

Conrad Weiser, Witness to Peace and Reconciliation (1696 – 1760)
Observed 6 July



Johann Conrad Weiser, Jr. was born in Württemberg (Germany). After the death of his mother, his father took the children and joined a large group of German Protestant refugees seeking a new life in England. There were so many of them, that the Crown arranged for many to take ship to help settle the colony of New York. The family thrived there and in his late teens, young Conrad accepted an invitation to live and learn among the Mohawk. This began his growing acquaintance with the languages and cultures of the Native tribes of the mid-Atlantic. After Conrad married, he and his wife settled in the neighboring colony of Pennsylvania. His status as an adopted member of the Mohawk tribe enabled Weiser to become a trusted emissary between the Iroquois Confederation and colonial officials as well as other tribes. Land disputes divided all of these groups and much effort was expended to bring peace. With so many conflicting interests (many Indian tribes, individual British colonies, and the French) war was always imminent. Conrad's efforts created lasting alliances and helped the British prevail in the French and Indian War, critical to the survival of the British colonies. With so many conflicting claims to much of the land, it was impossible to create agreements that seemed just to everyone, but

Conrad always strove for justice and peace. Colonial America was a time and place when one life could encompass many different paths. Weiser was a farmer, diplomat, builder and much more. Always a faithful Christian, he began and ended a Lutheran, but spent time with the Seventh Day Baptists, living for several years in a monastery they established in Pennsylvania. Living a monastic life did not separate him from his family, and he regularly returned to the farm, and his wife and children. His was a life with many facets, much adventure, and deep faithfulness. He was deeply mourned by his Iroquois friends who are said to have remarked that with his death they would find it harder to understand one another. He remains a model of faithfulness to the Gospel of the Prince of Peace in times of conflict.

Lessons Job 5:8-9,20-27; Psalm 122; II Corinthians 5:16-20 John 16:33-17:5

Collect Almighty God, of your grace you gave Conrad Weiser the gift of diplomacy, the insight to understand two different cultures and interpret each to the other with clarity and honesty: As we strive to be faithful to our vocation to commend your kingdom, help us to proclaim the Gospel to the many cultures around us, that by your Holy Spirit we may be effective ambassadors for our Savior Jesus Christ; who with you and the same Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.