

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This past Friday (March 5) was the 2021 World Day of Prayer. On that day, people of diverse faiths joined together in prayer. My midweek letter highlighted the day, in hopes that you would participate, as well, in praying for peace throughout the world.

Today, I would like to offer another example of how God's creation can be a part of peacemaking initiatives. While this example is one to which many of us can relate, it begins with our understanding that peacemaking can take many forms. It is an effort involving barn owls!

An excerpt from the International Owl Center website states the following:

The Barn Owl is cosmopolitan, its plumage varies in coloration and it shows remarkable behavior including cooperation between young siblings...

- Barn owls are exceptionally peaceful. Nestlings preen each other, they feed each other and they vocally negotiate which individual will have priority access to food instead of fighting...

Dr. [Alexandre] Roulin [professor at the University of Lausanne] believes the barn owl is an inspiration for us as humans and uses this bird to bring Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinians to the same table. Farmers spread poison to kill rodents that devastate their agricultural fields. This is an ecological disaster because predators that consume poisoned rodents accumulate poison and die. He and his colleagues thus motivate farmers to use barn owl[s] as an environmentally-friendly biological pest control agent. To implement this project in the three regions they organize workshops with Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinians. Diplomats, farmers, state leaders and even the Pope have been interested in this project to demonstrate its relevance in reconciliation between communities at war.

The program, "Owls for Peace," featuring Dr. Roulin will air today (March 7) via Zoom at 1:00 p.m. This free program is part of the Virtual Owl Expert Speaker Series offered by the International Owl Center in Houston, Minnesota. Once you register to attend, you will receive an email with a link to join the live, online Zoom event. Here, you can watch and listen, or even ask questions.

If you prefer, you can livestream the event from the International Owl Center's YouTube channel (where it will also be saved for later viewing after the program is over). Go to the International Owl Center website, internationalowlcenter.org On the homepage, scroll to "March 7, 1:00 PM: Virtual Owl Expert program: Owls for Peace"... and click on "Owls for Peace." From this link, you can read additional information and/or register for the Zoom event.

As we seek to promote peace and justice in God's world, let us be mindful of the message that one of God's creatures, the barn owl, has for us. May we too seek peace among and between our neighbors and with all that God has created.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy