Knoxville’s Women in Black have been a presence in downtown Knoxville every Tuesday for more than 15 years. On the Tuesday after Trump announced the US embassy to Israel would move to Jerusalem, more than a dozen folks braved chilly weather to witness for peace and justice.

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 asked 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

sources

Readings for this reflection booklet were contributed by Mary Dennis Lentsch, Thursday readings are drawn from Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies, David Barash, ed. (2000) and Tears We Cannot Stop: A sermon to white America, Michael Eric Dyson (2017).
I offer this sermon to you, my dear white friends, my beloved comrades of faith and country. My sermon to you is cast in the form of a church service. I do so in the interest of healing our nation through honest, often blunt, talk. It will make you squirm in your seat with discomfort before, hopefully, pointing a way to relief.

This is written to you, my friends, because I feel led by the Spirit to preach to you. I don’t mind if you call Spirit common sense, or desperate hope, or willful refusal to accept defeat. I don’t mind if you conclude that religion is cant and faith is a lie. I simply want to bear witness to the truth I see and the reality I know. And without white America wrestling with these truths and confronting these realities, we may not survive. To paraphrase the Bible: to whom much is given, much is required. And you, my friends, have been given so much. And the Lord knows, what wasn’t given, you took, and took, and took. But the time is at hand for reckoning with the past, recognizing the truth of the present, and moving forward together to redeem the nation for our future. If we don’t act now, if you don’t address race immediately, there very well may be no future.

~ Michael Eric Dyson
Friday, February 2
GROUNDHOG DAY

I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world.

~ Neil Gaiman

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

You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world’s problems at once, but don’t ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.

~ Michelle Obama

Sunday, February 4
1913: ROSA PARKS BORN

Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, that person sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

~ Robert Kennedy

Monday, February 5

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

~ Woodrow Wilson
Tuesday, February 6
1945: Bob Marley born

Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good.

~ Vaclav Havel

Wednesday, February 7

Hope is the pillar that holds up the world. Hope is the dream of one who is waking.

~ Pliny the Elder

On December 10, as ICAN received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, OREPA celebrated at the Sunday vigil with a public reading of the Ban Treaty; we also posted it in giant size on the fence surrounding the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex, set on the background of the Yellow X — Nuclear Weapons are Illegal!
America is in trouble, and a lot of that trouble—perhaps most of it—has to do with race. Everywhere we turn, there is discord and division, death and destruction. When we survey the land, we see a country full of suffering that we cannot fully understand, and a history that we can no longer deny. Slavery casts a long shadow across our lives. The spoils we reaped from forcing people to work without wages and treating them with grievous inhumanity continue to haunt us in a racial gulf that seems impossible to overcome. Black and white people don’t merely have different experiences; we seem to occupy different universes, with worldviews that are fatally opposed to one another. The merchants of racial despair easily peddle their wares in a marketplace riddled by white panic and fear. Black despair piles up with each body that gets snuffed on video and streamed on social media. We have, in the span of a few years, elected the nation’s first black president and placed in the Oval Office the scariest racial demagogue in a generation. The two may not be unrelated. The remarkable progress we seemed to make with the former has brought out the peril of the latter.

What, then, can we do? We must return to the moral and spiritual foundations of our country and grapple with the consequences of our original sin. I know that when we get out of our own way and let the spirit of love and hope shine through we are a better people.

But such love and hope can only come about if we first confront the poisonous history that has almost unmade our nation and unmade our social compact. We must face up to what we as a country have made of the black people who have been the linchpin of democracy, the folk who saved America from itself, who redeemed it from the hypocrisy of proclaiming liberty and justice for all while denying all that liberty and justice should be to us.

~ Michael Eric Dyson
Friday, February 9
1944: ALICE WALKER BORN
1996: US REVEALS HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS ON 9,000 SUBJECTS

As great scientists have said, and as all children know, it is above all by the imagination that we achieve perception, and compassion, and hope.

~ Ursula Le Guin

Saturday, February 10

Hope will never be silent.

~ Harvey Milk

Sunday, February 11
1967: A J MUSTE DIES | 1990: NELSON MANDELA RELEASED FROM 27 YEAR IMPRISONMENT

Our human compassion binds us one to the other—not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learned how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.

~ Nelson Mandela

Monday, February 12
1909: NAACP FOUNDED

You are as young as your hope and as old as your despair.

~ Samuel Ullman

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

We should not moor a ship with one anchor, or our lives with one hope.

~ Epictetus

Wednesday, February 14
1817: FREDERICK DOUGLASS BORN

Hope is important because it makes the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh
Almighty, hear our prayer. Oh, God, how we suffer. We your servants are ensnared in tragedy that doesn’t end. We can do nothing to make our tormenters stop their evil. We cannot convince them we are your children and don’t deserve this punishment. We have tried everything we can to keep them from slaughtering us in the streets. They hide behind the state to justify killing us. They say we are scary, that they are afraid for their lives. They say this even when we have nothing in our hands but air. They say this even when they are armed with weapons meant to remove us from the face of the earth. They say this even when they must throw down guns to pretend that we intended to do them harm. They say this even when video proves they are lying through their teeth.

Oh, God, we are near complete despair. How can we possibly change our fate? How can we possibly persuade our society that we deserve to be treated with decency and respect? How can we possibly fight a criminal justice system that has been designed to ensure our defeat? How can we possibly combat the blindness of white men and women who are so deeply invested in their own privilege that they cannot afford to see how much we suffer?

But most of all, Oh God, how can we keep racism from strangling every bit of hope left in our bodies and minds?

~ Michael Eric Dyson
Friday, February 16

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

~ Vaclav Havel

Saturday, February 17

The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.

~ Wendell Berry

Sunday, February 18
1931: Toni Morrison born  |  1934: Audre Lorde born

I am part of a light, and it is the music. The Light fills my six senses: I see it, hear it, feel it, smell it, touch it and think it. Thinking of it means my sixth sense. Particles of light are written note. One bolt of lightning can be an entire sonata. A thousand balls of lightning is a concert.

~ Nikola Tesla

Monday, February 19

In a futile attempt to erase our past, we deprive the community of our healing gift. If we conceal our wounds out of fear and shame, our inner darkness can neither be illuminated nor become a light for others.

~ Brennan Manning
Tuesday, February 20

If one keeps loving faithfully what is truly worth loving and does not squander one’s love on trivial and insignificant and meaningless things, then one will gradually obtain more light and grow stronger.

~ Vincent van Gogh

Wednesday, February 21

1965: Malcolm X Assassinated

What is indiscriminate compassion? Take a look at a rose. Is it possible for the rose to say, “I’ll offer my fragrance to good people and withhold it from bad people?” Or can you imagine a lamp that withholds its rays from a wicked person who seeks to walk in its light? It could do that only by ceasing to be a lamp. And observe how helplessly and indiscriminately a tree gives its shade to everyone, good and bad, young and old, high and low, to humans and every living creature—even to the one who seeks to cut it down. This is the first quality of compassion, its indiscriminate character.

~ Anthony DeMello

Folks were anxious to pose with OREPA’s giant civil rights/nonviolence icons at the conclusion of Knoxville’s 2018 MLK parade—Myles Horton, Gandhi, Sarah Moore Greene, Dr. King, Sojourner Truth, along with Birmingham Girls Carol Robertson, Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, and Cynthia Wesley.
The history can’t be erased: the Middle Passage, the sale of human beings, slavery, Dred Scott, segregation, Jim Crow, Selma...

Its effect can not be wiped away; there is no clear slate. No apology, no matter how sincere, can reconcile generations of brilliant children denied an education; no reparations, no matter how generous, can restore Emmett Till to his mother; no prayer for forgiveness, no matter how heartfelt, can retroactively recognize the dignity denied generations of women and men, children, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons, daughters, cousins, grandparents, teachers, poets, laborers, entrepreneurs, barbers, housecleaners, farmers, horsemen and women, masons, carpenters, drivers, scholars, preachers, writers, deacons, seamstresses, launderers, attorneys, doctors, nurses, midwives, soldiers, marchers, sanitation workers, students, apprentices, locksmiths, miners, bankers, roofers, mailmen, cooks, waiters and waitresses, porters, landscapers, miners, bankers, journalists, teachers, historians, photographers, veterinarians, athletes, realtors, insurance salesmen and women who bore not only the violence of individual bigots, but the crushing weight of institutional violence that denied loans, the vote, the lunch counter, the bus seats, that sought and far, far too often succeeded in stripping away the fundamental feeling of worth that inhabits each of us.

~ Ralph Hutchison
Friday, February 23
1868: W E B DuBois Born

A desire to kneel down sometimes pulses through my body, or rather it is as if my body had been meant and made for the act of kneeling. Sometimes in moments of deep gratitude, kneeling down becomes an overwhelming urge, head deeply bowed, hand before my face.

~ Etty Hillesum

Saturday, February 24

There is only one perpetrator of evil on the planet: human unconsciousness. That realization is true forgiveness. With forgiveness, your victim identity dissolves and your true power emerges—the power of Presence. Instead of blaming the darkness, you bring in the light.

~ Eckhart Tolle

Sunday, February 25
1912: 20,000 Women Strike for Better Working Conditions

When someone sees a soul disturbed and unable to see something, that one won’t laugh mindlessly but will take into consideration whether it has come from a brighter life and is dimmed through not having yet become accustomed to the dark or whether it has come from greater ignorance into light and is dazzled by the increased brilliance.

~ Plato

Monday, February 26

If the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead.

~ Carl von Clausewitz
Western doctors are like poor plumbers. They treat a splashing tube by cleaning up the water. These plumbers are extremely apt at drying up the water, constantly inventing new, expensive, and refined methods of drying up water. Somebody should teach them how to close the tap.

~ Denis Burkitt

One of the greatest challenges of voluntary simplicity is in creating a rich and meaningful way of life not only by finding a personal definition of how much we think is enough but by fitting that harmoniously into how much the Earth can provide in a healthy and sustainable way.

~ Mark Burch

Knox County Public Defender Mark Stephens and Tammi Campbell from Knox County Schools described the need for restorative justice in the schools and the legal system, kicking off the eleventh annual Community Conversation, sponsored by OREPA and others at the Beck Cultural Center in Knoxville as part of the MLK birthday commemoration.
Warfare, by which I mean recognized conflict between two groups as groups, in which each group puts an army (even if the army is only fifteen people) into the field to fight and kill, if possible, some of the members of the army of the other group—warfare of this sort is an invention like any other of the inventions in terms of which we order our lives, such as writing, marriage, cooking our food instead of eating it raw, trial by jury or burial of the dead, and so on.

There are peoples even today who have no warfare. Of these the Eskimos are perhaps the most conspicuous example, but the Lepchas of Sikkim are as good. Neither of these peoples understands war, not even defensive war.

Grant that war is an invention, that it is not a biological necessity nor the outcome of certain special types of social forms—still, once the invention is made, what are we to do about it? Warfare is here, as part of our thought; the deeds of warriors are immortalized in the words of our poets, the toys of our children are modeled upon the weapons of soldiers, the frame of reference within which our statesmen (sic) and our diplomats work always contains war.

If we know it is not inevitable, are we to be given any hope by that? What hope is there of persuading nations to abandon war?

Two conditions, at least, are necessary. The people must recognize the defects of the old invention, and someone must make a new one. Propaganda against warfare, documentation of its terrible cost in human suffering and social waste, these prepare the ground for teaching people to feel that warfare is a defective social institution. There is further needed a belief that social invention is possible and the invention of new methods which will render warfare as out of date as the tractor has made the plow, or the motor car the horse and buggy. In order to invent forms of behavior which will make war obsolete, it is a first requirement to believe that an invention is possible.

~ Margaret Mead
Friday, March 2

Remember that consciousness is power. Consciousness is education and knowledge and becoming aware. It is the perfect vehicle for students. Consciousness-raising is pertinent for power, and be sure that power will not be abusively used, but used for building trust and goodwill. Tomorrow’s world is yours to build.

~ Yuri Kochiyama

Saturday, March 3

When power leads us toward arrogance, poetry reminds us of our limitations. When power narrows the area of our concern, poetry reminds us of the richness and diversity of existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses.

~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Sunday, March 4

1917: Jeannette Rankin First Woman Elected to US Congress

The most disappointing feature of working for a cause is that so few people have a philosophy of life. We used to say, in the suffrage movement, that you can trust a woman who believed in suffrage, but we could never trust the woman who just wanted to vote.

~ Jeannette Rankin

Monday, March 5

1991: Last US Cruise Missile Removed from Greenham Commons

It has always seemed strange to me that in our endless discussions about education so little stress is laid on the pleasure of becoming an educated person, the enormous interest it adds to life. To be able to be caught up into the world of thought—that is to be educated.

~ Edith Hamilton
Tuesday, March 6
1970: Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Enters Into Force

I heard a Tibetan lama address this same issue in a far different language. “We die not because we are ill but because we are complete.” Illness is the occasion of our dying, but not the cause.
~ Rachel Naomi Remen

OREPA celebrated ICAN’s Nobel Peace Prize at the December 10 vigil with a public reading of the Nuclear Ban Treaty. And with sparkling cider and a special blond brownie! “The story of nuclear weapons ends one of two ways,” sais Beatrice Fihn, accepting the award. “Either we end them, or they end us.” Setsuko Thurlow admonished nuclear abolitionists everywhere to heed the words that saved her when she was buried in the rubble in Hiroshima: “Keep pushing!”

Wednesday, March 7
1965: Selma to Montgomery Civil Rights March

Restorative justice is not simply a way of reforming the criminal justice system; it is a way of transforming the entire legal system, our family lives, our conduct in the workplace, our practice of politics. Its vision is of a holistic change in the way we do justice in the world.

~John Braithwaite
The first hostile act, seizure of a railway junction in Luxembourg, whose neutrality the five Great Powers, including Germany, had guaranteed, was scheduled within an hour. It must be stopped, stopped at once. But how? Where was Moltke? Moltke had left the palace. An aide was sent off, with siren screaming, to intercept him. He was brought back.

The Kaiser was himself again, the All Highest, the War Lord, blazing with a new idea, planning, proposing, disposing. He read Moltke the telegram and said in triumph: “Now we can go to war against Russia only. We simply march the whole of our army to the East!”

Aghast at the thought of his marvelous machinery of mobilization wrenched into reverse, Moltke refused pointblank. For the past ten years, Moltke’s job had been planning for this day, The Day, Der Tag, for which all Germany’s energies were gathered, on which the march to final mastery of Europe would begin. It weighed upon him with an oppressive, almost unbearable responsibility…

“Your Majesty,” Moltke said to him now, “it cannot be done. The deployment of millions cannot be improvised. If Your Majesty insists on leading the whole army to the East, it will not be an army ready for battle but a disorganized mob of armed men with no arrangement for supply. Those arrangements took a whole year of intricate labor to complete”—and Moltke closed upon that rigid phrase, the basis for every major German mistake, the phrase that launched the invasion of Belgium and the submarine war against the United States, the inevitable phrase when military plans dictate policy—“and once settled, it cannot be altered.”

~ Barbara Tuchman
Friday, March 9

I am continually humbled by human capacities for openness, heart-centered connecting, humility, compassion, understanding, and love. I find that restorative justice in general and peacemaking circles in particular help us connect with our deepest and best selves and bring these dimensions of ourselves to some of the hardest challenges we face.

–Kay Pranis

Saturday, March 10

1913: Harriet Tubman Dies

No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people, and as long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you might otherwise.

- Marian Anderson

Sunday, March 11

1899: Albert Einstein Born

The world is a dangerous place to live. Not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who do not do anything about it.

~ Albert Einstein

Monday, March 12

I have great belief in the fact that whenever there is chaos, it creates wonderful thinking. I consider chaos a gift.

~ Septima Poinsette Clark
Tuesday, March 13

The longer we listen to one another with real attention the more commonality we will find in all our lives. That is, if we are careful to exchange with one another life stories and not simply opinions.

~ Barbara Deming

Wednesday, March 14

Murder and capital punishment are not opposites that cancel one another, but similars that breed their kind. It is the deed that teaches not the name we give it.

~ George Bernard Shaw
Militarization, the process of emphasizing military values, policies, and preparedness when transferring civil functions to military authority, assumes that when a society is in crisis or threatened, the crisis or threat can best be weathered by strengthening the military. Two significant indicators of militarization are public expenditures, particularly the percentage of total expenditures allocated to military purposes, and the discussion or application of military measures as solutions to problems and conflicts that are basically political or economic. It should be noted that women take virtually no part in the decision making regarding such policies and that increasing military spending at the cost of social expenditures impacts most negatively on women. It contributes significantly to the feminization of poverty; the majority of the world’s poor will soon be women.

Militarism manifests the excesses of those characteristics generally referred to as machismo, a term that originally connoted the strength, bravery and responsibility necessary to fulfill male social functions. Military concepts and values are upheld by patriarchy. There is in all aspects of that system an inevitable sexist bias that is especially acute in matters related to security, the term all political units apply to self-preservation. Security is the impulse that produces the military— “structures of organized violence controlled by the state.”

The military, then, is the distilled embodiment of patriarchy; the militarization of society is the unchecked manifestation of patriarchy as the overt and explicit mode of governance.

~ Betty Reardon
Friday, March 16
1921: WAR RESISTERS INTERNATIONAL FOUNDED
2003: RACHEL CORRIE MURDERED IN GAZA STRIP

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when men and women are afraid of the light.

~ Plato

Saturday, March 17

Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.

~ Brene Brown

Sunday, March 18

If one is to shed the light on others, one must first of all have it in him or herself.

~ Romain Rolland

Monday, March 19
2003: US ATTACKS BAGHDAD, STARTS SECOND GULF WAR

The sun will rise and set regardless. What we choose to do with the light while it’s here is up to us.

~ Alexandra Elle

Tuesday, March 20
2004: TENS OF MILLIONS MARCH WORLDWIDE IN PROTEST OF US WAR IN IRAQ

Don’t let anything stand in the way of the light that shines through you. Risk being seen in all your glory.

~ Jim Carrey

Wednesday, March 21
1960: SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE KILLS 69 IN SOUTH AFRICA

Enlightenment means taking full responsibility for your life.

~ William Blake
Masculine models of transformation, frequently referred to as “system change,” tend to be abstracted from everyday human conditions, to display a central concern with power arrangements, and to be preoccupied with the concept of sovereignty, an essentially patriarchal notion. Some focus much attention on determining which component of the revised structures will be endowed with the power and the right to legitimately use force, whether that force be armed or “nonviolent.” Such models can be depicted by charts, diagrams, computer games, and institutional descriptions, but almost never do they have any explicit element of human relations or affective, emotional content, and few have displayed any cultural dimension. The strategies set for in the masculine mode for the transition process tend to be primarily political and economic.

Most feminist visions or models of the future world order are found not in academic essays, computerized games, graphs, or charts, but in novels, poetry, works of art, and specific behavioral changes that women are currently making in themselves and seeking to help others make. Their efforts and their visions of healing and wholeness are in some ways far more transformative than the precise structural designs and abstract political processes that male researchers have offered to date.

~ Betty Reardon
Friday, March 23

In Restorative Justice, I learned that life doesn’t have to always be about teasing and bullying. It is about actually treating people the way they want to be treated. Don’t make fun of how they look and how they do something. In RJ I have improved on being respectful to every citizen I know and I will on every new person I meet.

~ 4th grade male

Saturday, March 24

1980: Archbishop Oscar Romero assassinated in El Salvador
1999: US and NATO begin 78 day bombing of Serbia

Restorative measures in schools provides a framework for administrators to address true accountability for offenders, the needs of victims and the actions of bystanders without sending anyone away, and a process to develop a supportive learning community, recognizing that by taking the time to do that, we improve academics, strengthen school connectedness and increase safety.

~ Nancy Riestenberg

Sunday, March 25

Justice for victims will not be served if we maintain our primary focus on the old questions that drive our justice system:
   What laws have been broken?
   Who “done” it?
   What do they deserve?
Real justice requires that we start with victims:
   Who has been hurt?
   What do they need?
   Whose obligations and responsibilities are these?
Only when we allow such questions to frame our quest for justice will victims attain the place they deserve.

~ Howard Zehr

Monday, March 26

1979: Camp David Peace Accords signed

You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.

~ R. Buckminster Fuller
Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

**Wednesday, March 28**

1979: Three Mile Island (PA) Nuclear Reactor Failure

Peace is not the product of a victory or a command. It has no finishing line, no final deadline, no fixed definition of achievement. Peace is a never-ending process, the work of many decisions.

~ Oscar Arias
The Goddess who created this passing world
said Let there be lightbulbs & liquefaction
Life spilled out onto the street, colors whirled
Cars & the variously shod feet were born
And the past & future & I born too
Light as airmail paper away she flew
To Annapurna or Mt. McKinley
Or both but instantly
Clarified, composed, forever was I
Meant by her to recognize a painting
As beautiful or a movie stunning
And to adore the finitude of words
And understand as surfaces my dreams
Know the eye the organ of affection
And depths to be inflections
of her voice & wrist & smile

~ Alice Notley
Friday, March 30

Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love. Then for the second time in the history of the world, we will have discovered fire.

~ Teilhard de Chardin

Saturday, March 31

1927: CESAR CHAVEZ BORN

Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict—alternatives to passive or aggressive responses, alternatives to violence.

~ Dorothy Thompson

Jim Ullrich on New Year’s Eve at the Sunday vigil, where we “planted” a Hope Tree, with prayers, dreams and wishes for the new year inked onto peace doves. Remarkably, we arrived the next week to find our tree was still there, still decorated with doves, still standing as a beacon of hope.
Welcoming the stranger has become an annual December event, sponsored by the Riverside Catholic Worker and supported by other local groups—this year’s march started in front of the nativity scene at First Baptist Church in Knoxville (above) and proceeded to three other churches where we heard greetings and prayers from clergy. Below: First Presbyterian Church pastor Meredith Loftis welcomes us. The march was undaunted by a chilly rain that fell off and on; and Riverside’s youngest worker, Jessika, holds her sign while she waits for the show to get on the road.
Fast forward one year—the issues that brought women and others into the streets in January 2017 are, sadly, more alive than ever. So it was back to the streets, thousands strong, on Sunday, January 21, 2018, in Knoxville, TN.