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Dear Friend of LMPC,

I hope that you have had a blessed Advent season and can look forward to a joyous Christmas, as we celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace. As I consider the essential message of Christmas and God's incarnation in Christ, I've been reflecting on the gift that you have meant over the years to the LMPC ministry and its mission: "to proclaim Christ's good news, the gospel of peace and justice, and to be active in the sacred ministry of reconciliation, wherever and whenever we can."

Your support empowered us to have a rich year of seeking to fulfill that mission. Program highlights for 2019 have included:

- Presenting educational programs on 118 days out of the year.
- Facilitating 75 mediation and consultation sessions, which included completing two major judicatory and congregational mediation processes, involving multiple sessions, and beginning two other such efforts that will continue into 2020.
- Leading a January *Peacemaker's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, with 23 participants.
- Six offerings of our *Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders*, attended by 232 pastors and other church leaders.
- Leading five *Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process* programs, as well as two offerings of the *Advanced Clergy Clinic*, spanning over the course of two program years, with a total of 220 people attending the various sessions.

Most significantly for me, I've announced that this will be my last year of serving as the LMPC Executive Director. As of January 15, 2020, LMPC will welcome Jay Wittmeyer as our new LMPC Executive Director. I will continue to serve in the LMPC office until May 31, 2020, as LMPC Director Emeritus and Senior Consultant, to fulfill program and mediation commitments that I've made during the first part of the year, while also assisting in the transition process.

Beyond June 1, 2020, I will provide leadership for the remaining 2020 offerings of the *Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders* and the various 2020-2021 *Clergy Clinic* and *Advanced Clergy Clinic* sessions. I will also be available to present educational workshops, as well as any major training events beyond 2020-2021, when invited to do so by the new LMPC Executive Director.

With this letter, you'll find information about two other events that I'll be leading in my role as LMPC Director Emeritus and Senior Consultant – with a form for expressing your potential interest in joining us either in Florence or the Holy Land – or both!

- A September 19-27, 2020, a course on *Differentiated Leadership: Exploring Self and the Art of Florence* for Southern Methodist University, to be presented in the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance.
- Another *Peacemaker's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, scheduled for January 13-26, 2021.

As we move into a time of leadership transition, I believe we are truly blessed to have Jay Wittmeyer return to the LMPC ministry, having served as LMPC Assistant Director from 2004 to 2006. He left LMPC to serve in the denominational offices of the Church of the Brethren, most recently as Executive Director of Global Mission and Service. Since Jay has prior experience in presenting LMPC workshops and facilitating our congregational mediation process, it will contribute significantly toward a smooth transition process.

Regarding his decision to return here in the role of LMPC Executive Director, Jay has indicated: "Two key aspects of the peace center ministry draw me back at this time: 1) the focus on leadership development and capacity building, especially for those serving in churches in these difficult times of conflict and anxiety; 2) I am a peacebuilder at heart and passionate about Christ's call to serve in the ministry of reconciliation. I'm also grateful that Richard will still be available to lead the major training events and assist in other ways during the transition process."

God has truly blessed the LMPC ministry across the 37 years that I've been serving here, touching thousands of lives with our message that Christ is the path to peace. I have no doubt that the LMPC ministry will continue to be blessed under Jay's leadership. I encourage you to be in prayer for all of us at LMPC as we move through this time of transition, while continuing to keep up with our busy schedule of offering educational events and consulting services to churches of multiple denominations. In turn, we will be praying that you and your family have a joyful Christmas as you welcome the Christ Child into your midst during this holy season!

P.S. I also want to express appreciation to those of you who have sent a donation to LMPC in recent months. For those who have not yet included LMPC in your 2019 giving, I would invite you to express your support for our new LMPC Executive Director by sending a contribution to LMPC during this season of peace.

Grace and peace,

Richard Blackburn  
LMPC Executive Director