

Peace and Justice Committee Report – November 2016

Peace and Justice is a joint committee of Eastern District and Franconia Mennonite Conferences, though our programs have often included Mennonites who are not members of either conference. The committee has been without a chairperson for almost two years while several people have continued to organize the annual winter peace retreat with financial support from Eastern District Conference.

This spring Franconia Conference leaders made a new commitment to support peace and justice initiatives within the conference. Jenifer Eriksen-Morales was assigned to serve as staff liaison for peace and justice, with the expectation that financial resources and support from other staff will also be available to the committee.

About 50 of us – adults and children – gathered for winter recreation, discussion, worship, and renewal at Spruce Lake Retreat in February. This was our 46th annual winter peace retreat, this time focusing on the theme “*Israel-Palestine: Learning from the Least*” with Andrew Bush. Pat and Mike Hedrick led the children’s program.

The 2017 winter peace retreat will be held in a new location: St. Mary of Providence Center, near Elverson, PA. The adult program, on the theme “*Rewilding the Way: Break free to follow an untamed God*” will be led by Todd Wynward.

The Peace and Justice Committee maintains a website that includes information about various issues of interest. It also publishes an occasional newsletter for our local church peace representatives to provide information about resources and regional peace and justice events, and to support more interaction among our peace representatives. Five issues of the newsletter, which include stories about peace and justice activities in our local congregations, have been distributed during the past year, and the newsletter is also posted on the Peace and Justice Committee’s website.