Recalling long-ago refugees, members of the Riverside Nonviolent Community held a December march in Knoxville to proclaim “Refugees Welcome Here.” Sarah Margaret Hutchison welcomes the gathering in front of the First Baptist Church nativity scene; more than 60 people marched through downtown to a rally on Market Square.

About this booklet

This booklet grows from an intentional exploration of nonviolent community embarked upon by members of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance. It has since expanded to embrace many members of our peace community.

Our intention is to use the booklet to build spiritual community. Those who are using the book are invited to participate by contributing readings to it.

The common thread in these reflections is the struggle of human beings to improve the world. In OREPA, our struggle to end bomb production is part of that struggle. In these reflections, we join ourselves with the larger community that works to heal the world.

The reflection booklet has been provided free of charge to all who request it. We welcome donations—$20 would cover the cost of paper, printing and mailing for one year—but they aren’t required.

Each Thursday you will find the name of a member of the community who is using this booklet. This is an opportunity to bring that person and all those who work for peace into the light on that day.

‡ contributions, suggestions, requests can be sent to OREPA, P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831 or by e-mail to orep@earthlink.net
Monday, February 1
1902: LANGSTON HUGHES BORN
1960: GREENSBORO, NC WOOLWORTH’S COUNTER SIT-IN

We’ve never said protests are the answer, but protests create space for the answer. Protest is disruption. Protest is confrontation. Protest is the end of silence, and what protest does is it creates space for the other work to happen.

~ Deray McKesson

Tuesday, February 2
GROUNDHOOG DAY

If we’re set on creating change, on doing things differently, we must be prepared for loneliness. As someone noted, “It’s lonely to get to the future first.” We can’t expect to be joined by a lot of people. We will always be the minority, and we will always feel invisible and lonely.

~ Margaret Wheatley

Wednesday, February 3
1965: SELMA, AL SCHOOLCHILDREN ARRESTED IN MASS PROTEST FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Do not depend on the hope of results. You may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea you start more and more to concentrate not on the results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. Gradually you struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything.

~ Thomas Merton
It’s unfortunate that life isn’t about constant progress and unending success. In the workings of life, everything moves between periods of chaos and order. Too long in either state is destructive. Too much chaos and nothing new gets created; too much order and nothing gets accomplished. Stuckness is a sign that there’s too much order—too much rigidity in our thinking. It’s time to loosen our grip.

When we get stuck, when nothing seems to be moving and there’s nothing we can do, this means that a very fruitful time is at hand. But these fruits come at a cost—we have to be willing to let go of what we’ve been holding onto—our opinions and beliefs, our current ways of perceiving things, our old methods and techniques.

We’re inside a large knot and the tighter we hold onto any of its strands, the more stuck we get. Loosening our grip, letting some fresh air into our opinions, bringing in new voices and more diversity—any of these approaches will ease the knotty tension we’ve created.

~ Margaret Wheatley
Friday, February 5

The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true.

~ James Branch Cabell

Saturday, February 6
1945: Bob Marley Born

The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just have to find the ones worth suffering for.

~ Bob Marley

Sunday, February 7

What difference does it make to the dead, orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?

~ Mohandas Gandhi

Monday, February 8
1968: Orangeburg, SC Massacre Kills 3 and Injures 69 Protesters
1978: Longest March Begins, San Francisco to Washington, DC

Democracy is a process, not a static condition. It is becoming, rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle.

~ William H. Hastie

Tuesday, February 9
1944: Alice Walker Born
1996: US Reveals Human Radiation Experiments on 9,000 Subjects

Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.

~ Alice Walker

Wednesday, February 10

Without justice and love, peace will always be the great illusion.

~ Dom Helder Camara
We say all these things that we believe, but do we believe them really? Because they do not make any sense, of course. We say that we believe in love, but so much in and around us is hate. We say we believe humility and generosity, but so much in and around us is ego and greed. We Christians say that we believe in Christ, but we do not give everything away and follow him through the narrow gate, do we? I am the worst of sinners in this regard.

We say that we live in his light, but so much is darkness. I am not delivering a sermon. I am just saying that we are so much in the dark. Many times, I despair also. Every day there are times of darkness when everything I say and think seems small and mean and only a swirl of wind in the dust. But somehow hope returns, and we stand up and walk again.

Perhaps that is grace. Our learned people write learned things about the nature of grace, but I think perhaps it washes over us all the time, and we take it for granted. Hope does not make sense. But we continue to hope against all evidence. Could it be that to hope when hope is crazy is the purest grace? To believe against all sense and reason and logic, that is grace! The world will say you are silly! Be proud of that!

~ Desmond Tutu
Friday, February 12
1909: NAACP FOUNDED

Occupy was, at its core, a movement constrained by its own contradictions: filled with leaders who declared themselves leaderless, governed by a consensus-based structure that failed to reach consensus, and seeking to transform politics while refusing to become political. Ironic as it may seem, the impact of the movement that many view only in the rearview mirror is becoming stronger and clearer with time.

~ Michael Levitin

Saturday, February 13
2010: PEACE PILGRIMAGE FROM OAK RIDGE TO UNITED NATIONS DEPARTS Y12 IN OAK RIDGE

It’s insulting to everyone, including the men who fought and died in World War II. My generation was not the Greatest Generation. The Greatest Generation has not yet been born. That will be the generation that learns how to solve problems without war. Maybe that’s idealistic, but is is what I believe.

~ Lt. Col. James Megellas

Sunday, February 14
1817: FREDERICK DOUGLASS BORN

I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the wrath of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.

~ Frederick Douglass

Monday, February 15
1920: SUSAN B ANTHONY BORN

I don’t want to die as long as I can work; the minute I cannot, I want to go.

~ Susan B. Anthony
Tuesday, February 16

However dark the prospects, however intractable the opposition, however devious and mendacious the diplomacy of our opponents, we ourselves have to carry so clear and intense a picture of our common humanity that we see the brother [sic] beneath the enemy and snatch at every opportunity to break through to his reason and his conscience, and, indeed, his enlightened self-interest.

~ Adlai E. Stevenson

Wednesday, February 17

If we could read the secret history of those we would like to punish, we would find in each life a sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all our hostility.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Toni Morrison democratically opens the door to all of her books only to say “You can come in and you can sit, and you can tell me what you think, and I’m glad you are here, but you should know that this house isn’t built for you or by you.” Here, blackness isn’t a commodity; it isn’t inherently political; it is the race of a people who are varied and complicated. This is where her works become less of a history and more of a liturgy, still stretching across geographies and time, but now more pointedly, to capture and historicize: This is how we pray, this is how we escape, this is how we hurt, this is how we repent, this is how we move on. It is a project that, although ignored by many critics, evidences itself on the page. It has allowed Morrison to play with language, to take chances with how stories unravel and to consistently resist the demand to create an empirical understanding of black life in America. Instead, she makes black life—regular, quotidian black life, the kind that doesn’t sell out concert halls or sports stadiums—complex, fantastic and heroic, despite its devaluatin. It is both aphorism and beyond aphorism, and a result has been pure possibility.

~ Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah
Friday, February 19

The essence of optimism is that it takes no account of the present, but it is a source of inspiration, of vitality and hope where others have resigned; it enables a person to hold his/her head high, to claim the future for him/herself and not to abandon it to the enemy.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Saturday, February 20

Be patient toward all that is unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now.

~ Rainer Maria Rilke

Sunday, February 21

1965: Malcolm X Assassinated

There is no teacher better than adversity. For every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance the next time.

~ Malcolm X

Monday, February 22

Dreaming that love will save us, solve all our problems, or provide a steady state of bliss or security only keeps us stuck in wishful fantasy, undermining the real power of love—which is to transform us. For our relationships to flourish, we need to see them in a new way—as a series of opportunities for developing greater awareness, discovering deeper truth, and becoming more fully human.

~ John Welwood
Monday, January 18 dawned with temperatures in the low teens in Knoxville, but Rich Henighan braved the cold and donned the Gandhi puppet to march in the MLK parade.

Tuesday, February 23
1868: W E B DuBois born

Herein lies the tragedy of the age: not that people are poor—all know something of poverty; not that people are wicked—who is good? not that people are ignorant—what is Truth? Nay, but that we know so little of others.

~ W E B DuBois

Wednesday, February 24

Every human being is born without faith. Faith comes only through the process of making decisions to change before we can be sure it’s the right move.

~ R. Robert Schuller
My morals were sound, even a bit puritanic, but when a hidebound old deacon inveighed against dancing I rebelled. By the time of graduation I was still a “believer” in orthodox religion, but had strong questions which were encouraged at Harvard. In Germany, I became a freethinker and when I came to teach at an orthodox Methodist Negro school I was soon regarded with suspicion, especially when I refused to lead the students in public prayer. When I became head of a department in Atlanta, the engagement was held up because again I balked at leading a prayer. I refused to teach Sunday School. When Archdeacon Henry Phillips, my last rector, died, I flatly refused again to join any church or sign any church creed. From my 30th year on I have increasingly regarded the church as an institution which defended such evils as slavery, color caste, exploitation of labor and war.

~ W E B DuBois
Friday, February 26

A man living alone answers a knock at the door. There stands Tyranny, armed and powerful, who asks, “Will you submit?” The man does not reply. He steps aside. Tyranny enters and takes over. The man serves him for years. Then Tyranny mysteriously becomes sick from food poisoning. He dies. The man opens the door, gets rid of the body, comes back to the house, closes the door behind him, and says, firmly, “No.”

~ Bertolt Brecht

Saturday, February 27
1973: SECOND US SIEGE AT WOUNDED KNEE

Only one thing is sadder than remembering you were once free, and that’s forgetting you were once free.

~ Leonard Peltier

Sunday, February 28
1958: CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT LAUNCHED IN ENGLAND

The basic difference between an ordinary person and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge, while an ordinary person takes everything as a blessing or as a curse.

~ Carlos Casteneda

Monday, February 29

Conflict is the gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates to invention. It shocks us out of sheeplike passivity, and sets us at noting and contriving. Conflict is a sine qua non of reflection and ingenuity.

~ John Dewey
Tuesday, March 1

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely.

~ Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Wednesday, March 2

I was grounded in that moral fiber of wanting to do the right thing. I was so sure that this was the right thing because it was so obvious and even those who were persecuting me knew, and I knew they knew I was doing the right thing. But they didn’t want me to do it because it was inconveniencing them, and I knew that.

~ Wangari Maathai
I have no parents: I make the heavens and earth my parents.
I have no home: I make awareness my home.
I have no divine power: I make honesty my divine power.
I have no means: I make understanding my means.
I have no magic secrets: I make character my magic secret.
I have no miracles: I make right action my miracles.
I have no friends: I make my mind my friend.
I have no enemy: I make carelessness my enemy.
I have no armor: I make benevolence and righteousness my armor.

~ 14th century Samurai Warrior
Friday, March 4
1917: JEANNETTE RANKIN FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO US CONGRESS

Men and women are like right and left hands. It doesn’t make sense not to use both.

~ Jeannette Rankin

Saturday, March 5
1991: LAST US CRUISE MISSILE REMOVED FROM GREENHAM COMMONS

Competitiveness breeds a you-against-me attitude that creates separateness and isolation, the food of addiction. Cooperation breeds a sense that we are all interdependent on one another, we all matter, and each of us has a role to play in the bigger picture. It teaches us that everyone can win.

~ Charlotte Davis Kasl

Sunday, March 6
1970: NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY ENTERS INTO FORCE

Silence, then, could be said to be the ultimate province of trust: it is the place where we trust ourselves to be alone; where we trust others to understand the things we do not say; where we trust a higher harmony to assert itself.

~ Pico Iyer

Monday, March 7
1965: SELMA TO MONTGOMERY CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH

We can put our whole heart into whatever we do; but if we freeze our attitude into for or against, we’re setting ourselves up for stress. Instead, we could just go forward with curiosity, wondering where this experiment will lead. This kind of open-ended inquisitiveness captures the spirit of enthusiasm, or heroic perseverance.

~ Pema Chodron
Tuesday, March 8

Innocence has a single voice that can only say over and over again, “I didn’t do it.” Guilt has a thousand voices, all of them lies.

~ Leonard Peltier

Wednesday, March 9

A determined population can not only force a domestic ruler to flee the country, but can make a would-be occupier retreat, by the use of a formidable arsenal of tactics: boycotts and demonstrations, occupations and sit-ins, sit-down strikes and general strikes, obstruction and sabotage, refusal to pay taxes, rent strikes, refusal to cooperate, refusal to obey curfew orders or gag orders, refusal to pay fines, fasts and pray-ins, draft resistance, and civil disobedience of various kinds. Thousand of such instances have changed the world but they are nearly absent from the history books

~ Howard Zinn

A smaller, colder contingent than usual in the 2016 MLK parade, here gathered at Greater Warner Tabernacle AME Zion church at the conclusion of the parade—Cindy Collins, Linda Ewald and Carol Nickle, front; Beci Bolding, Rich Henighan, Todd Shelton and Kevin Collins, back.
Every one of us has the capacity to love, to forgive, to understand, and to be compassionate. If you know how to cultivate those elements within your consciousness, your consciousness can nourish you with this healthy kind of food that makes you feel wonderful and benefits everyone around you. At the same time, in everyone’s consciousness, there is also the capacity for obsession, worry, despair, loneliness and self-pity. If you consume sensory food in a way that nourishes those negative elements in your consciousness—if you read tabloids, play violent electronic games, spend time online envying what others have done, or engage in a mean-spirited conversation—then anger, despair or jealousy becomes a stronger energy in your consciousness. You are cultivating the kind of food in your own mind that isn’t healthy for you. Even after you have walked away from the book or the computer game, your mind may continue to revisit and re-consume those toxic elements for hours, days, or weeks afterward, because they have watered the negative seeds in your consciousness.

There are plants that can make you sick, such as hemlock and belladonna. If you consume them, you suffer. People usually don’t deliberately grow these plants in their garden. Similarly, you can choose to cultivate the healthy things in your consciousness that will nourish you rather than the toxic things that will poison you and make you suffer.

Whether we’re conscious of it or not, we are continually watering one thing or another in our mind—things that we almost certainly will consume later on. We can do a lot of damage to ourselves and to our relationships when we don’t pay attention to what we’re taking into ourselves and cultivating in our mind.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh
Friday, March 11
1899: Albert Einstein born

The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that “realities are greater than ideas.”

~ Pope Francis

Saturday, March 12

The human mind can plan threats as well as artistic works, cruelty in place of gentleness. It can hate as deeply as it can love. In contemplating human thought, we haven’t determined what the mind might wholly contain, just as we can’t say where the human spirit truly dwells.

~ Linda Hogan

Sunday, March 13

Quakers are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity; it is our desire that others’ feet may walk in the same and do deny and bear our testimony against all strife and wars and contentions. Our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual.

~ Margaret Fell

Monday, March 14

But I remember now
I am in this earthly world; where to do harm is often laudable, to do good sometime Accounted dangerous folly.

~ William Shakespeare
Tuesday, March 15

Today we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

~ Pope Francis

Wednesday, March 16

1921: War Resisters International founded
2003: Rachel Corrie murdered in Gaza Strip

Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters.

~ Henry David Thoreau

Putting the finishing touches on the Sarah Moore Greene puppet for the Martin Luther King, Jr. parade in Knoxville in January. Cindy Collins adjust Ms. Greene’s dress while Linda Ewald looks on.
Ask permission of the ones whose lives you seek. Abide by the answer. Never take the first. Never take the last. Harvest in a way that minimizes harm. Take only what you need and leave some for others. Use everything you take. Take only that which is given to you. Share it, as the Earth has shared with you. Be grateful. Reciprocate the gift. Sustain the ones who sustain you, and the Earth will last forever.

~ Robin Wall Kimmerer

The honorable harvest
**Friday, March 18**

Good work is a way of living. It is unifying and healing. It defines us as we are: not too good to work with our bodies, but too good to work poorly or joylessly or selfishly or alone.

~ Wendell Berry

**Saturday, March 19**

2003: US ATTACKS BAGHDAD, STARTS SECOND GULF WAR

A person cannot approach the divine by reaching beyond the human. To become human is what this individual person has been created for.

~ Martin Buber

**Sunday, March 20**

2004: TENS OF MILLIONS MARCH WORLDWIDE IN PROTEST OF US WAR IN IRAQ

I don’t feel like we have to solve the border crisis for a terrified child to be shown some compassion.

~ Clay Jenkins, Judge of Dallas County, TX

**Monday, March 21**

1960: SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE KILLS 69 IN SOUTH AFRICA

There is no reason that the senseless temples of God should abound in riches and the living temples of the Holy Spirit starve for hunger.

~ St. Ethelwold

**Tuesday, March 22**

A liberation movement that is nonviolent sets the oppressor free as well as the oppressed.

~ Barbara Deming

**Wednesday, March 23**

No nation is rich enough to pay for war and civilization. We must make our choice; we can’t have both.

~ Abraham Flexner
“Blessed are the rich; the reign of this world is ours.” Empirically, the rich rule the world, and the rest suffer and die, often in misery. But Jesus counters with the real truth. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who have nothing—no power, no prestige, no possessions, no success. They receive the first and greatest blessing, entry into God’s reign. The rich lay claim to all things except that. Thus we are called to live in friendship with the poor, to let go of power and domination, to embrace our own powerlessness. Which is to say, if we share our lives with the poor and practice downward mobility, they will share with us the reign of God.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for injustice.” This is the siren song of the System. The System sustains itself by all manner of injustice and lawlessness and greed. But Jesus offers a contrary word. Desire for unjust gain shall forever thwart fulfillment. The unjust will never be satisfied. But those who are passionate for justice will find satisfaction, true meaning. They’ll take part in the transformation of disarmament and global peace.

~ John Dear
Friday, March 25

We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.

~ Pope Francis

Saturday, March 26

1979: Camp David Peace Accords signed

I want you to join me in valuing this country’s rich history of nonviolent civil disobedience. At this point of unimaginable threats on the horizon, this is what hope looks like. In these times of a morally bankrupt government that has sold out its principles, this is what patriotism looks like. With countless lives on the line, this is what love looks like, and it will only grow. The choice you are making today is which side are you on.

~ Tim DeChistopher

Sunday, March 27

There is a certain indolence in us, a wish not to be disturbed, which tempts us to think that when things are quiet, all is well. Subconsciously, we tend to give the preference to “social peace,” though it be only apparent, because our lives and possessions seem then secure. Actually, human beings acquiesce too easily in evil conditions; they rebel far too little and too seldom. There is nothing noble about acquiescence in a cramped life or mere submission to superior force.

~ A J Muste

Monday, March 28

1979: Three Mile Island (PA) Nuclear Reactor Failure

Knowing how to walk in the dark takes time. When we do so we sign a waiver that allows us to bump into some things that frighten us at first. But all we need do is ask the mystery of darkness to teach us, to follow the darkness where it leads, and to become intimate with the darkness.

~ Nancy Schreck
Tuesday, March 29

I vow to myself and to each of you: To commit myself daily to the healing of the world and the welfare of all beings. To live on Earth more lightly and less violently in the food, products and energy I consume. To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future generation, and my sisters and brothers of all species. To support others in our work for the world and to ask for help when I need it. To pursue a daily practice that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart, and supports me in observing these vows.

~ Joanna Macy

Wednesday, March 30

Community means different things to different people. To some it is a safe haven where survival is assured through mutual cooperation. To others, it is a place of emotional support, with deep sharing and bonding with close friends. Some see community as an intense crucible for personal growth. For other it is primarily a place to pioneer their dreams.

~ Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson

At Market Square in December, Knoxvillians of all faiths and none at all proclaimed a welcome to refugees in the spirit of Christmas. Dennie Kelley and Linda Brown bear witness to the plight of refugees.
Locke quotes a memorable observation about one of history’s tyrants: “And of Caligula...he wished that the people had but one neck, that he might dispatch them all at a blow.”

Nuclear weapons and the highly practiced arrangements for their use have made Caligula’s wish come true: the people of earth now have but one neck and can be dispatched all at a blow. It does not matter that the thermonuclear monarchs who preside over us today are ordinarily much nicer people than Caligula, for it is the nuclear architecture itself that literalizes and monumentalizes Caligula; the individual personalities of our monarchs, and the always amusing differences among them, are at best a temporary check on a vast structure of cruelty that stands ready to be used.

~ Elaine Scarry
The topic was the agenda of the Black Lives Matter movement and the need to move from dreaming to action. The room at the Beck Center in Knoxville was packed for the ninth annual MLK Community Conversation sponsored by the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance.

sources
Readings for this reflection booklet were contributed by Linda Ewald, Jim Ullrich, Stephen Kobasa and Mary Dennis Lentsch.
Behind the magic of the giant puppets—Todd Shelton is beginning to transform into Knoxville icon Sarah Moore Greene. Here Linda Ewald works with Kevin Collins to strap Todd into the frame and harness that will support the giant head during the two mile parade down MLK Boulevard.