

Episcopal Peace Fellowship

Paul Jones, bishop and peacemaker

In April 1918, right after the United States entered World War I, the House of Bishops tried to silence a prominent Episcopal voice against war, Bishop Paul Jones.

Jones, serving the then-Missionary District of Utah, was forced to resign his post when he revealed his deep convictions about war, stating "I believe that the methods of modern international war are quite incompatible with the Christian principles of reconciliation and brotherhood..."

However, Jones' work for peace continued. He was a founder of the interdenominational Fellowship of Reconciliation and served as its secretary for 10 years. He helped found the Episcopal Peace Fellowship prior to his death in 1941. During the early years of World War II, he helped resettle Jews and others who fled Nazi Germany, and he argued for greater understanding in relations with Japan.

Bishop Jones is honored on the Episcopal Church's calendar on September 4.

Episcopal Peace Fellowship began as The Episcopal Pacifist Fellowship on November 11, 1939, Armistice Day. Founders included William Appleton Lawrence, Bishop of Western Massachusetts, Mrs. Henry Hill Pierce of New York, and John Nevin Sayre, also of New York. In the early days of World War II, EPF supported conscientious objectors, urging the whole church to do so. At that time members were required to sign a commitment: "In loyalty to the Person, Spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ, my conscience commits me to His way of redemptive love and compels me to refuse to participate in or give moral support to any war."

In 1966, on the eve of the Vietnam War, EPF changed its name to Episcopal Peace Fellowship and altered its commitment statement to accommodate peace-makers who were not necessarily pacifists.

Today, EPF seeks to address confusion, ambivalence, fear and hatred by helping individuals and groups cultivate the spirituality and everyday practice of active nonviolence. EPF also has launched two special projects in cooperation with the Diocese of Haiti and with Episcopal Native Peoples.

EPF is organized in local chapters that work on local issues within their parish and communities as well as national and international issues. Chapters sponsor and co-sponsor prayer and public witness such as peace vigils, liturgies, service projects and demonstrations. In addition, EPF holds regional meetings throughout the United States.

EPF's Young Adult Brain Trust coordinates a growing group of 18-to-20-something activists. EPF also maintains action groups on a number of issues, including Iraq, the death penalty, peace and the Millennium Development Goals, Israel and Palestine, Iran, Cuba, conscientious objectors, and nuclear abolition.



Loving God, Creator and Sustainer of humanity, to whom each person is sacred and for whom all wars are unchristian: Raise up in this and every land and time courageous women and men who, like your servant Paul Jones, will stand firm in proclaiming the gospel of peace when the multitude is clamoring for war, and who will dare to call your church to fulfill her reconciling vocation. This we ask in the name of the One who calls us to peace and reconciliation, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and for ever. Amen.

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After much prayerful thought, imagination and contemplation, the Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls (Oglala Lakota), director of the Department of Indian Work in the Diocese of Minnesota and vicar of

All Saints' Church, Minneapolis, created this icon. "Bishop Jones was one interesting fellow," Two Bulls said, "and he reminds me how far we are from the Gospel with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. After doing the icon I became much closer to him and what his life and work represented."

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