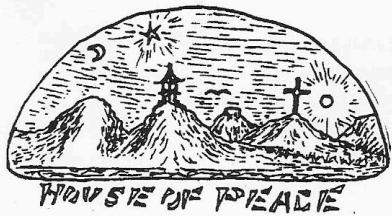


WINTER WORDS FROM THE HOUSE OF PEACE



Thirty years ago this House of Peace logo (created by a founding member—Hue Thai) appeared with the following excerpt from the first public announcement of our intention to establish a community devoted to the welcome of refugees and victims of war in companionship with friends with special abilities. This cosmic picture of sun, moon and star...ocean and mountaintop...cross and pagoda heralded our vision and our hope.

The issues propelling us towards the end of this century are clear ones...issues of war and peace...of children of war and makers of peace. They are the issues of homelessness and hospitality...of special needs and special gifts. They are the issues of people, a people of the Millennium, a people that must create a vision that takes root in the soul—and the soul must find its companions in community—and the community must take its place in the world.

Thirty years is a significant rhythm in the vast cycles of time. Marking three decades of life in community at the House of Peace we marvel at this rhythm, this cycle, this span of time that has taken us even into a new Millennium. We began our work propelled by the issues of war and peace and all that results from the catastrophe of violence. We continued our work in solidarity with companions who would let this vision take root in their souls. And we carry on our work in community, taking our place in the world, ever amazed at what this world, in these thirty years, has become.

From the first days we knew that the two mighty pillars at the entrance to this nearly three hundred year old house symbolized our inner pillars: gratitude and trust. We knew then and now, humble in the knowledge, that friends and strangers alike, both in this world and beyond the threshold daily give to us the help we need to create an environment of healing.

We only need to seek this aid, recognize it in all its many fascinating forms, and give thanks. So too, in these darkening times, we can and must trust that community is not only possible but more vital than ever. We must trust that we can and will continue to serve those who come in need of help and healing, those who carry the suffering of the times, those whose very pain demand that we redeem the times.

Our founding Principles from thirty years ago echo today more relevant than ever:

In undertaking life together, the House of Peace endeavors to reflect that "higher form of community founded in the freedom of love among brothers and sisters, as a breath of magic that we breathe in our groups...." This ideal for social life shall find its daily work in the full measure of sharing in the poverty and gifts of those who seek this healing, be they refugee or soldier, intellectually able or disabled, child or adult.

We are, at the dawn of our next thirty year cycle, filled with thankfulness for all that has been...ready to say yes to all that will come.

*Cassie Schuchardt
February, 2020*

To share a table with someone is to share everything. (P.K.)

Our solid pine kitchen table, very old and indestructible, is a friendly reminder of the four major aspects of this House of Peace life. With its four sturdy legs this table has supported the sharing of uncountable meals and all the nourishment of conversation and lively exchange that goes with the feeding. Simply put, there are four substantial tasks of our life and work:

Community life with refugees and those uprooted by war;
Companionship with helpers with special needs and special gifts;
Commitment to peace making, social justice and the abolition of war;
Consciousness and connection with a path of serious spiritual seeking.

The activities associated with each of these areas are always evolving, always revealing. At times we are called upon to describe our four-fold endeavors at various conferences. Here are some extracts from our efforts to do this at some gatherings this past year.

* * * *

The Camphill Movement worldwide has taken up this year the theme of The Refugee in the rhythm of weekly scriptural readings and services. At an event in Camphill Village, Copake, NY marking the beginning of this endeavor at the festival of Michaelmas, Carrie brought some reflections from life with refugees at the House of Peace:

....After forty years of life in community with refugees and companionship with special friends, it is profoundly moving to come into this space to experience the meeting of the greatness of Camphill with the small efforts of the House of Peace whose intention it is “to confront the suffering of the earth and its displaced peoples with a thought of the heart manifested in community life where some of the givers of healing are themselves bearing disabilities.” (HoP Principles)Here tonight, in a war-broken, environmentally devastated, refugee-creating world we reflect on Camphill and home-coming.The Community of Camphill, founded by refugees, has been prepared for decades, with grace and suffering and powerful destinies and guidance. Its House, and our House of Peace, are ready for the children of different destinies to come home. It is truly a House that Wisdom has built where people in need are ready to be recognized and welcomed and renewed....

* * * *

At two other gatherings this past year, Geraldine Ortiz, long-term resident of the House of Peace, “artist-in-residence”, gourmet cook and friend to all who come shared her perspective. Of the annual spring North American Council gathering in Pennsylvania she states: *Going to this conference every year is an artistic and learning experience for me. It is a good way of making new friends and seeing old friends...of learning something new and bringing it home.* At the July Conference of the International Communities Study Association in New York, Geraldine presented an inspiring picture of her life at the House of Peace where she daily creates a joyful atmosphere of unconditional hospitality. Together with our beloved Mary Ellen and with Nick, newer to the fold, she insures this “sharing at the Table” is healing.

* * * *

RUDOLF STEINER (1861-1925) and MARTIN LUTHER KING (1929-1968)

At the Annual General Meeting of the Anthroposophical Society in America (Decatur GA, October 2019) John Schuchardt presented a vivid and original portrait of the inter-connected destinies and work of these two great leaders. This deeply moving, uniquely creative exploration will continue to unfold as more people take up this theme. Here are a few highlights from John's study:

Both Dr. Steiner and Dr. King had a deep experience of spiritual realities. Rudolf Steiner wrote:
The unfolding of my soul rested upon the fact that I had stood in spirit before the Mystery of Golgotha in most inward, most earnest solemnity of knowledge. (1900, age 34)

Dr. King described his own experience at age 27:

At that moment I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced God before. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying: 'Stand up for justice, stand up for truth. God will be at your side forever.'

Carrying a profound prophetic vision combined with deep understanding of the past and present conditions of their times, both Dr. Steiner and Dr. King founded movements of world-wide importance: Rudolf Steiner—the Anthroposophical Society (with its many branches addressing education, medicine, agriculture, the arts and more); Dr. King—the Civil Rights Movement (and its countless related endeavors fighting for human rights).

Both Dr. Steiner and Dr. King called for a total restructuring of society with a focus on human rights and human responsibility, the first framing a choice between adopting a rational attitude or facing “cataclysmic revolutions”...the latter warning of “non-violence or non-existence.”

Dr. Steiner’s Threefold Social Order presented practical, innovative, urgently needed forms for the upholding of freedom, rights and human solidarity and community. Dr. King outlined in powerful detail the “giant triplets of evil: racism, militarism and economic exploitation.”

The souls of both men were shaken to the core by the violence of hatred and war. Dr. Steiner repeatedly referred to the catastrophe of the First World War, beseeching people to take up the path of spiritual and social renewal. Dr. King cried out against the war in Vietnam, organizing resistance and ultimately, sacrificing his life.

The life and teachings of Rudolf Steiner and Dr. Martin Luther King offer a mighty proclamation to the world...a vision of a society, permeated by love...a renewed cosmic creation of a humanity ever more able to fulfill its tasks.



*Out of the gravity of the times
must be born the courage to act.*



*I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional
love will have the final word in reality.*

A PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE

In late April 2019 John and Carrie Schuchardt of the House of Peace joined a peace delegation to Russia. It is impossible to adequately describe the scope and depth of this experience of Russia—the people and landscape, the culture and community, the suffering and striving. The following report begins with an excerpt from the delegates' final statement.

As an international delegation of 24 individuals to the Russian Federation we have visited Moscow, St. Petersburg and three cities in Crimea (April 25-May 9).

We came to learn, to listen, and to build a bridge of friendship through citizen diplomacy. We have had daily important meetings with Russian journalists, activists, academics, ordinary citizens, and have gained firsthand information and historical perspective. The Russian people met us with warmth, openness and generosity...The Russian people love their country with a warmth and depth of love that is difficult for Americans to comprehend. It is a love born of centuries of history, culture and religious faith, and a love born of the suffering and sacrifice of the repeated defense of their Motherland.
(Global Network Russia Study Tour Declaration, May 2019)

Three Russian cities—three major national events—and countless experiences and encounters filled the days. Soul-expanding windows into the very heart of the Russian people opened before us.

Moscow: Our delegation gathered daily with rapt attention and in earnest dialogue with a remarkable spectrum of Russians who addressed the political, military, social, cultural and historic realities of their country. We freely explored the city's vast treasures: cathedrals and gardens, waterways and bridges, war memorials and museums, Red Square and the Kremlin...and in the starry Midnight Hour of Orthodox Easter Eve a soaring church, flooded with singing people, illuminated with thousands of candles held by a procession of fervent pilgrims.

(Journal entry): It is overwhelmingly beautiful, moving....from the ancient past echoing into the future. If we could look upon the world would we see, rising up from such holy places—from such holy people—an irrepressible force of the Good? The power of beauty, of sanctuary, of peace? The tears flow. I pray for all this world on this Easter night.

Crimea: Our guide, translator, guardian of every detail and now treasured friend is Tanya. She shepherded us through the May Day crowds and our place in a buoyant parade where we marched in joyful celebration with our Veterans for Peace banners. This day in Simferopol culminated in a remarkable forum, a deep sharing between our group and Crimean community leaders. It was an opportunity to learn the truth of their experiences, so urgently needed to overcome propaganda.

We traveled on to Yalta where one destination was the vast expanse of Artek, a famous international youth center where Samantha Smith, young American prophet for peace, once spent some time. She is the patron of our Veterans for Peace Chapter in Ipswich, MA which sent with us gifts and symbols of solidarity with our Russian counterparts who work for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons.

Finally we traveled to Sevastopol where we were welcomed at the Battery 35 Museum, site of the deaths in 1942 of 30,000 Russians at the hands of Nazi invaders. We were totally transfixed by the enormity of the sacrifice and suffering of Mother Russia, US ally, who lost some 27 million people in the suffering, starvation and deaths inflicted during the Nazi sieges.

(Journal entry): Our museum guide, Inna, brings us into these military catacombs. ...An underground operating room...a stretcher/operating table stands there, and on it two fresh roses.

Photos of young men--a helmet--still another rose. Names on the walls—one just by me---I leave a kiss...

I feel immersed in their death and dying. The tears begin to fall. Inna gazes at me, I at her.

The tour continues. Inna gathers us at the entrance of the Hall of Remembrance. She recites a poem left behind by a victim: "Remember us...." We enter the circular room that has a wreath on the floor, illuminated. Then darkness. We look up. As deeply harmonic music plays the faces of young men whose lives ended here are shown in a kind of rotation. The stars of the heavens shine in them. Slowly the faces disappear, each transformed into the flame of a candle. The Dead are with us. The awe of it. The plea: "Be with us, Help us. We need you." ...We quietly leave. I feel shaken but peaceful. I clasp Inna's hand.She says: "I have done this for seven years. I tell people about it. It is my job....But when I looked into your eyes and saw your tears and knew you understood what happened here and had compassion, I cried. I never cry here. Today, I cried." We say goodbye. We know we will remember.

St. Petersburg: Our delegation coalesced into a caring, supportive community united in discovery. We walked the boulevards of this city with awe at the mighty palaces and museums, bridges, rivers and parks. We carefully explored the War Museum and emerged shaken, speechless, changed in our awareness of the massive toll of war, oppression, starvation and poverty. Some of us slipped into towering ancient Cathedrals where young and old crowded before treasured icons, lighting candles, cherishing the past, praying for the future.

Our final honor as a delegation: we were invited to join on May 9 in the annual march of the Immortal Regiment-- a massive ocean of one million people honoring those who served in the Second World War. Photos were reverently carried, songs mightily sung, a tidal wave of remembrance making its way with a deep mindfulness of the past meeting the future. It was the endpoint of our delegation... the beginning of new friendships, deeper understanding, and shared longing for new ways to peace. We set out for this journey to Russia from America in dark times when spring was unfolding its flowery wings as if to escape the icy chains of shattered diplomacy, broken treaties, frozen polarization. We returned from this pilgrimage with a humble and powerful sense of solidarity with the people of Russia and with an earnest hope to continue the task “to build bridges of diplomacy and friendship.”

There is something in the human spirit that will survive and prevail.

There is a tiny and brilliant light burning in the human heart that will not go out no matter how dark the world becomes. (Leo Tolstoy



It is the Glad Season.

Hope is born again in the faces of children.

It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets.

Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things.

(from Amazing Peace by Maya Angelou)

There are wonderfully festive days in this Glad Season of turning thirty. Times of celebration and shared meals, birthdays and anniversaries, arrivals and, midst bittersweet tears, some farewells too. Young helpers, many of them Waldorf students from Germany, come with great eagerness and strength, ready to learn...and always teaching us to pay attention to youth! Long beloved volunteers are joined by new friends in offering a lively spectrum of activities to our guests and those of us who live here long-term. Strong hands for tasks in maintenance and work on the land accomplish wonders for this very old house and its gardens and woods. Family visits happen too, a shining highlight for us all, reminding us of the central core of relationships from which all community must grow.

Most important, guests in need of physical and spiritual healing make their way to us, coming through diverse means: large city agencies, hospitals, churches...or quietly through word of mouth and personal connections with those who have come before them. Our uniquely creative and supportive Board of Directors and our Advisors join us in the welcome and in finding effective ways to meet the needs that are so urgent. It is an increasingly dangerous and painful time to be a refugee...to be the one who has lost all, only to find the way to survival blocked and threatening in the current climate of fear and brutal marginalization and rejection.

Each of you, our readers and friends, makes all that we attempt possible. Your presence among us, felt in our every day life and work, is where the Hope is...it is how the Hope spreads...it is the radiating force that can touch each day and help it become "bright and beautiful."

We thank you.



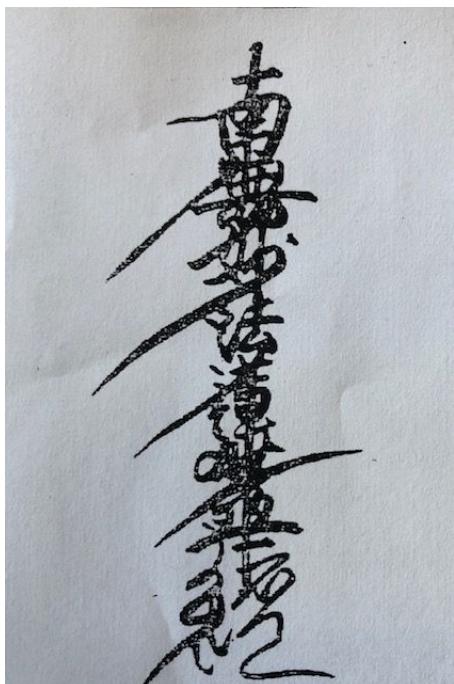
The faces of the children...the beauty of the aged...a Birthday Reunion, October 2019

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2020

Celebrating 30 Years!



Just as the height of winter is the prelude to spring, the fear that shrouds humanity can be seen as a harbinger of peace, leading to a sudden upsurge of spiritual vigor sprouting in the hearts and minds of humanity...

Humanity's challenge in the latter half of the 20th century is to choose between extinction and great unity through reconciliation. It is in turn a choice of victory for violence or for human spirituality...

The path for genuine universal liberation is there for humanity to choose with courage, faith in humanity and spiritual values...

*The time has come when we can no longer sit or stand idle but are compelled to rush out of the confines of our homes. The time has come to look up at the heavens, bow to the earth, voice our concerns to one and all and share our grief...
(Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii)*