



Peace Quest Begins with East Lansing Peace March

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By: Jim Detjen



Above: Terry Link and Ellen Link leading the peace march during Peace Quest in 2016.

A community-wide celebration of peace, called Peace Quest 2017, will begin today, Sunday, September 17, with a kick-off rally and march on the Michigan State University campus from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. at the Cherry Lane Park in East Lansing.

This free event, which will be held at the intersection of Harrison and Wilson Roads, is one of more than fifteen activities that are scheduled from September 17 to 24 in the greater Lansing area.

Among the activities at today's kick-off rally—called a “day of action”—will be remarks by clergy and local leaders, face painting, paper crane-making, music, information tables, and a short peace march. Participants are encouraged to bring a peace sign, if possible. In addition, the winners of the Niagara Foundation art contest for high school students will be announced.

The week of peace-related activities in Mid-Michigan will formally begin this morning with messages of peace at 10 a.m. at Edgewood United Church, the Okemos Community Church, the Presbyterian Church of Okemos, and the Lansing Church of the Brethren. All Saints Episcopal Church in East Lansing will hold services at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Peace Quest events are part of an international effort to create a culture of peace by raising awareness about nonviolence and conflict resolution and through learning about other faiths and cultures. Events are being held this week in all 50 states and in 16 countries in connection with the United Nations International Day of Peace on September 21.

During the past three years, the number of peace-related events held around this day has dramatically increased, according to Pace e Bene, a nonprofit organization that tracks peace-related activities. The number of activities has grown from 240 in 2014 to more than 1,250 this year.

Other events in our area's Peace Quest will include sermons focusing on peace at houses of worship in East Lansing, Okemos, and Lansing, storytelling about peace, a non-violence-training workshop, a forum on solar energy, and an interactive presentation on "Understanding Islam." A complete list of the activities can be found [at the Peace Quest website](#).

The week of peace-related activities will conclude with a "Concert Across America to End Gun Violence" from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on September 24 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing, 5509 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, Lansing. (The suggested donation is \$10.)

This year's local effort is an expansion of a single day of activities on September 27, 2015, at Potter Park Zoo in Lansing. Last year the effort was expanded to a full week of activities held at a variety of venues in mid-September and named Peace Quest 2016.

Peace Quest 2017 is being organized by a team of volunteers from the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, the Peace Education Center, the Michigan Coalition to End Gun Violence, Edgewood United Church, Niagara Foundation, Shalom Center for Justice and Peace, and other organizations.

The week's activities are being supported by donations from more than 25 individuals, businesses, foundations, houses of worship, and educational organizations.

Parking for today's event at the Cherry Lane Park will be available at the University United Methodist Church, the University Lutheran Church, and the Islamic Center of East Lansing on Harrison Road.

Disclosure: Jim Detjen, the Knight Professor of Journalism Emeritus at Michigan State University, is the secretary of the Peace Education Center. He is a member of the planning team for Peace Quest 2017.

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