



(The banner was imagined by Salford's Peace Camp leadership and created by the 80 children who attended in June 2022)

Gardening for Peace
Salford Mennonite Church
Saturday September 24, 2022
A Summary Report



Gardening for Peace Weekend **Saturday, September 24, and Sunday, September 25, 2022** **Salford Mennonite Church**

Purpose

The headline of the event is that we are about transforming the hearts of people to become followers the peaceable way of Jesus, because that is where each person constructs their social structures.

Background

The thread of this event started when Megan Briggs, Story Powerhouse, Program Director and [Listen Courageously](#) Facilitator, initiated “Meaningful Conversations” at the Broad Street Grind in Souderton in mid-2019. These conversations were a follow up to the Indivisible Hope gatherings, a regular series of meetings designed to educate the Indian Valley to the political process. Indivisible Hope worked with Megan and Salford’s Justice and Peace team.

Megan created a series of meetings called “Pathways to Peace.” The first meeting was held at Salford Mennonite Church in February 2020, with a panel of individuals who had completed their jail terms at the Phoenix prison in Graterford, led by Dave Moyer.

The second meeting was held at the Beth Or synagogue in Maple Glen featuring [Shane Claiborne](#) in March 2020.

At that meeting we learned that Shane is part of [Raw Tools](#), who with Mike Martin converts guns into garden tools. We decided to invite Shane to our Salford Mennonite and Advent Lutheran garden. That was March 2020, and everything shut down. Eventually we settled on the date Saturday, September 24, 2022 for Gardening for Peace. For an overview of the event please see our video: [Gardening for Peace Overview](#)

Goals of Event

Our major goal was to “start something” or strengthen the key initiatives of the Salford’s Justice and Peace team, or other community initiatives, keeping with an interfaith perspective:

1. Respond to Montco’s food insecurity issues,
2. Reaching out to Phoenix Prison in Graterford treating the Prisoners as Neighbors
3. Welcoming Refugees
4. Listening to the stories of Indigenous Peoples

Saturday, September 24, 2022, 1:00-7:45pm

The event was held in three major sections, 1. Opening in the Salford and Advent Garden; 2. 10 workshops and dinner and; 3. The main event with Shane Claiborne and Mike Martin. Over all, with the attendees, workshop presenters and other volunteers, we had approximately 150 people involved. Shane also led the morning service at Salford with a sermon and a follow-up second hour Q&A session.

Gardening for Peace opened at the garden, in the open air, on a very sunny pleasant fall day. John Ruth, author¹ and historian, opened with “Hoes, Tuckahoes and Strange Grain in Lenape Land.” Next Lenape Elder, John Thomas, from Bartlesville, OK, brought greetings from the Lenape People. Heather Lobban

¹ See his most recent book; “This Very Ground, This Crooked Affair: A Mennonite Homestead on Lenape Land,” Cascadia, 2021



Viravong, from Ursinus College read their Land Acknowledgement Statement (see p.4, also see Salford's Land Acknowledgement statement, located in Salford's prayer labyrinth.)

The 10 workshops, with over 80 people in attendance as described below with next steps, were held inside the church. During workshops, games and activities were available for 12 children entering 1st through 6th grade.

Before dinner a number of guns were "chopped" by Mike Martin and Shane Claiborne. After serving dinner to approximately 130 individuals the evening service began.

Shane Claiborne and Mike Martin led the evening service. Shane with his keynote:

"Ways to Peace" and a very powerful survivor's testimony by Jackie and Ed Burleigh, all shown in the following video: [Pathways to Peace video](#)

At the conclusion of the service, the congregation walked outside by the forge, taking turns at beating a gun into a garden tool (all shown in the above video). To close our event, Mike Martin presented Steve Blank with a garden tool. Shane announced; "It was a gun that had been 'born again.' "

Sunday Morning 9:30-11:45 am September 25, 2022

Shane Claiborne: [Sunday Morning Sermon: Blessed are the Peacemakers](#)
[Q & A with Shane Claiborne](#)

Workshop titles and next steps:

1. Fear Not: Creating a plan to respond to active violence (MCC - Mike Martin and Jess Stoltzfus Buller)
Ongoing conversation with Martin/Buller about using MCC's curriculum at Salford
2. Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence: A How To (Bryan Miller)
In conversation with Bryan Miller to host event in Lansdale in the Spring of 2023
3. Prison Reform (Dave Moyer)
Prisoners as Neighbors continues with inmates, current focus is on those who have life sentences, also a veterans group has been initiated
5. Are Christianity & Jesus Included in Islam? (Saleem Ahmed, MD FCPS)
Dr. Ahmed part of "Let's Talk" initiative at Salford
6. Growing Food for Your Community (Steve Blank) Location: Church garden
Section of garden dedicated to Lenape vegetables: tuckahoes, corn and beans
7. A Loaded Conversation² (MCC - Mike Martin and Jess Stoltzfus Buller)
8. A North Penn Where No One Is Hungry (Sheldon Good)
Continuation of Salford's, 'Project of the Month' food donations
9. Building Bridges through Civil Dialogue (Megan Briggs)
Exploratory conversation with Ms. Briggs to host a Civil Dialogue in the Indian Valley
10. Guns and Suicide: The Means Matter (Mark Boorse)
11. History and Necessity of Dialogue Between Muslims and Christians (Aziz Nathoo)
Mr. Nathoo is included in local Bible study. Salford members are now participating in a refugee resettlement program, in response to Mr. Nathoo's invitation.

If you or anyone you know has any questions about the follow-up or is interested in joining any of the follow-up actions, please contact: Joe Landis at jglandis@gmail.com

² [A Loaded Conversation: Mennonite Central Committee](#)



Land Acknowledgement Statement Signed by Ursinus College

Ursinus College respectfully acknowledges that our campus rests on Lenapehoking, the ancestral and spiritual homelands of the following five nations: Delaware Tribe of Indians, Delaware Nation, Eelūnaapèewii Lahkèewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown), Stockbridge-Munsee Community, and Munsee-Delaware Nation (Ontario).

Our community carries names derived from the Lenape language - names holding spiritual and cultural meaning while also bearing the remembrance of the systematic removal of the Lenape people over 250 years ago by European colonial powers, whose legacy still reinforces and benefits from the Lenape's disenfranchisement.

Ursinus College commits to collaboration, representation, and inclusion as we work together with the Lenape people to bring about healing and reconciliation between and among all our communities.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT in Salford's Prayer Labyrinth

Salford Mennonite Church and this labyrinth sit on the homelands of the Lenape people, who stewarded the lands for thousands of years. In 1718 it was part of a 200-acre purchase by immigrant (German) Mennonite settlers Henrich and Magdalena Ruth from (Philadelphia -based) surveyor- speculator David Powell. The surrounding Perkiomen watershed had been "bought" by William Penn from Lenape headman Maughoughsin in 1684 for "two coats, four pair stockings, and four bottles of sider. " Information from John L. Ruth 11/2021



Justice Grows in the Garden by Mandy Martin





Justice Grows in the Garden

An artist's interpretation, created for the 2022 Gardening for Peace event at Salford Mennonite Church, featuring speakers Shane Claiborne and Mike Martin. The painting is also a reflection of the ongoing work for justice and peace here and in the wider body of Christ.



The three fiery flowers in the foreground represent the Trinity, and the fire of God's spirit that compels us to take action.



The guns hidden amongst the greenery represent *Guns into Garden Tools* and our hope for an end to gun violence in our nation.



There is a garden growing with green vegetables, symbolizing the important work of reducing food insecurity, which in turn reduces the crime rate. There are "justice plants" growing in the garden, a reminder that without justice, there is no peace.



The Human Rights logo is also featured in among the garden plants, representing our desire for equality for all, regardless of age, gender, race, disability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.



There are traditional poppies with black centers in the flower garden, symbolizing our welcome for veterans and hope for healing from the trauma of war.



A black fist rises among the flowers, a symbol of racial justice originating with the 1968 Memphis sanitation march. The fist holds an olive branch, a symbol of peace and victory.



There is a turtle in the background of the painting, one of the symbols of the Lenape tribe, a reminder that we are on Lenape land and we seek justice for native peoples.



The image of Salford Mennonite Church is blended into the hillside. *The intent is to not center the story of this congregation*, but to acknowledge the work for justice and peace that has been accomplished here so far, and the hope for it to continue.



Behind the church, we see an image of a border wall that is falling down. This represents our hope for fair treatment of immigrants.



Finally, a dove hovers above the scene, representing God's spirit which fills us with a desire for peace and inspires us to work for change.

Turning guns into garden tools is a ministry of turning violence into peace. www.RawTools.org

Artwork by Bucks County artist Mandy Martin. www.MandyMartinArt.com