

Lancaster Mennonite Conference



# SOWING *SHALOM*

Seeds of Peace



- Reconciliation
- Discipleship
- Transformation



Participate in the conversation on



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[Lancaster Conference website](#)

[LMC YouTube Channel](#)

[LMC Reheated Facebook page](#)

Lancaster Mennonite Conference, 2011. *Sowing Shalom: Seeds of Peace* hopes to foster communication about *shalom* by people of Christ's peace. The design team included Christine Baer, Richard Buckwalter, Silas Crews, Jon Rudy, Brinton Rutherford, and Micah Zimmerman. The project was funded primarily by the United Services Foundation.

**The content was mostly "crowd sourced," meaning that Lancaster Conference youth groups and young adults created some of the video content.** All video content received during the project is posted on the LMC YouTube channel and is in the public domain. The [Sowing Shalom Facebook page](#) allows conversation about *Sowing Shalom: Seeds of Peace*.



## FOR THE SESSION LEADER

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### Why *shalom*?

*Sowing Shalom: Seeds of Peace* deliberately uses the Hebrew term *shalom* rather than the English word "peace." From a Christian point of view, *shalom* and peace have the same meaning. Both *shalom* and peace refer to what God gives those who follow him. Both words also refer to the well-being, welfare or safety of a person or a group of people and to internal harmony and tranquility. Too often, however, the English word "peace" is limited to mean an absence of war. Because of this tendency, *Sowing Shalom* works against that limiting trend by using the word *shalom*.

### DVD Content

The nine sessions on the DVD are self-contained. Each video segment introduces, sets up, and presents a video clip that explores a facet of *shalom*. The final sequence in each segment provides a dilemma for group discussion.

### Study Guide Use

This study guide helps leaders frame the group discussion time in order to get the most out of the conversation. Discussion questions are offered for use.

### Website, FaceBook and YouTube

The [Lancaster Conference website](#) provides a free **download for the Leader's Guide**. Groups can interact with the curriculum on the [Sowing Shalom Facebook page](#) and access the video on the [LMC YouTube Channel](#) playlist.



## RECONCILIATION

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**As people of Christ's peace, we live reconciled to God.**

Reconciliation: to make friendly again; to settle accounts (as in reconciling bank statements); to make consistent (as in reconciling meeting minutes). In Christianity, the restoration through Jesus Christ of relationships with God and others that are broken by sin.

Objective: Understand that reconciliation with God is both an initial event and a life-long journey.

Core Text: Romans 5:9-11 (MSG). In this chapter of Romans, Paul **sets up a variety of contrasts between God's thoughts and ways** and human thoughts and ways. It is a powerful and compelling chapter that illustrates the love of God as being completely unconditional.

Orientation to the Video: The lyrics of [We Are at Our Best](#), emerges out of the text of Romans 5:1-11. The music video explores life before Jesus, a present following Jesus, and a future of being more like Jesus.

The Dilemma: Is reconciliation with God an event or is reconciliation with God a life-long journey?

Background Resources on the Internet: A pdf document with the lyrics for *We Are at Our Best* is available at the *Sowing Shalom* page of the LMC website.

Additional Video content: Another video, [Peace or Shalom?](#), can be accessed at [www.lancasterconference.org/shalom](http://www.lancasterconference.org/shalom). This short teaching video explores the differences between God's *shalom* and worldly peace.

## WITH GOD

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. Romans 5 talks about being at our worst and at our best. Discuss this contrast and explain what it means in the context of the music video.
2. What does personal peace with God mean for how we treat our enemies?
3. What attitude might we have toward brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we do not agree or have conflict of some kind?
4. **What is “our best” and how do we see it most clearly?**

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the *Peace or Shalom?* video on the website and discuss it.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *We Are at Our Best* **video and the “Peace or Shalom?” video if you** watched it.

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### Action

Choose an action your group will take to live into this session.  
Write it out below:

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## RECONCILIATION

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**As people of Christ's peace, we live reconciled to ourselves.**

Reconciliation: to make friendly again; to settle accounts (as in reconciling bank statements); to make consistent (as in reconciling meeting minutes). Within Christianity, the restoration of relationship broken by sin through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Objective: Understand that a life of *shalom* is by faith but also demonstrated by deeds.

Core Text: 1 Corinthians 1:21-30

Orientation to the Video: The video, [Jubilee Ministries](#), proclaims the gospel in prison and provides Christian discipleship and social and work training for men and women who leave prison. The story of Felix Diaz describes one Jubilee Ministries story that begins and ends in prison.

### The Dilemma

How is it that we are strongest only when we recognize and admit and surrender our weaknesses?

Background Resources on the Internet: Read the *Shalom News* article, "[Shalom has many facets.](#)"

Additional Video content: [Shalom Has Many Facets](#) video explores the breadth of the word *shalom*.

## WITH SELF

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. Why does God choose very different things compared to the things humans tend to choose in order to accomplish his purposes as described by 1 Corinthians 1:27-28?
2. Why is it important for Felix and other Christians to keep faith and works together?
3. When Felix is reconciled to God, what happens to his own sense of himself?
4. **Describe how Felix's journey goes full circle because of both his faith in Christ and his works of service.**

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the *Shalom Has Many Facets* video on the extras list.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Jubilee* video or the *Shalom Has Many Facets* video if you watched it.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take to live into this session.  
Write it out below:

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## RECONCILIATION

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**As people of Christ's peace, we live reconciled to our neighbor.**

Reconciliation: to make friendly again; to settle accounts (as in reconciling bank statements); to make consistent (as in reconciling meeting minutes). Within Christianity, the restoration of relationship broken by sin through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Objective: To explore the risks and rewards relating to our neighbors, even those who may appear to be the enemy.

Core Text: Luke 10:25-29 (MSG): In this narrative, Jesus explores **the definition of "neighbor" and suggests an answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?"**

Orientation to the Video: *Pastor Dan*, a Philippine pastor, struggles with his neighbor as he encounters unfriendly Muslims but **finds reconciliation with his "neighbor" that leads to service and witness through *shalom*. (By his use of the term "Muslim Brother" Pastor Dan does not intend to infer that his Muslim friends are Christians.)**

The Dilemma

Should I reach out to neighbors who are unfriendly and perhaps **unsafe, or only to friendly, 'safe' neighbors?**

Background Resources on the Internet: Read [Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct](#).

Additional Video content: *Teatime in Mogadishu*



## WITH NEIGHBOR

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. In Luke 10:25-37, how does Jesus ask us to define “neighbor?”
2. **How is Pastor Dan’s experience of reconciliation both an event and a journey?**
3. **What deeds follow Pastor Dan’s faith?**
4. With what attitude might we consider approaching our different, unfriendly, or unsafe neighbors?

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the *Teatime in Mogadishu* video in the extras.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Pastor Dan* video and the *Teatime in Mogadishu* video if you watched it.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take to live into this session.

Write it out below:

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## DISCIPLESHIP

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**As people of Christ's peace, we steward God's gifts.**

Discipleship: **bringing one's** whole life under the lordship of Christ in a covenant community; actively following Jesus; both an inward experience of the grace of God and an outward application of that grace to all human conduct and the consequent Christianization of all human relationships.

Objective: Consider actions to exercise better stewardship personally and in your community.

Core Text: Luke 12:15 (MSG): These words of Jesus introduce the **parable of the rich farmer. A person's life is more than his or her possessions.**

Orientation to the Video: [The Story of Electronics](#) describes an unsustainable, linear chain from resources, to production, consumption, and disposal for consumer electronics items and the hidden costs.

The Dilemma: What is enough and when is too much toxic?

Background Resources on the Internet: Read [Reduce, Reuse, Recycle](#) and [Stewardship of the Earth](#).

Additional Video content: [The Story of Stuff](#), from the same organization as The Story of Electronics, explores a consumption economy in greater depth. Note that it is also 21 minutes long.

## AS STEWARDSHIP

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. Why should Christians concern themselves with stewardship of the earth?
2. If people are not their possessions, then what is the connection **between “enough” and “toxic electronics?”**
3. What levels of stewardship do you see presented in *The Story of Electronics*?
4. What are the problems with a linear consumption process? What is an alternative process?

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View *The Story of Stuff* video in the extras.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about *The Story of Electronics* video and *The Story of Stuff* video if you watched it.

### Action

**Compose a prayer addressing “enough” and addressing toxic consumption.** Write it out here and pray it together.

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## DISCIPLESHIP

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**As people of Christ's peace, we serve others.**

Discipleship: **bringing one's** whole life under the lordship of Christ in a covenant community; actively following Jesus; less an inward experience of the grace of God than an outward application of that grace to all human conduct and the consequent Christianization of all human relationships.

Objectives: Explore the complexities of the tension inherent in witness and service.

Core Text: Matthew 25:34-39.

Orientation to the Video: The MCC video, *Sharing God's Love and Compassion*, explores the motivation behind this relief, development, and service agency. Numerous reasons are given for why thousands of people regularly give their time and money to MCC.

The Dilemma: What is the difference between serving as a response to faith in Christ and serving as an end in itself?

Background Resources on the Internet: Read the [Greatest Social Need](#) and Wachsmuth, [In Pursuit of Economic Shalom](#).

Additional Video content: [Coffee, Corn and Globalization](#)

## AS SERVICE

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. Matthew 25:34-39 seems to emphasize the service of the disciple. Where do you see the motivation for service appearing in this text?
2. How might a lack of tension between witness and service skew the ministry of a person or organization?
3. What motivation do you hear emerging from the MCC video, *Sharing God's Love and Compassion*?
4. Serving as a response to faith in Christ and serving as an end in itself has the same result: people are helped. From a Christian perspective, why do you think the motivation for service is important?

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View [Coffee, Corn and Globalization](#) video in the extras.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Sharing God's Love and Compassion* video and the [Coffee, Corn and Globalization](#) video if you watched it.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take to live into this session.  
Write it out below:

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## DISCIPLESHIP

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### As people of Christ's peace, we live as peacemakers

Discipleship: **bringing one's** whole life under the lordship of Christ in a covenant community; actively following Jesus; less an inward experience of the grace of God than an outward application of that grace to all human conduct and the consequent Christianization of all human relationships.

Objective: Understand that *shalom* calls all Christians to train themselves in the things that make for peace (Rom 14:19).

Core Text: Matthew 5:9 (MSG) and Romans 14:19 (NAS). These two passages suggest that Christians take a very active role **"making peace" and that Christians should pursue "skills," and "process" ("things" NAS) that make for peace.**

Orientation to the Video: *Calling for Peace* tells two stories of two people who get involved in their local community and encounter conflict as a result. One person has considerable formal training in peacemaking compared to the other person.

The Dilemma: Is peacemaking only for specially trained experts, or can anyone learn to be a peacemaker?

Background Resources on the Internet: Kreider, "[Peace Church, Mission Church.](#)"

Additional Video content: The video, *Mediation*, presents an actual mediation session and demonstrates several mediation **"tools."**

## AS PEACEMAKING

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. How do the passages from Matthew 5:9 and Romans 14:19 relate to one another?
2. **What do you think about the guidelines of “listen without interruption,” “no unrequested opinions,” “explain and clarify intentions,” “maintain right relations,” and “apologize” as tools for peacemaking? Would you add any other guidelines?**
3. How have you seen relationships create a foundation for peace?
4. **What do you think about the joint “letter to the editor” that the women wrote as a peacemaking strategy?**

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the *Mediation* video in the extras.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Calling for Peace* video and the *Mediation* video if you watched it.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take to live into this session.

Write it out below:

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## TRANSFORMATION

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**As people of Christ's peace, we influence our surroundings.**

Transformation: an act or process that makes a thorough or dramatic change in form, appearance function, nature, or character of something or someone. In Christianity, the putting off the old and putting on the new in Christ, the transfer from darkness to light.

Objective: Discover that one creative Christian can make a big difference and that the difference can powerfully impact an ever-expanding circle of people.

Core Text: Matthew 5: 1-12. The Beattitudes describe a kingdom ethic for how Christians live a *shalom* way of life. This teaching from Jesus is worded in a personal way.

Orientation to the Video: When personal transformation comes in **contact with "things" needing transformation, exciting things can happen.** [Coffee for Peace](#) examines a third-way solution in a violent conflict between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao, Philippines that has surprising and far-reaching results. The impact of **one person's transformation (or one small group) in this case** moved from changed relationships to community service and economic transformation.

The Dilemma: Can limited actions of one person actually make a difference or is social transformation limited to governments and organizations who have access to vast resources?

Website Resources: **Philips, "[Fair Trade](#)"**

Additional Video content: *Power*



## IN ECONOMICS

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. Does Matthew 5: 1-12 simply stop at personal application? What stories do you have where your journey with God had positive economic implications for others?
2. **In “Coffee for Peace,” how are economics and a gospel of peace interwoven?**
3. In a complex world fraught with unintended consequences, can an individual or a small group become knowledgeable and responsible enough to make a difference spiritually or economically?
4. What third-way options are available to Christians besides giving in to the aggressor or overpowering the aggressor?

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the *Power* video on the extras list.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Coffee for Peace* video and the *Power* video if you watched it.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take and write it out here:

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## TRANSFORMATION

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**As people of Christ's peace, we take the risk.**

Transformation: an act or process that makes a thorough or dramatic change in form, appearance function, nature, or character of something or someone. In Christianity, the putting off the old and putting on the new in Christ.

Objective: Understand that living a *shalom* life means a continual life of decisions for Jesus.

Core Text: Luke 19:5-9 (NIV): When confronted by Jesus, Zaccheus makes a personal decision about his past dishonesty and his present solution to making things right. The potential financial cost of his solution is high.

Orientation to the Video: This session explores the Christian **claim, "Jesus is Lord."** In the video, *Mennonite Boy*, two stories of personal decisions to follow Jesus in contrast to the prevailing social context are presented.

The Dilemma: Is the cost of the risk (of hard personal choices) worth the risk of the (personal spiritual) gain?

Website Resources: Read "[Advice to Conscientious Objectors Facing Draft Registration.](#)"

Additional Video content: [What Would You Do?](#) (preview this video before showing it to a group).

## IN PERSONAL CHOICES

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. How do you think Zaccheus was able give his primary allegiance to Christ regardless of personal cost?
2. Since there is no military draft in the United States currently, what does a personal decision to declare Conscientious Objection to war mean to you?
3. What would *shalom* as a third way mean for a president of the United States if he or she was a Mennonite?
4. How do you apply conflict resolution strategies that you learned at home in other settings?

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the [What Would You Do?](#) video in the extras.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Mennonite Boy* or [What Would You Do?](#) video if you watched it.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take and write it out here:

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## TRANSFORMATION

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**As people of Christ's peace, we get involved, even if it gets messy.**

Transformation: an act or process that makes a thorough or dramatic change in form, appearance function, nature, or character of something or someone. In Christianity, the putting off the old and putting on the new in Christ.

Objectives: Understand that living a *shalom* life means **understanding the culture around us and be "leaven" for the Kingdom of God.**

Core Text: Acts 10:17-23 (GNT). In Acts 10, Peter becomes the leading voice in opening up the promise of salvation to the Gentiles through a very precisely arranged set of circumstances.

Orientation to the Video: *Trading Dilemmas: a peace institute and the military* explores how a peacebuilding organization took the risk to invite the military into the peace process. As a result at least one military officer had his perspective widened.

The Dilemma: Can getting involved in 'the world' be a dangerous compromise or can it be God's mission?

Website Resources: [What Is An Anabaptist Christian?](#)

Additional Video content: [What Would You Do?](#) (preview this video before showing it to a group). [Olepolos](#) explores transformation at several levels.

## IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES

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### Discussion Starter Questions

1. **What structural changes does Peter's adventure (Acts 10:17-23) into the Gentile world bring about?**
2. How is the title of the video *Trading Dilemmas* placing tension between church and military, peace and war, when the two gather and dialog with one another?
3. **How do you manage the tension of a "gospel of peace" for all nations with being "transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light?"**
4. What stories does your congregation have of Christians impacting conflicts between church structures and socio-cultural structures for the reign of God?

### Things to do

1. As a group prepare one or more posts on the Facebook page in order to start a conversation with others about this session.
2. View the [Olepolos](#) video on the website and discuss it.
3. On the YouTube channel, post a comment about the *Trading Dilemmas* video and the [What Would You Do?](#) and [Olepolos](#) videos if you watched them.

### Action

Choose an action your group will take to live into this session.

Write it out below:

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## Further Reading and Viewing

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### Shalom Book Resources

Joseph Allen, *War: A Primer for Christians*. In 62 pages, Allen briefly and clearly explains pacifism, just war, and crusade approaches to war.

Elizabeth Hershberger Bauman, *Coals of Fire*. Stories of people who returned good for evil.

John H. Yoder, *If a Violent Person Threatened to Harm a Loved One What would You Do?* He shows there are not just two answers to the question.

John H. Yoder, *Nevertheless: Varieties of Religious Pacifism*. Yoder presents 29 different approaches to pacifism, each only 5-6 pages long.

Steven Friesen, *Pax Avalon: Conflict Resolution*. A serious presentation of *shalom* and conflict in a culturally relevant comic book format.

John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Resolution*. One book in the series, *The Little Books of Justice & Peacebuilding*. They really are little, but they are also interactive and have good applications.

Tricia Gates Brown, *Getting in the Way: Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams*. A series of true stories about encounters with violence written by CPTers from dangerous locations around the world.

Peter Dyck, *A Leap of Faith: True Stories for the Young and Old*. Dyck recounts personal and second-hand stories of people confronting the dangers of the real world with a faithful response to Jesus.

John Driver, *How Christians Made Peace with War: Early Christian Understandings of War*. Driver investigates, in a very readable format, the early church teaching on peace and war.

Dennis Byler, *Making Peace and Making War: Why Some Christians Fight and Some Don't*. Byler describes the emergence of just war thinking.

John D. Roth, *Choosing Against War: A Christian View*. A theological treatment of a way of peace that addresses many of the difficulties of holding such a position in a modern world.

Leo Driedger and Donald Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism*. A historical, sociological, and theological investigation of Mennonite views on peacemaking.

Donald Kraybill, *Upside Down Kingdom*, 2nd Edition. This classic study of the Kingdom of God wrestles with the biblical text and calls Christians to become socially aware and engaged in the world.

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### Shalom Video Resources

Mennonite Media, Mennonite Mission Network, *Peace DVD: especially for youth.*

Explores *shalom* visually from five different vantage points. A companion website that has some of the video clips is [www.peaceDVD.com](http://www.peaceDVD.com).

Mennonite Central Committee, *Thermostat*. A 100-page study guide and three hours of video clips and activities explore peace in a post-9/11 world.

**Third Way Media, *Waging Peace*. Peacemaking in the Christian and Muslim traditions.**

### Shalom Children's Book Resources

Katherine Grace Bond, *The Legend of the Valentine*

Todd Parr, *The Peace Book*

Michele Maria Surat, *Angel Child, Dragon Child*

Derek Munson, *Enemy Pie*

Mem Fox, *Feathers and Fools: A Modern Fable*

Hiaroyrn Oram, *Just Like Us*

Janice May Udry, *Let's Be Enemies*

Judy Lalli, *40 More Ways To Be A Peaceful Person*

Jacqueline Woodson, *The Other Side*

Katherine Scholer, *Peace Begins With You*

Charolotte Zolotow, *The Quarreling Book*

Marcus Pfister, *Rainbow Fish and the Big Blue Whale*

Deborah da Costa, *Snow in Jerusalem*

Shelley Moore Thomas, *Somewhere Today: A Book of Peace*

Dawn L. Watkins, *The Spelling Window*

Robert Coles, *The Story of Ruby Bridges*

Monro Leaf, *The Story of Ferdinand*

Priscilla Turner, *The War Between the Vowels and the Consonants*

Lauren Murphy Payne, *We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices*

Charlotte Pomerantz, *You Are Not My Best Friend Anymore*

### Websites

[civilianpublicservice.org](http://civilianpublicservice.org) Stories from Peace Churches in Civilian Public Service.



# Lancaster

*Mennonite Conference*

*A conference of Mennonite Church USA*

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*We are people of Christ's Peace*

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