



May 28, 2017

“Trading Places” - Have you watched it?

In late 2007, 138 Muslim leaders from many parts of the world signed a letter addressed to the global Christian community. The letter is called A Common Word Between Us and You. Since its original release, more than 100 additional signatories have added their names. A significant initiative from the world's Muslim community, this letter represents an invitation to engage more deeply in peacemaking by two of the world's largest religious communities.



The United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have each responded to the signatories, some of whom are members of our partner, the Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue. In addition, the World Council of Churches has also sent a response to the signatories, as well as encouraging its member churches to engage the letter, and Muslim neighbors.

Interfaith relations is an increasingly prevalent reality in North America, and we can learn a great deal from our own experience and that of partners in the Middle East and throughout the world. Here in the U.S., the UCC and Disciples are actively engaged in interfaith dialogue, both with the Jewish and Muslim communities. Information and resources about these are available on the National Council of Churches Interfaith Relations page.

In January of this year the UCC, released a video - “Trading Places”. Trading Places shines a light on religious bigotry in a unique way—by depicting religious leaders of different faiths experiencing the power of walking in one another’s shoes – and into one another’s houses of worship.

To watch the video and for more information go to the following webpage: <http://tradingplacesucc.org/>



MEMORIAL DAY



Memorial Day Weekend. Swimming pools will open; cookouts and parades will fill the air with the smell of charcoal and sounds of marching bands. If your school isn’t out already it will be shortly. Summer is at hand. All that joy lives in tension with the sorrow in the purpose of Memorial Day – remembering the loss of our sacred military dead.

Most of us know that Memorial Day began as Decoration Day, when people of the South and North looked for some way to cope with the slaughter of the Civil War. After we lost more soldiers in more wars Memorial Day became a nationwide observance on the last Monday in May as declared by a 1968 act of Congress.

I cannot escape the memory of brothers who died in service to our country while on deployment to Iraq in 2006-07. Every veteran’s deepest wish is that their war will be the war to end all wars; that the sacrifice of their friends was not only a valiant contribution to a historic victory but one that would end all future suffering. Still, the fighting goes on.

It is right and good to remember that although we work for peace and pray for peace, sometimes peace is broken. Evil is real and while war is too often the failure of humans to find creative ways to solve their differences, there are times when the alternative is worse. Let us pray without ceasing that our leaders always know the difference.

Our ancestors marched into battle bravely, sometimes reluctantly but always with the hope that if they fought gallantly not only would they would be remembered, the world would be a little bit better because of their sacrifice. Those of us who are their spiritual and, in some cases, physical descendants, can we do any less for our warriors? What sacrifice of ours will join theirs to make this world just a little bit better?

This weekend, enjoy everything about the beginning of summer and take a moment to honor those who died fighting for our country.

Visit a cemetery. Say a prayer. Light a candle. Pour a libation. Tell a story. Sing a song. And remember.

- Rev. William P. Worley, Conference Minister