



A Season of Peace
September 14, 2022
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We are in a season of peace. Maybe it doesn't feel that way, but I take it on good authority that we are. On October 2, we celebrate World Communion Sunday, joining with denominations around the world at the Lord's Table. It is one way we promote Christian unity and ecumenical cooperation – one way we promote peace.

On October 2, many of our congregations will receive the Peace & Global Witness Special Offering. A gift to the Peace & Global Witness offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Each congregation is encouraged to keep 25% of the offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace in their particular context. The Presbytery retains an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

During this season of peace, part of those funds supports the International Peacemakers program, and the Presbytery's share makes it possible for us to bring a peacemaker to Wisconsin. These are people who have committed themselves and their ministries to peacebuilding, expanding from a season of peace to a lifetime's work for peace. This year, Rev. Julie Kandema from Rwanda will be visiting the Milwaukee Presbytery to share about her ministry in peacebuilding and reconciliation. She will be leading our education hour and worship at the September 20 Presbytery meeting. Please join us in person or online by Zoom. You don't need to be an elected commissioner to attend; the meeting is open for everyone. But, [you do need to register](#), especially if you want to Zoom in. As importantly, you need to register **TODAY if you hope to have a meal!** If you miss the Presbytery meeting, check out the rest of her schedule in Fresh Impressions.

Mpho Tutu van Furth, a South African Anglican priest, author and activist, wrote about a miscommunication that took place during her country's Truth and Reconciliation process.¹ She explained that when the perpetrators used the words, "I am sorry. Forgive me," they accepted individual blame and responsibility, seeking to be excused from any personal wrongdoing. In translation, however, the apology was interpreted as "I ask for peace." Mpho Tutu Van Furth explains that this is an ubuntu apology, and it is about we. "I ask for peace" sees interconnectivity. It requires more than asking victims "to pick up an eraser and walk through the past eradicating the injuries that perpetrators inflicted..." The ubuntu apology is full of expectation for mutual work toward justice and reparation. It restores the "we." It took much effort to bring both the perpetrators and victims to a mutual understanding of what this larger sense of apology, forgiveness, and repair meant for their country.

In this season, we have the chance to lean into the collective pursuit of peace, not to alleviate a sense of personal guilt or give a half-hearted apology for the wrongdoing of our ancestors, but to seek the wellbeing of all. May we indeed "ask for peace" through our giving, our learning, and our actions to bring justice and healing.

¹ Mpho Tutu van Furth, *Forgiveness and Reparation, the Healing Journey* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2022), 72–73, 74–75, 75–76.