



MINUTE FOR MISSION

Come to the Table of Transformation

A MINISTRY OF TRANSFORMATION

The ancient biblical vision of turning swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks has stirred the modern-day imagination of Columbia Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia.

Like the prophet Isaiah, the people of Columbia envision a world where devices associated with death are turned into implements that give life. So they are converting guns, instruments sometimes used to inflict death, to tools used to access life-giving water.

This effort sends a powerful message of peace to people in the United States and helps meet an urgent need for water in Malawi. The congregation asked its members and people from the surrounding community to donate guns to the project. They were taken to a local artistic blacksmith, who forged working rope pumps with metal from the guns.

The pumps are displayed around the community to symbolize the congregation's conviction that there are too many guns in society and too few resources devoted to meeting human needs. Those who agree with the message are invited to make donations toward the purchase of African-made rope pumps.

"We are trying to address the gun issue by saying 'enough is enough' and then do something positive," says Columbia's pastor, Tom Hagood. The congregation is promoting the effort within the Greater Atlanta Presbytery and through area media.

"We're saying we need guns off the streets because people are dying in Atlanta, Decatur, and elsewhere," Hagood emphasizes. "If we can prevent one death and help a village get water, it's worth our effort."

Hundreds of thousands of people in Malawi lack access to a reliable source of clean drinking water. More people die from water-related diseases like typhoid, cholera, and hepatitis A than from AIDS. In recent years, erratic rainfall and flooding have added to Malawi's challenges. Crop yields are down significantly, and many have been left without a reliable source of nutritious food. Rope pumps can help mitigate both of these problems by providing safe water for Malawian families and irrigated water for their crops.

For more than 25 years, Presbyterian mission co-workers Jim and Jodi McGill have worked with Malawian partners to help people in Malawi gain access to clean water. The McGills, who have a longstanding relationship with Columbia Presbyterian Church, told the congregation about the life-saving benefits rope pumps provide to people in Malawi.

At Columbia Presbyterian, the guns-to-pumps project invites the community to join them around God's table of transformation. God has set this table around the world and made it a place where evil is turned into good. By supporting the Peace & Global Witness Offering, you join Presbyterians across the country who are gathering around God's table of transformation.

Twenty-five percent of the Peace & Global Witness Offering will be retained by our congregation to support peacemaking efforts in our community, 25% will go to presbytery ministries, and 50% will go to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministries of peace and reconciliation. Your gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering will signify your support of God's vision of transformation for our world. **Please give generously.**