and flyers. Notably, he wrote over 7 LPF letters to our members – most of them **hand-written** in his own **unique lettering** that reflects his graphic vision. As you may have heard, Dan **passed away** on August 28. **In Dan's memory**, we chose text from one of his hand-written letters to share in our Advent letter. It portrays his kind and memorable commitment to peacemaking, as well as evoking some challenges we experience today.

Finances: As with many nonprofits, **recent** years have brought tighter finances for LPF. Many **LPF members** still had to limit their donations due to cuts in employment, etc.

LPF staff trimmed spending and proposed a Nat. Coord. salary that consisted entirely of benefits (which is the equivalent of a 70% pay cut) for the past several years. More than a few of our **supporters** around the U.S. gave much-appreciated extra help. All told, we were able to build a surplus in our 2022 budget to help expand our future impact.

We are looking for suggestions of possible LPF **board members**. We would be grateful for your ideas, by email, phone, or mail. Our board plays a crucial leadership role in engaging our members, choosing & **focusing** advocacy priorities, looking for ways to **strengthen** all our efforts.

We thank all our members for your caring and support. There are many ways we each can be peace & justice makers in 2023: challenging **conflict & violence**, from family to global. . . Helping **protect** the most vulnerable -- migrants, the poor, people of color. . . Sharing **skills** and **resources**. . . offering **leadership, advocacy**, as well as our **contributions**. Your help in each is greatly valued! Together we'll see the **dove** of peacemaking spread its wings and **fly!**

For more information or to explore ways to help, please contact Glen Gersmehl, LPF national coordinator: 206.349.2501, ggersmehl@hotmail.com or mail us at: LPF, 1710 11th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122. www.lutheranpeace.org