

Creating a Culture of Peace (CCP) in 2017- and beginning of 2018

Our Prophetic Witness Team met monthly to plan two short (3-hour) Introductory trainings in various churches in far corners of the WRA EOA; and one 20-hour weekend retreat called a Training of Trainers in April.

The Intro CCP Agenda was as follows: we began by “Creating sacred space together” with the Prayer of St. Francis - helping us trust each other enough to step out of our comfort zones – creating a safe space to dialogue & experiment. Then together we looked at the question: What is Violence? – talked about it. How we perpetuate it; or not. Then we participated in a Walking meditation and prayer. Prayer changes things; and in that mode, we all joined in the final exercise: CIRCLES of TRUTH - finding our deeper empathy – we divided people into groups and gave them roles: a teacher, a cop, a pastor, a business person, a construction worker . . . each person gets 2 mins to speak in role play - to talk about how each one viewed “immigration” from the perspective of their character; then switched. Each person had a chance to play each character. Then we discussed. Enlightening. . .

In April 3-day weekend (Fri nite, Sat and Sun AM): T 4 T – 21 people came and slept, ate, walked, prayed, reflected on life and worked together in the woods, most came from St. Paul’s Community; people are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit on retreat, ready for a change, willing to step out of their comfort zones, to learn to trust each other and to try out the best conflict resolution practices / nonviolent action, incorporate it into their lives, and to take it home to their people.

Here’s the next opportunity for participating with CCP.

Next CCP workshop @ 9am - 12 on Oct. 6, 2018 – Bethany UCC

Why: Our time in front of the Computer Screen is ever increasing. Social skills decreasing . . . we don't even want to try to talk to some people; just don't have the energy . . . and our attention deficit problems, children's ability to understand verbal, non-verbal and emotional cues, higher rates of mental illness, increased depression and heightens the risk for obesity. Linked to increased suicide attempts, linked to technology and computer time increasing. This is not the way we want to live.

Because these things in our culture, are like the devil distracting us from the Gospel directive to love God, love our neighbors as we love ourselves. They take our peace.

What can we do? :

- 1) Come to the Next Intro on Oct. 6: Wrestling with politics in light of our faith. Finding the courage to include, not exclude others because of their politics; don't compartmentalize – Reconcile being human with being a political/social animal.
- 2) Send us a delegate: We believe that in each one of our EOA WRA congregations there are at least one, maybe two people who have the courage to take a step towards peace and reconciliation. We want to offer another Training 4 Trainers (T4T). We need some help from you and your congregation to create a more peaceful society; and really the only way that happens is helping one person at a time become the peace that they want to see in the world; and so we're asking for you to designate one or possibly two people from your congregation who could come to this T4T and be your church's representative to the Creating a culture of peace prophetic witness team. It's a 16 hour training & well worth the \$100. The techniques and skills are immediately applicable to any situation.
- 3) Learn about: "my attachments," the *idealized persona* I bring to situations/ conflicts in my life, the stuff that is called baggage because it gets heavier and heavier . . . the ways to manage my own fears and anxieties, unease or lack of confidence.
- 4) Attend to your Inward Journey, which means listening to what the Holy Spirit is guiding you to do, not what any human being really feels is best for you and then take those lessons outward: Build your skills for engaging people, dealing easily, confidently, with humor, the conflicts as presented.

How can my faith that is strengthened during my inward searching impact my outward effectiveness at being the peace I want to see in the world?

Rev. Doug Horner

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