



March 7, 2008

Washington D.C. and Your Community

*“Now, more than ever, America needs our moral witness.
We need a surge in troops in the nonviolent army of the Lord.
We need a surge in conscience and a surge in activism
and a surge in truth-telling for a change.”*

Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock, CPWI worship, Washington National Cathedral, March 16, 2007

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We invite you, your family, church and neighbors to be that surge! Come to our nation’s capitol on March 7, or create a Peace Witness in your own community. Join us to fill houses of worship, pray for peace, and hear anew God’s call to us. Grounded in Christian worship, those in Washington will process to the Capitol and be joined by brothers and sisters of other faiths for an Interfaith Peace Witness.

Last year 4000 Christians filled the Washington National Cathedral, walked prayerfully to the White House, then encircled it with the Light of Christ’s peace as 222 people knelt in prayer until they were arrested. That evening 200 worship services for peace were held across the nation.

We may be “protest weary,” but the love of God and promise of God’s reign of peace and justice compel us to continue with hope. If we wait until the presidential election, we betray those who suffer and die daily in Iraq. If we sit in silence, we forsake those who are abused or tortured now. If we stay in our homes and churches and do not go to the halls of power, we are complicit as our nation once again sounds its war drums. If we pray but do not act, we make a mockery of the love of Christ for the least of our sisters and brothers. If we do not witness NOW, we expose our own lack of faith in God’s transforming power.

Our Focus

End the U.S. occupation of Iraq: Like the prophet Isaiah, we are called to speak truth to power. We confess our complicity in this war and commit to put our trust in God, who insists we build right relations with all people. We call our government to immediately begin an orderly withdrawal of U.S. troops and closure of bases with a timetable supported by the Iraqi people.

Resist war against Iran: Like the psalmist, we shall seek peace and pursue it. We believe that threats of war sow fear and hostility. We will resist any acts of aggression against Iran. We call upon our government to choose the way of diplomacy and lead the way to peace through truth-telling, justice & international cooperation.

Support our troops: Like Jeremiah we lament, “For the hurt of my poor people I hurt. Is there no balm in Gilead?” We commit to a ministry of healing and justice for those who have served in our armed forces. We call our government to provide generous support for veterans to heal their wounds and to rebuild their lives.

Support an Iraqi-led peace process: Like Micah, we work and pray for the day when everyone can sit under their own vine and fig tree and no one shall make them afraid. We repent of the devastation wrought by this war and support relief efforts for all Iraqis. We call our government to make reparations and fund international reconstruction.

Say NO to torture: Jesus said, “I was in prison, and you visited me.” We will show mercy to those held captive, for it is there that we will find Jesus. We insist that our government treat all prisoners humanely and justly and that torture be banned by all agencies of our government.

Say YES to justice: As Mary praised God for lifting up the lowly and filling the hungry with good things, we commit to work for justice for all, to make the connections between war abroad and poverty at home and between local and global violence. We call our government to fully and justly fund human needs at home.

Building a Movement

We pledge to offer a prophetic and unceasing witness for peace with Christians and people of faith across the nation. We ask you to join us in building a peace movement at both the local and national level. Our plan of action includes:

- o *A wave of peace witnesses* throughout Lent. Post your event on our website and look there for others.
- o *A national peace witness* in Washington, DC on March 7. Our goal is 10,000 participants.
- o *Regional witnesses for peace* on March 7 or soon after to mark five years of war in Iraq.
- o *A Peace Surge Summer* urging U.S. Senators to pursue a legislative agenda that favors diplomatic and peaceful solutions in Iraq. We are asking local partners, especially those in areas highlighted by CPWI, to participate in strategic lobbying and witness to influence significant Senate votes. Our goal is to have well-orchestrated campaigns in over a dozen key locations by May.

Partners:

Adventist Peace Fellowship/Alpha Mennonite Church/American Friends Service Committee/Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America/Brethren Witness Washington Office/Catholic Peace Fellowship/Christian Peacemaker Teams/Church of the Brethren, On Earth Peace/Deep Shift/Disciples Justice Action network/Disciples Peace Fellowship/Episcopal Peace Fellowship/Fellowship of Reconciliation/Institute for Progressive Christianity/Kairos Action/Kirkridge/Leadership Conference of Women Religious/Lutheran Peace Fellowship/Maryknoll Global Concerns/Medical Mission Sisters' Alliance for Justice/Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office/ Mennonite Church USA Peace and Justice Support Network/Methodist Federation for Social Action/Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice/ Network of Spiritual Progressives/No2Torture/Pace e Bene/Pax Christi/ Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship/Presbyterian Peace Fellowship/Santa Clara County Council of Churches/Sisters of Mercy of the Americas/United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries/United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society

Public Witness on March 7

Once again we will lift up a moral witness for peace to our nation on March 7 in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. In Washington we will join in Christian worship services at noon in churches near Capitol Hill. Each service will include a prominent preacher of God’s word, a witness to the effects of war, prayers, and a celebration of the Eucharist (as appropriate). Worship experiences will be diverse, including Taize, emergent, Gospel and reformed, as well as denominational traditions such as Episcopal, Quaker and Catholic. Following worship we will process to the National Mall for a mass Interfaith Witness for Peace with inspiring words, ritual and song. All of us will act for peace and some may engage in a nonviolent action that risks arrest.

Additional opportunities

Thursday evening, March 6, and Friday prior to worship, you may take part in nonviolence trainings (strongly encouraged for those considering civil disobedience) and other workshops around the commitments of our witness. Topics will include responsible proposals for ending the occupation, policies and action to support our troops, reports from interfaith delegations to Iran, a Christian pledge to seek peace, local strategies for witness, reports from people working with Iraqi refugees and a National Religious Campaign against Torture event. See our website for details.

Resources for prayer, learning and witness are available on our website. Please register your local witnesses on the website and soon you’ll be able to register for events in Washington.

For more information, resources, and to download invitations and flyers:

www.christianpeacewitness.org