

## Sandeep Thomas Licensed Toward Ordination at AICCP

“Welcome to persons from Allegheny Conference churches. Welcome to friends and family of Sandeep and Sufi Thomas. Together with Asian Indian Christian Church of Pittsburgh members, we become a larger community, gathered together on this important day as witnesses of Sandeep’s licensing.” With these words of welcome, Pastor Thinagar Sitther began the worship service on February 17, 2008, at 4:30 on Sunday afternoon.

Begun as a church plant by Allegheny Mennonite Conference, the Asian Indian Christian Church of Pittsburgh (AICCP) met for its first Sunday worship service on December 12, 1999. Now, nine years later, the congregation has grown. Pastor Thinagar Sitther, church planter, continues as lead pastor. Pastor Sandeep Thomas has been added to the leadership team as associate pastor. AICCP meets regularly on Sunday afternoons at 4:30 in the Covenant-Community Presbyterian Church building, 1630 Greentree Road, Pittsburgh, Pa.

After his words of welcome, Pastor Sitther invited us to focus on God, because “God is here.” His prayer was one of thankfulness, for the places God has brought us from, for the places God intends to take us, for the specific moment in time that caused us to gather in worship. “Thank you for choosing us and for blessing us with the ministry of peace and reconciliation,” he prayed. Blessings for Sandeep, Sufi (his wife) and their family ended the prayer.

The AICCP Music Team then led out with songs of worship and praise. Songs like, “You shall go out with joy,” and “Hosanna,” led us to the final song of “We are standing on Holy Ground, and I know that there are angels all around. Let us praise Jesus now. We are stand-

ing in His presence on holy ground.” Indeed, we were on holy ground, worshipping the One who calls and equips each one for ministry.

We were reminded throughout the worship service that God calls each one of us for ministry. As preparations were made to receive the offering, we heard that we give our money as well as our lives. This was not only a licensing service for Sandeep; the gathered worshippers stand together, supporting the ministry.

As Kurt Horst, Allegheny Conference Minister, invited Sandeep and Sufi forward for licensing, he reminded us that “All who heed the call from the Lord of the harvest and enter the covenant of baptism become Christ’s ministers. All receive the Spirit; all are given gifts. In addition, through the Spirit, God continues to call women and men to the gift of credentialed ministry.”

Horst continued, “We gather here today because we believe that God is drawing Sandeep Thomas toward ordained ministry. The years ahead will be a time of testing to see if you, Sandeep, are willing and able to follow this path, to see if this set-apart-ministry is the one to which God and the church are calling you. Asian Indian Christian Church of Pitts-



**Above: Sandeep Thomas**  
**Below: Thinagar Sitther**





**Above: AICCP Music Team**

**Right: Ahia, Sufi, and Sandeep Thomas.**

**Below: Credentialed persons and church council members gather around Sandeep and Sufi for prayer. In the foreground can be seen daughter Ahia and son Andrew.**



burgh and the Allegheny Mennonite Conference have confirmed your emerging sense of calling and join with you in this time of discernment.

Following Sandeep's and Sufi's responses to the formal questions for licensing, and the congregational response, all credentialed persons in attendance, as well as members of the AICCP council were invited forward to

lay hands on Sandeep as prayers of blessing were offered. The gift of the *Minister's Manual* was presented to Sandeep on behalf of the congregation and council.

Pastor Sittler then told Pastor Thomas that to become a minister is a joy. "There will also be times when a minister is tempted to run away from the responsibilities of ministering. When these times come, know that you don't need to run," he said. In his words to the congregation, the antidote for wanting to run away can be found. The congregation was challenged to be ready to support Pastor Thomas on a daily basis and to join him in growing the church. Without this kind of support, the licensing is for nothing. "In some ways," he said, "we all are also licensed to do

God's work today." He closed with words of thankfulness that it is God's discernment to bring two different persons with different gifts to lead in doing the work of the church.

Sandeep and Sufi, together with their daughter, Ahia, responded with the song, "Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing." Sandeep then stated that he was thankful for everyone who came to help make this day special for him, but it really wasn't about him. "It is about something special that God is up to." It is about being instruments of peace. He expressed appreciation for the Mennonite Church in its



demonstration of peace, as well as his desire that AICCP demonstrate this gift of peace in Pittsburgh. He then read the chosen text for the evening—2 Corinthians 5:11-21.

Verse 18 reads: "All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him." Kurt Horst, who brought the message, thanked Sandeep for choosing this text and for "making the reconciliation of God a driving force in your life." His sermon had four points: (1) Those who have been reconciled to God have had their world changed. (2) It is God, not us, who does the reconciling. (3) Not everyone will understand this message of peace and reconciliation. (4) Ministry must flow out of love.

Following the sermon, all in attendance from Allegheny Conference were invited up as an impromptu choir. The hymns, "Will you let me be your servant" and "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" were sung. John Bender, pastor at Pittsburgh Mennonite Church, closed the worship service with prayer and a benediction.

A wonderful meal of Indian food was served following the worship service. The gift of hospitality is very much present at AICCP, and the fellowship was delightful. I was blessed to have been a part of this special event. May the people of AICCP be blessed as they become agents of reconciliation and peace in Pittsburgh.—Donna Mast, *Scottsdale*

**Photo Credits:**

p. 1 & 2, Conrad Mast;  
p. 2, bottom left,  
Sudheer Kumar Ravuri,  
p. 3 & 6, supplied by authors;  
p. 8, Donna Mast.

**March/April 2008 Volume 65 Number 2**

Allegheny Conference News (ISSN 0746-7362) is published six times a year. Periodical postage paid at Scottsdale, PA 15683 and at additional mailing offices. Postal Service Registration #0013-800; **Postmaster:** Send change of address 3579 to *Allegheny Conference News*, 531 Scottsdale Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683-1243. Known office of publication: Donna Mast, editor, *Allegheny Conference News*, 531 Scottsdale Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683-1243; home phone: (724) 887-5563; e-mail: sendamcnews@gmail.com. Printed in USA.



# Allegheny Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting

The 133rd Annual Conference of Allegheny Mennonite Conference will be held on August 1-3, 2008 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Our theme is "Freely Receive ~ Freely Give" and our representing agency will be Mennonite Mutual Aid. There will be seminars, worship times, and reporting times for adults in which babysitting will

be provided for children under 5 (not available over meals and free time). There will be separate activities planned for children, junior high and youth, so be sure to mark their ages on the registration form. Meal registration is a must and a reminder that Friday evening meal is NOT included in the meal package. Make your plans now to attend and receive!

## Canadian and American Mennonites To Meet

*Joint Release of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada*

Members of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada will meet together at a binational "People's Summit for Faithful Living" at the Canadian Mennonite University campus in Winnipeg, July 8-10, 2008.

It is a sense of urgency that led planners to call this binational gathering a "People's Summit for Faithful Living." Under the theme "At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril," participants will focus on the urgent task of being a faithful community of God amidst the many challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Deuteronomy 4:1-9 will be the theme text.

"The book of Deuteronomy is especially suited for use in such a summit," says Jack Suderman, general secretary of MC Canada. "It is directed at God's people as they move into the land God has allowed them to possess, where they face important questions like why does God work through peoplehood even when that people is not deserving? What does covenant mean and how does that inform our questions of faithfulness? What are the temptations of God's people in the land in which they live? Where do God's people find security as they live in the land and are tempted by wealth, power and ownership?"

These are the urgent questions the summit will address through worship, study and discussion. Mennonite Church USA identified similar questions at its convention in San José, Calif.,

when it passed a resolution calling for, "... resources that help us live faithfully in Christlike ways, sometimes at odds with our national culture, acknowledging that no culture is either completely redeemed or completely fallen."

Plenary worship speakers are Tom and Christine Sine of Seattle, Wash., April Yamasaki of Abbotsford, B.C., and Tom Yoder-Neufeld of Waterloo, Ont. A variety of workshops and activities and time for visiting and recreation will round out the two and a half day event.

The People's Summit was announced in July 2007 at the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention in San José, Calif., and the MC Canada annual delegate assembly in Abbotsford, B.C. The two denominations last met together at a joint convention in Charlotte, N.Car., in 2005 where delegates strongly supported continuing to meet together.

The People's Summit begins the evening of July 8 and continues through the evening of July 10. Attendees are invited to make a vacation of the People's Summit and Manitoba attractions such as the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, beautiful Whiteshell Provincial Park and the hugely popular Winnipeg Folk Festival.

Information and registration is available at [summit.mennoniteusa.org](http://summit.mennoniteusa.org) (for Mennonite Church USA) and at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/534](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/534) (for MC Canada).



**The Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA and the Mennonite Church Canada General Board met jointly at Charlotte 2005 in Charlotte, N.C. Delegates at that binational gathering strongly supported the two denominations continuing to meet together. Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada will meet together at a binational People's Summit for Faithful Living, July 8 to 10, in Winnipeg.**

## Bridging Divides: Uniting the Church for Peacemaking

*April 11-12, 2008 Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, Washington, D.C.*

This conference for pastors, theologians, service workers, academics and laypersons will explore how the church can unite for mission despite political divides and also work to heal divisions in our communities. Speakers include Myron Augsburg, keynote and plenary sessions with Michelle Armster, MCC US; Chris Bowman, pastor of Oakton Church of the Brethren; Steve Brown, of Calvary Community and Phil Jones, director of the Church of the Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Adam Tice, Hyattsville Mennonite Church, is worship leader. "How we talk when we disagree" is the pre-conference seminar led by Grant Rissler. Participants will join the annual Hymn Sing for Peace is 5:00 pm on April 12. To register and for more information, see [www.apcwdc.mennonitenet](http://www.apcwdc.mennonitenet) or contact Keith Swartzendruber at 202-548-0010 or [keith@apcwdc.mennonite.net](mailto:keith@apcwdc.mennonite.net).

**ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE: REGISTRATION FORM**  
**133rd ANNUAL MEETING—August 1-3, 2008**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CONGREGATION/AGENCY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(NO phone reservations. Please note: the conference office will close at 2:00 p.m. Wed., July 30, until after this event.)**

**List everyone's name (for NAMETAG purposes) and the ages of children (for better planning of children's activities)**

Name of those attending	Children's ages	Name of those attending	Children's ages
1.		4.	
2.		5.	
3.		6.	

**YOUTH REGISTRATION (completed grade 9-grade 12)** (staying in the Lodge, remember to bring your own linens)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Cost \$80.00 (which includes meals, lodging, and conference fee) **Total youth** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE FEE**

Whether registering for all or any part of conference: the fee is \$5.00 per person and \$2.50 per child ages 3-11.  
 Number of adults \_\_\_\_\_ x \$5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of children (ages 3-11) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$2.50 = \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Conference Fee** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**LODGING** (The rooms/sites are charged with one/two persons per room per night: for each additional adult it will be \$10 per person per night. For children up to age 11, lodging is free.)

Rates per night are: Solarhouse/Guesthouse \$96 Cottage room \$72 (Linens are not provided for the cottages)  
 Camp Site with hookups (water/electric/sewer) \$22 Camping site without hookups \$15  
 Indicate lodging preference \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check which night/nights you need lodging: Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lodging requests will be on a first come, first serve basis.  
**# of nights** \_\_\_\_\_ **X rate** \_\_\_\_\_ = **Total Lodging** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MEALS must be PRE-REGISTERED for by JULY 15** (Children 2 and under are free)

**Meal Packages** (Saturday brunch through Sunday noon- **does NOT** include Friday evening)

# of people	cost	total
3-11 year _____	x \$15.75	_____
12-yrs-adult _____	x \$31.50	_____

**Total Cost of Packages** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual meals**

MEALS:	3-11 YRS.	12-ADULTS
Friday dinner	_____	_____
Sat. Brunch	_____	_____
Sat. Dinner	_____	_____
Sun. Breakfast	_____	_____
Sun. Lunch	_____	_____

(not included in pkg.)

**MAIL TO:**  
 Allegheny Mennonite Conference  
 PO Box 12  
 Somerset, PA 15501

Individual meals are: \$9.00 per adult and \$4.50 per child per meal with the exception of Sunday Breakfast which is \$6.50 per adult/\$3.25 per child.  
**All meals must be paid upon registration or upon check-in.**  
**ALL MEALS NEED TO BE REGISTERED BY JULY 15 with no refunds**

TOTALS	Conference Fee	Youth	Lodging/ Camp Site	Meals	Grand Total	Deposit (please pay at least 1/4 of total)	Balance Due

**REGISTRATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JULY 15.** Any registrations postmarked after July 15 will be charged a \$15 (per person) or \$30 (per family) late fee with **no meals available!**

# The Happiest Man in the World

*The following was written for the funeral service of John Adams, held at Pittsburgh Mennonite Church, February 16, 2008*



**John Adams:  
November 11, 1924 –  
February 12, 2008**

To give someone the title “The Happiest Man in the World” must seem audacious: the kind of superlative one might expect in an obituary. However, to John Adam’s many friends this title seems perfectly reasonable and accurate. In this day and age when many of us strive so hard in our search for happiness, it is truly remarkable to meet someone to whom happiness seemed so natural.

The details of John’s life are scattered among many people and places. He was born in 1924 in a rural area of South Carolina. In the 1940’s John moved to Pittsburgh and lived with family until the 1980’s when he joined the Step-By-Step program. In spite of the fact that John lived to be a ripe-old-age, he remained developmentally a child. He could not read or write, and though he always wore a wrist watch, he could not tell time. However, John’s childlike nature did not shelter him from pain. Those who saw his badly deformed legs marveled that he could walk and knew that he sometimes experienced great physical pain. John survived cancer, and the surgery left a large scar on his neck and shoulder. John was aware of the labels people give each other to describe ability and race, and surely knew the pain that prejudice inflicts. John could get angry and could be disappointed, but he quickly moved on without a trace of bitterness.

John loved life. To him ordinary events; such as petting a dog, watching a campfire, going for a ride in a car, or watching children play became extraordinary and he lived them with passion. John felt good about himself. He had a job and getting his pay check every other week was a sweet event. He also had a key to his group home’s van, along with keys to 30 or 40 other things. He was a person of means. John felt that he was making the world around

him a better place. He helped at home with laundry and cutting grass. At church he carried dirty dishes to the kitchen and informed mothers when their babies were crying. John liked people. He expected strangers to like him, and they did. He enjoyed being with people and spent many hours sitting on his front porch watching them pass by.

John was part of a family. In addition to his biological family he included his caring Step-By-Step staff and fellow residents, his neighbors, and his church family. John dearly loved God and knew that God dearly loved him. In his later years John was a member of the Pittsburgh Mennonite Church and was deeply devoted to his congregation. He came to this church shortly after we moved into this building. John walked here from his home across the street. In fact, John came to church every time a few people gathered for any reason. If it turned out to be a boring committee meeting with no refreshments, he would sit a few minutes and then return home.

Through the Mennonite church John was introduced to Laurelville, a camp and retreat center near Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania. John seemed to love Laurelville more than any other place on earth and he talked about it nearly every day. He knew many of the buildings by name, and followed the progress of recent construction projects with great interest. At Laurelville John met many loving people and developed a network of friendships that spans several states.

John attended church for the last time two weeks ago. On the car ride home, cradling a slice of Miriam’s homemade apple pie on his lap, John exclaimed “I had a good time!”

So did we, John. So did we! .Amen  
—Everett Ramer, Pittsburgh

## Memorial Fund

A memorial fund has been established at Pittsburgh Mennonite Church to honor John’s memory. Funds received will be given to Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. Located in the beautiful foot hills of the Laurel Mountains, near Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, Laurelville provides camping, conference, and retreat opportunities in a peaceful, nature-filled setting. Among John’s greatest joys was visiting Laurelville, where he regularly attended the annual meeting of Allegheny Mennonite Conference, Disability Camp, and Pittsburgh Mennonite Church retreat. At Laurelville John made many friends among staff and fellow campers. Laurelville’s motto is “Take home a blessing,” and John certainly did. In fact, he never stopped talking about Laurelville.

*Please make gifts by check payable to Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.*

# Wood Fire Kiln Building Workshop

March 15-18, 2008 • Laurelville Mennonite Church Center • Mount Pleasant PA 15666

Justin Rothshank, Dale Huffman, and Eric C. Wolfgang Knoche will lead the building of a long sprung arch kiln, set for March 15-18, 2008, at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in western Pennsylvania. A partnership between the Union Project and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center as well as support from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts has made this project possible.

"This is a big step towards a strong art presence at Laurelville," said Erin Clymer, Laurelville Program Director. "We look forward to the programming that this partnership will bring." The idea of the project grew out of Laurelville's desire to offer art programming and the Union Project's wish to expand its ceramic co-op's facilities to include a wood-fired kiln. "This project advances both organizations," said Rothshank. "Our partnership with Laurelville will allow each of us to offer programs we could not provide alone."

The workshop will give participants a hands-on learning experience of kiln building. Participants will build a single chamber "makigama" wood fired kiln. A makigama kiln is a long sprung arch kiln that fires much like an anagama kiln. This design has been taken from similar kilns in Tokoname, Japan. Participants will learn basic kiln design theories, how to cut and lay brick, building an arch, installing steel buttressing, and more. Included in the program, each participant will receive a copy of the basic kiln design and a materials list.

In addition to the kiln building, workshop instructors Huffman, Rothshank, Knoche will be facilitating lectures about their own personal artwork, process, and perspective. Each of these three leaders is an accomplished artist and teacher.

Huffman is chair of the art department at Carlow University, as well as having many local and international recognitions including being one of several American Award Winners in the Mashiko International Ceramics Contest in Japan. Information on Huffman's work is available at [www.dalehuffman.net](http://www.dalehuffman.net).

Rothshank is founder, associate director, and manager of ceramics at Union Project. He has been exhibited around the country and his work can be seen in numerous national productions. In 2005

Rothshank was named to Pittsburgh Magazine's 40 under 40. His work is visible at [www.rothshank.com](http://www.rothshank.com).

Knoche is a potter and sculptor from Minnesota. He has taught in Omaha, Thailand, North Carolina, and New York where he completed a two year apprenticeship to international wood-fire ceramist, Jeff Shapiro. He currently lives in Asheville, N. Car., and works at the Clay Space Co-op. More about Knoche's work can be found at [www.ericwolfgangknoche.com](http://www.ericwolfgangknoche.com).

The Union Project is a non-profit organization that provides gathering and working space for artists, community builders and people of faith. Through renovation and reuse of the abandoned Union Baptist Church on North Negley avenue in Pittsburgh, Pa., the Union Project has been able to make changes to the local community and Pittsburgh as a whole. "The Union Project is a great example of how the people of a community, though culturally and socially diverse, can come together to make positive change," remarked Pittsburgh's Mayor Luke Ravenstahl. Information about the Union Project can be found at [www.unionproject.org](http://www.unionproject.org).

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center is a 600-acre camp and retreat center in Mount Pleasant, Pa., whose program mission is to nurture Christ-centered spiritual maturity through spiritual renewal, the arts and sustainable living. In 2008 Laurelville will also host an art camp for youth and Beyond Words: Imagining a Visual Spirituality, a conference exploring art and faith. Information on these and other programs can be found at [www.laurelville.org](http://www.laurelville.org).

Registration for the workshop is \$195 per person and includes lunch March 15-18. It also includes a copy of the kiln design, construction specifications, and all necessary tools and materials for use during the workshop. Lodging and full meal schedule is available at Laurelville and ranges between \$136 and \$360 depending on lodging choices.

For registration, making a donation, or checking costs, contact Laurelville Mennonite Church Center: (800) 839-1021, [info@laurelville.org](mailto:info@laurelville.org), or visit <http://www.laurelville.org/Program/kiln>.



## Conference Calendar ▼

### March 1

Spring Delegates Meeting at University

### March 14-16

Jr. High Retreat, Grades 6-8, at Laurelville

### April 1

Deadline May/June issue *ACNews*

### April 7-10

Spring Bible Study at Laurelville

### June 3

Deadline July-August issue *ACNews*

### July 15

Registrations due for AMC Annual Meeting

### July 18-19

TriState Relief Sale, McHenry, Md.

### August 1-3

AMC Annual Meeting at Laurelville

### August 5

Deadline Sept.-Oct. issue *ACNews*

### September 5-7

Camporee for children, ages 8-12

#### ACNews

531 Scottdale Ave.  
Scottdale, PA 15683  
ph. 724-887-5563  
e-mail: [sendamcnews@gmail.com](mailto:sendamcnews@gmail.com)

#### Allegheny Mennonite Conference Office

PO Box 12, Somerset, PA 15501  
ph. 814-443-2007 fax 814-445-3418  
e-mail: [office@amc-mcusa.org](mailto:office@amc-mcusa.org)  
[www.amc-mcusa.org](http://www.amc-mcusa.org)

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to *Allegheny Conference News*, 531 Scottsdale Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683-1243.

## Peace lamps challenge Mennonite Church USA congregations to faithful witness

By June Galle Krehbiel for Mennonite Church USA



Each peace lamp has its story. In churches throughout Mennonite Church USA and beyond, the lamps shone brightly during the recent advent and Christmas season. In many churches the lamps shine on as congregations pray and petition for peace in Iraq, Iran and the world.

The lamps' history began with the first delegation of church leaders to Iraq in 2002. J. Daryl Byler, then MCC Washington Office director, gave peace lamps to religious leaders, saying, "When you see this, know that Mennonites in the United States and Canada are praying for peace between us."

Soon after, some churches ordered and began using the peace lamps, crafted by Dick Lehman of Goshen, Ind. One of those congregations was University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa., where David B. Miller pastors. Since 2002 the congregation has begun every Sunday morning worship by lighting the peace lamp.

"The peace lamp is an ongoing summons for all of us to pray and work for peace. Jesus' way of peace is at the core of our witness as a congregation," says Miller, who has also articulated the theology of peace at occasional meetings at Pennsylvania State University. "In Luke's account Jesus weeps over Jerusalem and declares, 'If only you knew the things that make for peace' (Lk. 19:42). That same agony continues to be felt by God for all of human society."

Last fall, sensing the time was right to once again challenge churches to petition for peace, Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA, collaborated with Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach, director of the Washington office of Mennonite Central Committee. They developed worship resources and provided background information on Iraq and Iran. Through funding from Executive Leadership peace advocate funds, Landis made 100 of the Dick Lehman peace lamps available to Mennonite Church USA congregations at no cost. Sixty-two congregations requested lamps, and more than 30 congregations sent or delivered petitions to their federal representatives.

In Elkhart, Ind., Hively Avenue Mennonite Church's peace advocate Louise Claassen and others visited Rep. Joe Donnelly's South Bend office, taking with them petitions for peace with Iran and signatures from Elkhart's Hively, Belmont and Fellowship of Hope churches. Later, she delivered a peace lamp to Donnelly's office.

Claassen's motivation stems from her experience as a World War II refugee. Though her family was Mennonite for generations, her father became part of Hitler's army and was missing in action on the Russian front. "It hurts me so much—all this bombing and killing and maiming. Is it the only option we have—to go there and kill? No, the other option is to live a life of peace and be aggressive peacemakers, reaching out to the poor in our communities, for example. There are many ways to make a positive difference in the world," she says.

Last fall, prompted by suggestions from Susan Mark Landis on MennoLink, Claassen started a one-hour-a-week public demonstration at the peace pole outside their church. The protest has since moved to the Elkhart civic plaza and, even in the cold Indiana winter, she and others meet on Wednesday afternoons to protest the war. "Unlike Germany in World War II, here we still have the possibility to speak out against war. We can stand on a street corner and hold up a sign, encouraging others to 'Pray for peace. Act for peace,'" Claassen says.

Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach is heartened to hear about the prayers and petitions of congregations. "My hope is that congregations will continue to light the lamp and pray for peace in Iraq and Iran," she says.

Susan Mark Landis calls congregations to even more faithfulness in peace efforts. "Do something. Do it in community. Do it repetitively, routinely, and push yourself a little more than what you have done before," she says. "God is calling us to return the love we have been given. The more we understand how much we have been loved, the more we are willing to put ourselves in ridiculous and even risky situations to show that love back to God."

For more information about the peace lamps and other ways to advocate for peace, see [www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace](http://www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace).