



Pax Christi

LITTLE ROCK

Pax Christi Little Rock

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**Blessed are the
Peacemakers, for
they shall be called
the children of God.
Matthew 5:9**

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Dr. Ira Helfand, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, To Speak in Little Rock on Nuclear Disarmament

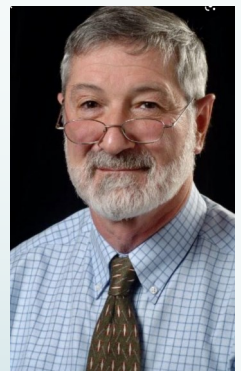
Ira Helfand, MD is a leader in two Nobel Prize-winning organizations: the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize; and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), recipient of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Helfand is also co-founder and past president of Physicians for Social Responsibility, IPPNW's US affiliate.

In May of 2016, Dr. Helfand led the session on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear war at the United Nations in Geneva that resulted in the successful negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on July 7, 2017. This treaty is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of leading towards their total elimination.

Dr. Helfand has more recently been a proponent of the Back from the Brink Campaign, a grassroots program initiated by the Union for Concerned Scien-

tists and Physicians for Social Responsibility. Last year, Pax Christi USA adopted this program that seeks to fundamentally change US nuclear weapons policy

by gaining the support at the city and state levels of government and thereby influencing the federal government through adoption of these local resolutions. Pax Christi Little Rock has also taken up the call and is currently working towards working with Little Rock city government to adopt a nuclear disarmament resolution. Dr. Helfand has agreed to support PCLR's efforts by speaking here during the first week of March, 2020. Although details of Dr. Helfand's appearance are still being finalized, he has agreed to speak on March 2 at 6 pm at the Clinton School. Pax Christi is also exploring the possibility of an engagement at Hendrix College on March 3. More to follow as plans are completed.



Dr. Ira Helfand

Peace Offerings

2020 PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK RETREAT

Pax Christi Little Rock will hold its 3rd annual retreat at St. Joseph's Center in North Little Rock on January 18-19, 2020. All interested parties are welcome to attend. We will spend two days and a night at St. Joseph's, using this time to bond as a group invested in learning to encounter peace in our own hearts so that we might better share the Peace of Christ with others. Cost for the retreat including meals is \$40. Contact Sherry at paxchristlr@gmail.com to register.

PCLR Retreat Schedule

Saturday, January 18

- 8:00 Register and check in rooms**
- 8:30 Welcome, Prayer, and Light Breakfast**
- 9:00 Qi Gong Meditation/Exercise**
- 9:45 Pax Christi LR Retrospective: Review of 2019**
- 10:45 Journaling and Discussion**
- 12:00 Lunch (catered)**
- 1:15 Love Anyway: The Film**
- 2:00 Habitat for Humanity-Puerto Rico presentation**
- 3:00 Experiencing the Peace of Christ-Fr. John Connell**
- 4:30 Back From the Brink Overview and Discussion**
- 5:30 Dinner-Rosalinda's Honduran restaurant**
- 7:00 Night Prayers—Fr. Warren Harvey**
- 7:45 Focus Session-Plans for 2020**

Sunday, January 19

- 8:00 Breakfast**
- 9:00 Attend reception for Bishop Elect Malone at CTK**
- 12:00 Mass for Life-State House Convention Center**

Peace Offerings

PCLR CO-SPONSORS ANTI-WAR RALLY IN WAKE OF US ASSASSINATION OF IRANIAN GENERAL

General Qassem Soleimani, the leader of Iran's elite Quds military force and one of the most powerful figures in the Islamic Republic, was killed early Friday morning in an airstrike in Baghdad. The White House sent formal notification to Congress about the US airstrike that killed Soleimani, in compliance with the War Powers Act. According to President Trump, he ordered



No War on Iran

the assassination of General Soleimani "to stop a war." He stated that Soleimani "was plotting imminent and sinister attacks on American diplomats and military personnel, but we caught him in the act and terminated him."



Sandee and Susi

The US Department of Defense blamed Soleimani for the deaths of hundreds of

Americans, indicating that he was behind recent attacks on coalition bases in Iraq, including one on December 27 that killed an American defense contractor.

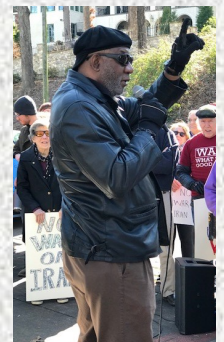
The assassination drew a vow of "crushing revenge" from Iran, causing US troops in the region to be on high alert. Lawmakers appear divided over the strike, with most Republicans supporting President



Pax Christi LR

Trump's action and Democrats warning about the possible repercussions.

It is the view of Pax Christi USA that Trump's decision to assassinate Iran's General Soleimani in Iraq has only served to escalate tensions in the Middle East and put the lives of innocent men, women and children in jeopardy. It is these innocent civilians who will suffer in the midst of the conflict between the US and Iran. PCUSA believes that the administration should pursue diplomacy to address the complicated problems in the region, many of which have been exacerbated by poor decisions undertaken by the US in the Middle East. Actions such as the assassination of General Soleimani only serve to destabilize the region further, fuel anti-American sentiment, and stoke the fires of extremism. These actions go against everything PCUSA stands for and are incompatible with the message of Jesus.

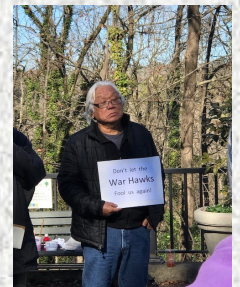


Judge Griffen



Pax Christi shows up!

Pax Christi LR co-sponsored an anti-war rally on Saturday, January 4 at 11 am at the Promenade on Kavanaugh to protest war-like action taken by the US in the assassination of General Soleimani. (information in part obtained from PCUSA article by Johnny Zokavitch).



Peace activist

Peace Offerings

Peace Coalition to Work with Habitat for Humanity on Three Houses in Spring, 2020

Pax Christi Little Rock, Women Action for New Directions (WAND), Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice and World Beyond War have worked together to raise money to contribute to the building of a home by Habitat for Humanity. This coalition of peace and social justice organizations reached their stated goal of \$2500. This contribution will enable the groups to work together in landscaping three homes in the spring and summer of 2020. The building of these houses will begin in March/April and they will be ready for landscaping around June, 2020. Lee Bass, a member of Pax Christi LR board and the liaison between the coalition and Habitat, said that the do-



nation will be used to purchase sod and shrubs for the homes. He also indicated that the peace groups would be personally involved in laying the sod, planting the shrubs, and watering and fertilizing these "landscapes for peace." Two of the homes will be in N. Little Rock near Allen Street on the new Porter Cove. The other home will be on Thayer street across from the White Water Tavern. According to Lee, these houses will create homes for low to moderate income families which quite literally changes lives and improves neighborhoods.

Additionally, this project will be an opportunity for these peace and social justice organizations to work together and in the process discuss ways that they can pool their resources on future community projects.

Pax Christi to Replenish Supplies At Mid-Year for Partner Schools

Each year around this time, Pax Christi Little Rock makes it a practice to check back in with the four schools it partners with in the Arkansas Catholic and public school systems and provide them with additional supplies that have been depleted during the first half of the school year. PCLR provides a combination of gift cards for individual classrooms and general school supplies to the four schools: Rocke-

feller Elementary, Osceola Elementary, St. Theresa's Catholic School and North Little Rock Catholic Academy. In many cases, when students are unable to provide their own supplies, teachers have voluntarily taken on this expense personally so that their students will have needed materials. Pax Christi hopes to prevent this added burden to teachers by assisting with supply shortages in January.

Peace Offerings

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

They saw the child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way. Matthew 2: 11-12.

SOLES4SOULS

Over the past month, 576 corks have been donated to Soles4Souls. This non-profit, in association with ReCork, provides durable shoes made of cork to children in need. ReCork also recycles corks given current cork shortage. Added to the total number (12,688) previously sent off, our total contribution is now 13,264. The much bigger collection this month has to do with the efforts of Mary Hunt. She is working with Milano's restaurant and they have been saving corks for many weeks and will continue to do so in the future. Thanks, Mary! Save your corks and bring them to our next PCLR meeting, drop them off at 415 N. McKinley St., #1040, or call 258-8653 and we'll pick them up.

CALENDAR OF PEACE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| January 6 | ACPJ Monthly meeting
6:30-8 pm Quaker Meeting House
3415 W. Markham St., Little Rock |
| January 10 | Note: PCLR MEETING CANCELLED |
| January 18-19 | Pax Christi LR Retreat
St. Joseph's Center
6800 Camp Robinson Rd.
North Little Rock, AR |
| January 20 | St. Joseph Center of AR
MLK Day of Service-8 AM
6800 Camp Robinson Rd., NLR |
| February 10 | ACPJ Monthly Meeting
6:30-8 Quaker Meeting House
3415 W. Markham St., Little Rock |
| February 13 | PCLR Board Meeting- 6 pm- Fitzgerald Hall
Speakers Series-7 pm
Seminarians from the House of Formation
Discerning the Call to the Priesthood
Diocese of Little Rock, Fitzgerald Hall |

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE
JANUARY BOARD MEETING AND
SPEAKER SERIES HAS BEEN
CANCELLED**

Peace Offerings

MOVING FORWARD IN RETROSPECT: PAX CHRISTI LR GROWS INTO 2020

It's a brand new year, a new decade, an auspicious moment in time when traditionally we have the opportunity to make a fresh start by making resolutions that will finally set us on "the right path" and supposedly correct all of those mistakes we made in the past year. All of that sounds so good except that year after year I have made these resolutions only to find that, after a few weeks, I often slip right back into the same old patterns that made those resolutions necessary in the first place. And, in certain areas, nothing ever changes. So, how can this year be different?

I think that one of the mistakes I've made on all of those past New Year's Days is neglecting to give proper recognition to how both the **failures and successes** of the previous year contributed to my growth. Life is complicated, so it makes sense to take time to unpack those experiences and try to figure out which of them contributed to growth and which didn't before making any more plans. And perhaps most importantly, it might help to try and understand where the Holy Spirit played a part in things. Because truly, with the Holy Spirit involved, sometimes those things that may seem like the biggest mistakes are actually life changing events that throw us off our projected path and into a whole new space where we can grow in an entirely different way.

This is true in my personal life, so it makes sense that it would also be true as we begin the process of charting the course for Pax

Christi in 2020. In this endeavor, too, it may help to look at where we have come from to better determine how we will proceed forward. Much like a person in a rowboat who has the experience of looking back at that glowing sunset as she moves into the darkness of unknown days, we can learn from recalling those events experienced in the past year and better determine how they shaped us and the world around us. It is then that we might be more ready and able to build a positive future on the foundation of these experiences.

What are some of the biggest lessons we have learned in our first three years working together in Pax Christi that we can bring with us into 2020? It is my hope that all members will be thoughtful about this question during our retreat later this month. In my own reflection on this question, I have come up with three "truths" that I have learned from the different experiences I have had the honor to share with other members of Pax Christi.

1. First of all, I have learned over and over that I always have **more to learn** and that the best way to do this is to **listen** to



Peace Offerings

PEACE PARTNERS

Peace Partners highlights various peace and social justice organizations that share our vision: active promotion of peace in our neighborhood, state, country and world. The goal is to increase awareness of the many organizations in our area that work for peace through social justice and invite joint ventures between these groups to increase the effectiveness of our mission.



Guided by the values and expertise of medicine and public health, Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival. Founded in 1961, PSR made its mark by educating the public and policymakers about the egregious impacts of developing and testing nuclear weapons on human health. Their groundbreaking research documenting the presence of radioactive waste in the human body led to the Limited Nuclear Test Ban treaty that ended atmospheric nuclear testing. If you would like to learn more information about Physicians for Social Responsibility, you can visit psr.org.

others. I think I've always felt such internal pressure to be sure that Pax Christi "made it" that at first I wanted to try to have all the answers even before we had the experience. But it didn't take long after we started making trips to Puerto Rico or filling backpacks with school supplies to realize that there was no way to really have the answers until we got there and began the learning process! One of the best examples occurred during our first visit to Humacao, Puerto Rico. We were clearing out the overgrowth as well as all the trash that remained in Dona Maria's yard after Hurricane Maria. We knew that there would be a "trash pickup" at the street which was probably 100 feet from her home up a long driveway. This trip was in August, so we spent hours in the heat hauling the trash and jungle overgrowth uphill to the street. We noticed that some of the local folks who were also working on Dona Maria's house were watching us curiously, but we just sort of ignored that and kept working. On the second day, when we started this hauling process again, one of the workmen came up to me and in broken English asked me why we were hauling all of that yard waste to the street. He then showed me a drop off in the jungle about 10 feet behind Dona Maria's home. He made it clear that we could recycle the yard waste by simply throwing it down into the empty jungle ravine which was much closer than the street. Perhaps we should have asked before we started. Things are different in Puerto Rico and the people there had answers to questions we weren't even asking!

2. Secondly, I continue to learn about the importance of **making mistakes**. Earlier in my life, I was under the impression that mistakes were those things that should be avoided at all costs. I had such shame and fear around messing up. But being a part of Pax Christi has taught me that we will not dare to venture forward if we are afraid of making mistakes. If I listed all of the mistakes I have made over the past three years,

Peace Offerings

this newsletter would be way too long to read. What I have come to know, and what has been probably my most valuable lesson in this area is that every time I messed up, there was a dear friend there to take up the slack, take over for me, or simply let me know that everything would be ok. It was in making the mistakes that I realized I did not have to be perfect to be loved. I can't tell you what a relief this understanding has brought to my life. The mistake that taught me the most occurred during our last trip to Puerto Rico. We were assigned projects there (clearing a steep hillside, installing solar panels) that were way beyond our ability. Most of us were in our 60's and 70's, out there with hoes and rakes in the heat working for hours each day. It was too much and, in retrospect, I should have stopped that immediately upon understanding our task. It simply wasn't safe. But let me tell you what this beautiful team of mostly women did. Several of them were out there working on that hill without complaint. And those that were not able to work in those conditions did other constructive things around the little house we stayed in. Again, without complaint. They also supported me and the mission at all times, placing the mission way above any discomfort or discontent. We became bonded to one another in the midst of these hard days. It gave new meaning to the scripture, "Whenever two or more are gathered in His name, there is love."

3. Finally, the very most important lesson that continues to be placed in front of

me even today is the message to **keep walking forward in faith** no matter what happens. There is meaning and purpose in what we do in Pax Christi and the Holy Spirit will always be there to help us figure things out. There have been numerous times when things have not gone as planned, yet with prayer and a little patience, things just seem to work out. Oftentimes, an even better solution than we had planned presents itself. One of the best examples I can think of was after we completed our backpack project the first year. We had never done this before and didn't think it entirely through when it came to delivering those backpacks. Sherry M. and I had two little cars to deliver over 300 backpacks and it was going to take many trips. However, we got there that morning to begin the delivery process and Fr. Harvey and Dcn Tim had already loaded the backpacks on a trailer and were ready to follow us to the school. You see, Fr. Harvey had been praying the rosary on his morning walk when it came to him how difficult it was going to be for us to deliver the backpacks. At that moment, Tim drove by with a trailer that he was no longer going to need. That's when they made their plan to help. Their beautiful act of charity saved us so much time and effort!

In reviewing this article, I realize that we must go much further back than three years to gain perspective. These lessons and our truths come from the Gospel, the words of Christ. We cannot go wrong if we build our future on the foundation of those truths, always remembering to look back at the Son for our direction forward. S. Simon