

CIRCLE OF MERCY PASTOR RECEIVES ASSOCIATED CHURCH PRESS AWARD

Friday, May 13, 2011

Rev. Joyce Hollyday, co-pastor of Circle of Mercy Congregation in Asheville, NC, recently received an "Award of Excellence" from the Associated Church Press for her article on mountaintop coal mining.

"Taming the Monstrous Machines: A Bold Witness against Mountaintop-Removal Mining" was published in the January-March 2010 issue of *Baptist Peacemaker*, journal of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

The article profiles Circle of Mercy member Greg Yost, who in the summer of 2009 participated in an act of civil disobedience at the Massey Energy Company mine in Boone County, WV. Afterward, he and 13 others entered "no contest" pleas to charges of trespass and conspiracy. Each was fined a minimum of \$1,900. Circle of Mercy covered most of Yost's fine through a mission grant and contributors from numerous members.

Mountaintop removal coal mining involves literally blowing the tops off mountains to extract coal, then shoving the debris into surrounding valleys, frequently covering streams and creeks.

In the Hollyday article, Yost is quoted as saying: "We need to recognize the power that we have, which is more than we've dared believe. If there is hope for us, we'll find this power within ourselves and each other—first to dig our heels into the ground to stop the madmen who would drag us over a cliff, and then to summon the power to build something new. As a follower of Jesus, I'm convinced that the true heart of the matter actually lies in the mystery of powerlessness."

A civil suit brought by Massey against the group is pending. A video of the civil disobedience action can be viewed at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs-aNph2vPE>

Circle of Mercy Congregation is dually affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists and the United Church of Christ.