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**Go Forth in Peace**

The words of Isaiah 55 convey a profound message to us during A Season of Peace:

*For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace.*

*Go out in joy*. When we look around our world these days, it is sometimes hard to feel joyful. Yet joy inherently embraces optimism. Joy is the companion of faith and hope. In our polarized world torn by war, famine, and marginalization of the poor and disenfranchised, we are in desperate need of joyful and brave people who are willing to ask the hard questions and live the difficult solutions that make peace possible.

*Be led forth in peace.* Through the Peace & Global Witness Offering, we connect with each other, as the Church, **together**, to confront systems of injustice and promote reconciliation in places around the world and right here at home.

Throughout A Season of Peace, we have heard these inspiring stories:

~ The members of Faith Presbyterian in Indianapolis who go forth in peace with Indy TenPoint, a not-for-profit using a “boots-on-the-ground” approach to reducing gun violence, increasing employment and enhancing educational achievement. Indy TenPoint connects young people with loving and caring people who help them find what God designed for them to be in life.

~ On the island nation of Fiji, the effects of climate change and violent cyclones force more and more people each year to leave the security of their homes. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program reminds us that our *Commitment to Peacemaking* includes “making peace with the earth,” meaning — protecting and restoring God’s Creation through environmentally mindful advocacy.

~ As we see in the news every day, millions of people desperately seek peace far from their native lands. Lesvos Solidarity, on the island off the coast of Greece, is one of the Church’s global partners in peacemaking and is a living example of how we can show love to the stranger and promote dignity among those who flee war and poverty.

Through our gifts to the Peace & Global Witness Offering, we are able, as a single congregation, to participate in this larger work that we would not be able to do on our own. Because this a shared Offering, we can help those whose challenges are very present to us. Twenty-five percent of the Offering will stay with our own congregation to pursue peacemaking and reconciliation ministries; 25% stays with our mid council for similar work in our region. (TALK ABOUT HOW YOUR CHURCH AND MID COUNCIL USE THESE FUNDS) And 50% will be used at the national level for ministries of peacemaking and global witness. Remember — peace is active, not passive. Peace is doing, not waiting.

So let us go out in joy and be led forth in peace. Please give whatever you can. For when we all do a little, it adds up a lot.

***Let us pray~***

*O God of all Creation, lead us joyfully from our places of comfort to bring your peace to those experiencing violence, displacement and fear. As we spread your joy, may we connect others with your healing and sheltering peace.* **Amen***.*