

REPORT OF THE 2020 INTERNATIONAL PEACE FAST IN KNIGHTON – HEALING NOT KILLING – TO COMMEMORATE 75 YEARS SINCE THE ATOMIC BOMBING OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

As part of Trident Ploughshares and XR Peace, 2 women (Angie Zelter and Lyn Gardenchild), fasted over 4 days to grieve and commemorate the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They prepared 4 exhibition boards with information about the bombings, the 9 nuclear weapon states, the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, XR Peace and the impact of the military on climate chaos. On each of the 4 days the boards, banners, and tables for leaflets and crane making were set up at 7.30 a.m. and then taken down at 6 p.m. Social distancing was adhered to although family clusters were closer. More than 50 different people visited the fast to view the exhibition, take part in the workshops or play music. Some people attending fasted for a day or missed a meal in solidarity and £188.80 was raised for the Knighton Food Bank.

The opening ceremony on Thursday 6th August at 8.15 a.m. was attended by around 13 people and there were readings from the Hiroshima Hibakusha and a bell from Hiroshima was rung.



Tod (on violin) and Camilla (on accordion) played for an hour while the knitting of white poppies began. This was followed by Baptist Minister Rev. Kevin Dare leading a workshop entitled 'Is there any real hope for peace?' We concluded that there was!

He was joined by other local ministers representing the Church of Wales (Rev. Petra Goodband) and the Catholic Church (Father Jerome) and between them they led Prayers for Peace.



The atmosphere of the fast was lovely, calm and welcoming. At 3 p.m. Penny Rosenthal led a workshop on Maslow's pyramid on the constituents of security and people joined in making themselves heard even over the very loud traffic noises.

Friday 7th August found the knitters fast at work and a young family came along and the father bought 2 of the poppies for his children. Christine (on whistle) along with Tod (on violin) made the time pass very pleasantly and intrigued passers by. The morning workshop led by John Goodband was fairly technical and explored the peaceful uses of radiation in cancer treatment, ending with a plea for just a fraction of the money spent on Trident to pay for more healing equipment. The afternoon workshop led by Angie Zelter was on the impact of climate change on our security. The participants told us of the changes in climate they had observed locally and in the world at large and came up with lots of suggestions on how our local environment could be made more resilient and secure.





Shadows were chalked on the ground – many people were unfamiliar with this tradition that symbolizes the shadows found on pavements in Hiroshima – the only remains of the people burnt into the ground by the heat of the explosion.



Saturday 8th August the peace crane making started really early and 3 strings of cranes were hung in the branches of the pin oak that was scattering us with beautiful flattened acorns. Charlie (on guitar) played for us, despite a badly cut thumb, and was then joined by John (who drummed on the guitar case and the Hiroshima bell).

Rev. Petra Goodband then gave a workshop giving us an insight into what a variety of different faiths said about nuclear weapons. Most outlawed indiscriminate weapons that killed civilians.

The afternoon workshop, led by Nandita Dowson on the Israeli annexation of Palestinian lands was very informative and lively and engendered much discussion.



Nagasaki day, 9th August, began quietly with Camilla (on accordion) and Chris (on flute).



11.01 a.m. began with John drumming.

About 16 people gathered in a socially distanced circle to hear about the Nagasaki tragedy, a song was sung, a poem read, tears were shed.

But the good news was shared that on Hiroshima Day, 3 more States ratified the The U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – Ireland, Nigeria, and Niue – and on this Nagasaki day Saint Kitts and Nevis also ratified. There are therefore now 44 States Parties. There are only another 6 needed for the Treaty to come into force.

We ended with a socially distanced group hug.

