

Citation Speech for Joyce Shutt
2008 Lifetime of Peacemaking Award Winner
by Janet Powers

Joyce Musselman Shutt was born into a Mennonite family, and by choosing her parents so wisely, she had a leg up on the rest of us who came to our peacemaking in fits and starts, only gradually coming to understand that violence is not acceptable in human encounters and war is not the answer. Mennonites believe in following the model set by Jesus, which involves turning the other cheek and caring for the poor and marginalized in our communities. Joyce clearly lived up to the expectations of her Mennonite parents. But her impact on the community has far exceeded the narrow realm of a single church.

Even so, many of us knew her first in the context of Fairfield Mennonite Church, for Joyce was instrumental in starting the annual Gift Festival there in 1961, with fair trade items brought for sale from the Mennonite World Services in Akron, Pennsylvania, to be sold at a 3-day event in Fairfield. It was a small operation at first, but it grew by leaps and bounds until now it lasts a week and grosses thousands of dollars. Where items were first transported in personal vehicles, now huge tractor trailers bring the goods to the church parking lot. The church makes not a penny on the Gift Festival, but rather all profits go back into the program to buy materials and pay the craftsmen for their work in less developed countries such as Peru, Haiti, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Fairfield's Festival is now a significant part of the Ten Thousand Villages endeavor. What a magnificent project!

Joyce and her husband Earl raised four children, two daughters of their own and two adopted bi-racial sons. In at least one case, the adoption was local, an exception to the rule. I must tell this story because it reveals so much about what a special person Joyce is. Several people at the hospital looking through the glass at a day-old infant, the child of an African American farm worker and a local girl gone wrong, made the comment, "What a beautiful baby. But who would want him?" Joyce surprised even herself by replying, "I would," and so their first adopted son joined the Shutt family. The going wasn't easy with those boys, but Joyce eventually turned extremely difficult problems into a significant force for good.

As Fairfield Mennonite Church could not afford a full-time pastor and made do with a Permanent Part-Time Pastor (PPTP) in the person of Lou Hammann and a number of exciting speakers sent to them by the Mennonite Central Committee, Joyce felt a call to the ministry. She completed her work at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg and was ordained, much to the consternation of the all-male Eastern District Conference Mennonite Board. But as merely a member of the congregation, Joyce presented worship services at Green Acres when few others at FMC were willing to take a turn to do so. Joyce took on the role as Fairfield Mennonite's full-time pastor in 1980, serving until 2000.

As a result of problems within her family, Joyce became involved with the Prison Society, a state organization, which dates from the Quaker legacy of Pennsylvania and is written into the State Constitution, to provide advocacy for prisoners. She went on to develop an informal Prison Ministry in the late 1990s and to organize it on a more formal basis in 2001. She has served on the board of SCCAP (South Central Community Action Program) for at least five years and assisted in setting up SCCAP's projects for both female and male prisoners. More recently, Joyce has been a significant presence in the Re-entry Coalition, a Healthy Adams County Task Force that helps to prepare soon-to-be released prisoners for again taking up community life in such as way as to discourage recidivism.

In the midst of all these activities, Joyce found time to write a book, *Steps to Hope* (Herald Press), which deals with addictions in terms of the Beatitudes found in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. She wrote from her own experience, out of love for her children, and with the viewpoint of a Christian called to minister to those in prison.

Joyce is an extraordinary woman who has made an extraordinary contribution to our community over her lifetime so far. For this reason, we are awarding her the 2008 Lifetime Peacemaker Award.