



So tonight, Tuesday, July 3 at 9:45pm in Wichita a plane should arrive carry the tired but excited Ulster Project teen from Portadown Northern Ireland. It is hard to believe that this will be the 19th Project to take place here in Hutchinson and that over five hundred young people will have participated in the project. This summer we will be working with a group of thirty-five teenager from Hutchinson and Portadown. This is the biggest group we have ever had and that is as a result of the McPherson group sadly not being able to host this year. So in true Hutchinson fashion the Board and this years families stepped up and took all the extra teens. Under the guidance of six counsellors and an army of volunteers, a magical, live changing month awaits. I am proud to be the President of this years Project and I continue to be overwhelmed by the teams of people who make up our Board, who serve on our planning committees, the great volunteers and financial supporters who make this amazing month happen. These young people from Portadown come here at a time of great uncertainty and political stalemate here in Northern Ireland. The political

institutions have been suspended and talks between the political parties to restore them have collapsed. While the violence that has plagued the country for generations has thankfully not returned, they continue to live in what has been accepted as a "fragile peace". It is in times like these, which unfortunately are replicated across the globe, that we all need to re-double our efforts, commitment and enthusiasm to be "peace makers".



The Ulster Project has been built on creating a safe place for young people who are separated by religious and political divides together to experience love, trust and new hope for the future through meaningful engagement with each other.

I have no doubt that the quiet, active peacemaking of the Ulster Project family over the last forty-three years has helped make political reconciliation in Northern Ireland a real and lasting possibility. This year First Presbyterian Church will have another three students and their families taking part in the Project. Hailey Meggers, Wyatt Johnson and Tyler Westfall will be part of a month that we pray will have a life changing effect on them.

As a Christian, faith based organization, it is our hope that each of our young people will be living examples of Gods love for the world. You see we follow a God of love and we need to show others that we are his children by our actions and the words we speak. I know that it goes without saying that if our God is a peacemaker, then we his children, who are made in his own image, need to be peacemakers too.

We are living in a world of turmoil, hatred, mistrust and war. There has to be a better way to live and we must strive to teach and raise up a generation who will work for and bring peace to a broken world. The Ulster Project has had a huge impact on my life. It helped shape and mould my thinking at a critical time in my young life and that has stayed with me as a foundational part of my life. My connection with the Ulster Project actually was a big piece of the puzzle that brought Jennifer and I here to First Presbyterian. Let all of us strive to make this world and our community a better place to live in by showing Gods love to everyone and treating all people as our brothers and sisters.