

**"Menno Simons Sermon Prize" 2026 has been awarded
to Kate André, Boston (USA)**

The "Center for Peace Church Theology" (Department of Protestant Theology, University of Hamburg) has awarded the international Menno Simons Sermon Prize to Kate André for her sermon "Gathering in the Gap." The sermon—followed by the award ceremony—will be held on Sunday, October 11, 2026, during the service at the Mennonite Church Hamburg-Altona. The event is part of the 20th-anniversary celebrations of the "Center for Peace Church Theology."

The prize-winning sermon was originally delivered on Palm Sunday 2025 to the Mennonite congregation in Boston/Cambridge. It takes its starting point from a pro-democracy mass demonstration, linking this experience with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44). Kate André asks: "Is the struggle worth it even if we lose, even if we die, even if the whole system collapses and the life we know—the parts we value and take for granted—is stripped away from us?" Why didn't Jesus save himself? In very direct language, the sermon briefly touches on traditional theological explanations for Jesus' death, only to suggest that perhaps we should not try to find "meaning" in his death—and all other senseless deaths—but rather mourn them honestly. The sermon points out various tactics we (could) employ in the face of current, frightening uncertainties. It does not dissolve these tensions, yet it conveys hope rooted in faith—in peace, justice, and simplicity.



Kate André is an ordained minister in the Mennonite Church USA and has served the Mennonite Congregation of Boston in Cambridge, Massachusetts, since 2022. She also serves as a Mennonite chaplain at Harvard University. She has taught world religions, philosophy, and ethics, and coordinated a program for young adults focused on Ignatian spirituality in Manhattan's Upper East Side. She is a trained yoga teacher and completed basic mediation training at the New York Peace Institute. During the peak of the pandemic, she worked as a hospital chaplain. Kate has recently begun her doctoral studies in the field of Religion and Education. Originally, she studied

music and drama at the University of North Carolina and pursued an acting career in New York City before earning her Master of Divinity from Yale Divinity School. Her master's thesis explored sketch comedy and improvisational theater as tools for authentic community-building in worship design. She loves exploring national parks with her husband, Erol, and spending time with her musical preschooler.

About the Menno Simons Sermon Prize

The international Menno Simons Sermon Prize aims to encourage and recognize sermons that bring the biblical witness to light through the lens of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

Within the horizon of lived ecumenism, the sermons should promote Peace Church orientation and convince through credibility, providing spiritual strengthening. Furthermore, the sermons should encourage engagement with current issues of public life beyond denominational boundaries.

The prize was established by Dr. h.c. Annelie Kümpers-Greve (1946–2017), a member of the Mennonite Church Hamburg-Altona. It includes a 2,000 Euro award, half of which goes to the recipient and half to their home congregation.

The jury consists of Mennonite theologians from various countries. The chair is Prof. Dr. Fernando Enns (Endowed Chair "Theology of Peace Churches," University of Hamburg), with Prof. em. Dr. Hans-Martin Gutmann (Practical Theology, University of Hamburg) serving as an external reviewer. Other members include: Lukas Amstutz (Bienenberg/Switzerland), Pastor Birgit Foth (Ludwigshafen), Rev. Dr. Christiane Karrer (Netherlands), Dr. Andrés Pacheco Lozano (Colombia/Netherlands), and Heinrich Wiens (Detmold).

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