

3. Report of On Earth Peace

INTRODUCTION

"The aim of 'On Earth Peace...' is to clarify the issues that a Christian church must face now regarding violence... This movement does not intend to solve all problems in this area of present-day human living. It can, however, do something in the name of Christ by endeavoring to implement the message that came when Christ was born, 'On Earth Peace and Good Will among [All People].'" - M.R. Zigler, December 1974

On Earth Peace's work as a ministry within the Church of the Brethren dates to 1974, when the organization was founded by 20th-century Church of the Brethren peace leader M.R. Zigler. Since 1974, OEP has developed programs serving youth and young adults, congregations, and community groups, as we walk in partnership with Church of the Brethren congregations, camps, districts, and Annual Conference.

Our purpose as an agency of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference is to help the Church of the Brethren become a relevant, vital, "living" peace and justice church equipped to create vital relationships and initiatives on contemporary issues of violence and injustice. We believe it's possible for this Historic Peace Church to develop new skills and spiritual power to become capable of meeting, finding, and proclaiming Jesus in the neighborhood.

Brother Zigler wrote for the founding meeting of On Earth Peace: "To All Christian Churches and other Religions and Individual Persons: Let us commit ourselves to peace on earth, NOW, and urge religious bodies around the world to eliminate war as a method to solve human problems... Let us stop the killing game, destroying our own brothers." Zigler's call remains before us. Let Christians of the world decide not to kill *anyone*. Let us disarm ourselves of violence and re-equip ourselves with the tools of active nonviolence and conflict reconciliation. Let us prepare ourselves to become vibrant bearers of God's love, vital, relevant, and ready to respond to the needs of our times.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT ON EARTH PEACE

OEP is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit. While it is an agency of the denomination, there is no provided denominational funding. All resources for our ministry come from donations of individuals and congregations or income from programs.

ON EARTH PEACE VALUES

Our shared values are what bring us together as the On Earth Peace community. These values guide our work and direct our decision-making.

1 - *Jesus-Centered Spirituality* -

2 We follow Jesus into the work of justice and peace. We share in spiritual practices
3 and develop faith resources to help undergird our programs.

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5 - *Positive Peace* -

6 We learn, teach, and practice dynamic forms of peacemaking which see conflict
7 as an important tool to meet needs, address injustice, correct imbalances of
8 power, and seek healing and reconciliation.

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10 - *Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression* -

11 We commit to name and undo barriers to participation in our programs based
12 on identity and to work for full inclusion and equity for all who wish to join in
13 our work. We commit to the long-term transformation of On Earth Peace, the
14 church, and society.

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16 - *Intergenerational Leadership* -

17 We nurture peacemakers and leaders and honor the wisdom, skill, and experi-
18 ence of all generations.

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20 - *Beloved Community* -

21 We commit to raising the levels of relationships until justice and peace prevail,
22 and all people attain their full human potential.

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24 **Vision Statement: The World We Work For**

25 "We see a world in Beloved Community, free from oppression, violence, and war."

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27 **Mission Statement: Our Portion of the Work**

28 "We develop and walk with leaders and communities who work for justice and
29 peace."

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31 Since our formation in 1974, when we equipped Brethren youth as conscien-
32 tious objectors and adults as peace promoters, OEP has supported leadership
33 for peace in each generation. Our work today centers on developing both leaders
34 and their communities for more effective work for justice and peace.

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36 **OEP Strategic Priorities**

37 Our present program priorities focus on helping leaders and communities learn
38 and apply the spiritual and practical discipline of Kingian Nonviolence Conflict
39 Reconciliation. We have special focus for our work within the Church of the
40 Brethren, and our continued long-term journey toward becoming an organiza-
41 tion and community that dismantles systemic barriers to full participation.

- 42 1. Develop individuals as leaders with spirituality and skills in Kingian Nonvio-
- 43 lence, using groups such as cohorts and communities of learning and action.
- 44 2. Walk with leaders and their communities as they take action for justice and
- 45 peace using the Kingian Nonviolence approach, including accountability,
- 46 consultation, and organizing in solidarity with current movements.

- 3. Through our agency responsibilities and opportunities, embolden the Church of the Brethren to become a living peace and justice denomination.
- 4. Institutionalize Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression in On Earth Peace practices and structures, including staff and board composition, programs, budgets, policies, and accountability to AR/AO partners including Crossroads and the Supportive Communities Network.

2022 THEME: ATTACK FORCES OF EVIL, NOT PERSONS DOING EVIL

In 2022, OEP lifted up the third principle of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr’s nonviolence approach, “Attack Forces of Evil, Not Persons Doing Evil.” This can also be phrased as “nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people.” In our denomination, and in the society around us, personal attacks and divisive rhetoric are destroying relationships and breaking down communities, often without addressing the real relational or systemic problems underneath. It’s time to learn to attack problems instead of attacking people, to hold out hope for restored relationships, and to speak a positive vision of the future.

Taking up this theme for 2022 meant that we as your peace agency sought to practice these skills ourselves, while bringing these disciplines to life in our Brethren community. With Principle Three as a backdrop and our young adult interns as our principal organizers, in 2022 On Earth Peace significantly revamped our organizing work, seeking to sharpen our capacity for applying the discipline of active nonviolence to current concerns including gun violence.

2022 UPDATES

1000 Brethren Kingian Nonviolence Training Project

We are working to help the Church of the Brethren grow its capacity to speak with power to the needs of our time. We have set a long-term goal of training 1000 Brethren in Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation. This is intended as a long-term project to transform the denomination’s approach to questions of justice and peace. We hope to help establish a new baseline for faithful engagement in the world around us.

We have powerful Annual Conference statements on violence, war, poverty, racism, hunger, and environmental destruction. But are we yet equipped to speak, act, and lead on these issues? We believe that the Church of the Brethren can be strengthened by developing a common framework for non-violent leadership.

On Earth Peace proposes that a key part of that shared framework can be an approach called Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation. Kingian Nonviolence is based on the theology, philosophy, and methodology of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the leadership of the Civil Rights movement. Former OEP board member David Jehnsen (Living Peace Church of the Brethren,

Columbus, OH) connected OEP with the Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation approach in about 2007. Jehnsen, who was raised in the Michigan District of the Church of the Brethren, joined Brethren Volunteer Service in 1962 and became part of the Chicago Freedom Movement, serving on Dr. King's Chicago staff. After Dr. King's assassination, Jehnsen worked with Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., a close associate of Dr. King, to codify what they learned into an approach and curriculum.

Kingian Nonviolence shares the "will" and the "skill" of nonviolence - values and practices we can use for interpersonal conflict and community leadership. Seeing this as a path to implement the values and teachings of Jesus, OEP has moved to institutionalize this approach in our work and ministry and it has become a primary form of engagement with the Church of the Brethren.

As a soft launch for the larger "1000 Brethren" project, the Michigan District of the Church of the Brethren hosted a 16-hour core training of Kingian Nonviolence over eight weeks in the spring of 2022. Led by co-facilitators Sara Halde-
man Scarr and Kimberly Koczan and guest speaker Thomas Dowdy, participants engaged with Kingian principles and steps and spent time exploring the spiritual formation aspects of committing to nonviolence as followers of Jesus.

In September 2022, the Westminster Church of the Brethren convened a day-long training in Kingian Nonviolence as a way to foster connections with other congregations and community leaders concerned about racism.

In the fall of 2022, OEP convened a circle of Church of the Brethren Kingian Nonviolence facilitators to share in refining the goals and plans for this project. That circle developed a new faith-based introductory two-hour workshop on Kingian Nonviolence, "Agape & Crisis," which was offered for the first time in January 2023. Three Church of the Brethren members participated in the fall 2022 certification course for Kingian Nonviolence trainers.

In winter/spring 2022-2023, OEP is developing training plans and programs with congregations and districts to continue building on the first year of program design and planning. Contact OEP@OnEarthPeace.org to explore how this training might help your district or congregation build capacity for active engagement with Jesus in the neighborhood.

Organizing Against Gun Violence

Between July 2022 and February 2023, On Earth Peace organizers connected with over 150 people from around the United States who yearn to speak up and get involved in responding to the epidemic of gun violence in our country. We have raised awareness among our staff and constituency and fostered a network of anti-gun violence allies and activists. In early 2023, we worked with a group of more than ten leaders across the denomination to launch an organizing team to galvanize the Church of the Brethren to be faithful as an effective force for

reducing gun violence wherever it occurs. We will continue to organize by building community, capacity, and commitment to act for safer communities.	1
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Internship Program	4
Through our paid internship program, On Earth Peace connects with 18 to 24-year-olds, college and graduate students of any age, and recent graduates. Our interns and fellows, who are second-year interns, lead much of our organizing, communication, and development work. They receive training in Kingian Nonviolence and apply that training in the work they do on behalf of OEP. In 2022, 20 interns and fellows participated in the program.	5
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Interns and fellows initiated and led much of our programming in 2022. Their contributions included launching and coordinating our gun violence campaign, organizing our monthly Kingian Nonviolence trainings, hosting our inaugural OEP Day of Celebration, developing toolkits on immigration and migrant justice, leading workshops at National Youth Conference, supporting our youth grant recipients, offering a youth-focused training for youth in Gaza, Palestine, using our Agape-Satyagraha Training curriculum, and leading our fall children's drama club for kids 6-12 years old from Gaza and the United States.	12
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Community Engagement Mini-Grants for Youth Groups	21
OEP is supporting youth groups and their efforts by offering up to \$500 in grant funding to support a youth-initiated project for peace and justice in their community. We accompany youth through webinars and consultation as they connect with their neighborhoods. In 2022, OEP offered grants to youth in Findlay, OH, and Gaza, Palestine.	22
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Youth and Young Adult Peacemaker Formation	28
OEP partnered with SPARK to offer Kingian Nonviolence and conflict skills to youth in Gaza, Palestine. OEP interns Hadil and Haya ran a 6-week program that adapted OEP's Agape Satyagraha curriculum for a group of Palestinian youth in Gaza. Our interns continue to work with youth from this group to develop community engagement projects.	29
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OEP hosted a 16-hour KNV Core Training for OEP interns and youth from the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation's Peace Fellows program, facilitated by Marie Benner-Rhoades and Drs. Sherri Bevel and Mary Lou Finley. The Peace Fellows were high school students from Olympia and Wenatchee, WA; Fargo, ND; and Montreal, Quebec, Canada; and a college student from the University of Washington, who are working on climate, economic inequality, feminism, and LGBTQ issues. They joined US and international OEP interns to participate.	35
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Children as Peacemakers	43
Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, OEP offered a series of webinars for parents and caregivers of children called Children as Peacemakers, focused on justice-based learning and organizing for kids. Topics included bullying,	44
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colonization, and indigenous solidarity, racial justice, Kingian Nonviolence, environmental justice, and gender identity and sexuality.

The “On Earth Performers” drama club for kids met throughout the fall to explore issues that affect their lives and communities. Children from Palestine and the United States designed and performed skits on topics including bullying, environmental justice, and the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Interns Simi and Haya led the drama club offering skills in acting, community formation, and language interpretation.

Standing with People of Color Study/Action Process

In 2022, On Earth Peace was delegated by the Annual Conference to join with the Southern Ohio and Kentucky District to lead a two-year study/action process, “Standing with People of Color.” Since August 2022, OEP staff has met regularly with members of the Southern Ohio & Kentucky district of the Church of the Brethren and to develop objectives for a two-year denominational study-action process focused on racial justice, “Standing with People of Color.” (See report from that committee elsewhere in this booklet.)

Kingian Nonviolence Certification Programs

On Earth Peace conducted a Kingian Nonviolence Level One Training of Trainers, with participants from California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Palestine, France, and Cameroon. The group learned the key modules of the Kingian Nonviolence Two-Day Core workshop and practiced facilitating with each other. The course took place over thirteen weeks from September to December. The group included three members of the Church of the Brethren.

Partnering with the Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training (Chicago) and the Nonviolence Legacy Program (Arizona), OEP helped re-imagine and re-design the Level Two Certification program in Kingian Nonviolence, focused on organizing and mobilizing. The course took place from April to June 2022. The participant group included two Church of the Brethren members or participants.

Partnerships

We deepened connections with partners in mutual support and shared work including the Supportive Communities Network, the Church of the Brethren Standing Committee and Agencies, Dunker Punks Podcast, the Church of the Brethren Women’s Caucus, Kingian Nonviolence Coordinating Committee, the Institute for Human Rights and Responsibilities, Inc., the Nonviolence Legacy Program, the Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training, Community Peacemaker Teams (formerly known as Christian Peacemaker Teams), the Fellowship of Reconciliation-USA, the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Oregon Poor People’s Campaign.

Working for an Inclusive Church

Since at least 2011, On Earth Peace has expressed public concern about the violence that is expressed in our denominational conflict over the 1983 Annual Conference paper on human sexuality. That year, in response to a credible death threat against a minority church leader, OEP shared a statement of inclusion challenging the church to become a safe and welcoming community for all oppressed minorities in the church. Since then OEP has continued to work toward a vision of a church where people will not be harmed because of their identity but rather affirmed as God's beloved children. Over the past ten years, OEP staff and board members have invested considerable time and resources to participate in important denominational conversations in hope of building understanding and relationships around these important issues.

In 2022, after eighteen months of dialogue processes, the Church of the Brethren Standing Committee determined that On Earth Peace had not violated polity by joining the Supportive Communities Network. We continue to believe and practice that all God's children have a rightful place in the church universal, in the Church of the Brethren specifically, and within the ministries of On Earth Peace. We believe that patterns and practices in the denomination which prevent the full participation of racial and cultural minorities, women, and queer people must be examined and shifted, within On Earth Peace itself and in wider church structures.

OEP STAFF

On Earth Peace has a three-person staff that is functioning in an extended interim capacity, sharing executive roles in addition to program and administrative responsibilities.

Co-Interim Executives: Marie Benner-Rhoades, Matt Guynn, Darlene Johnson
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In addition to our full-time staff, On Earth Peace has an average of 15 paid interns working as part-time contract staff on a wide range of programs and projects, and relies on a leadership network of volunteers and contractors.

OEP FINANCES

Financial Report for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022 (unaudited)
Our audited financial report is available on request.

Income \$312,120
Individuals (770 Donors) \$167,210
Congregations (126 Congregations) \$62,041
Program \$12,153
Endowment Income \$15,865
Special Events \$29,483
Planned Giving \$10,532
Other Contributions \$12,547
Other Income \$2,289
Expenses \$444,687
Net Operating Revenue (\$132,567)
Unrealized Gain (\$177,689)
Net Revenue (\$310,567)

On Earth Peace gives thanks for the support and abundant generosity of the many individuals and churches who faithfully donate and even increase their financial support for OEP. Support this ministry by becoming an individual donor, by asking your congregation to support On Earth Peace, or by asking how you can help us raise funds by meeting new potential supporters. Give now at www.OnEarthPeace.org/donate

To learn more about our Dove Club monthly donors program and the Legacy Society through which you can make deferred gifts to help secure our work for the next generations, please contact us at OEP@OnEarthPeace.org or (410) 635-8704.