



Pax Christi

LITTLE ROCK

Peace Offerings

Nicole Lashbrook, Executive Director of Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center, Speaks on Services and Recent Disaster

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Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Nicole Lashbrook, Executive Director of the Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center (APRC), will speak at the LR Pax Christi meeting on Thursday, June 14 at 7:30. This meeting will be held in Fitzgerald Hall at the Diocese of LR (2500 N. Tyler St.). Ms. Lashbrook will be providing information on the services administered by APRC, a ministry of St. Joseph's Helpers, and will also give up-to-date information on the fire that destroyed the center on May 20, Pentecost Sunday.

APRC is a faith-based non-profit organization that provides expert pregnancy options counseling while empowering individuals and families to make life affirming choices. They have been active in Little Rock for over 30 years. Services include :

- Medical grade pregnancy testing
- First trimester ultrasound
- Information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Community referrals
- Onsite parenting and sexual health classes
- Post-abortion recovery services



Nicole Lashbrook

APRC had been located at 3 Office Park Drive since 2009, across from an abortion clinic, where they had been renting office space. At 6:42 pm on May 20, a fire was reported, but firefighters were unable to save the building. Fortunately, there was no one inside and there were no injuries. Everything in the building, including a \$25,000 ultrasound machine, was destroyed. The fire marshal's office reported that the fire was accidental, caused by

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Nicole Lashbrook (cont.)

workers doing maintenance on the roof.

Board members and volunteers gathered within 24 hours of the fire to say a rosary and pray together at the site of the office building. They believe that the fact the fire occurred on Pentecost Sunday is significant and that the center will “rise from the ashes” to continue its work. Currently, Christ the King Catholic Church has offered office space to APRC in its Ministries Building. The Center will operate from there until other arrangements can be made. Fortunately, the mobile medical unit (The Stork Bus) containing an ultrasound machine and other equipment was not parked at the office and was not harmed in the fire. APRC can use this to continue their ministry while they rebuild. Nicole Lashbrook remains optimistic. In an interview with the Arkansas Catholic, she is quoted as saying: “We’re bigger than four walls. We’re a ministry; God’s got this.”

APRC may be contacted via text or phone at 501-227-4357.

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK

IS SPONSORING

**WELCOME HOME:
AN INVITATION FROM THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH TO ITS LGBT
BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

THIS IS AN ONGOING SUPPORT GROUP FOR CATHOLICS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBT AND ALLIES WHO MAY HAVE LEFT THE CHURCH AND WISH TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF RE-CONNECTION WITH THEIR FAITH THROUGH PRAYER, CONVERSATION AND SUPPORTIVE INTERACTION. OUR CHURCH FAMILY IS DIMINISHED BY YOUR ABSENCE. WE INVITE YOU TO COME HOME AND JOIN US IN GROWING OUR FAITH TOGETHER.

WHEN: THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2018 7 PM

WHERE: DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK-FITZGERALD HALL

CONTACT: SHERRY WITH PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK AT
paxchristilr@gmail.com

JOYFUL GIVING



Erica Polk

Kemuri Restaurant

Last month, we reached a total of 4604 corks donated to Soles4Souls. With the help of our peace partner restaurants **Kemuri, The Terrace, Brave New Restaurant, Bonfish,** and many individuals such as **the Bertasis, the Shaneyfelts, the Kelleys, Marian Paquette, Betty Jo King, Mary Hunt and Mary Jo Lewno,** we have collected an additional 1214 corks, for a grand total of 5818.

Pax Christi's Monthly Mission



Our custom is to contribute to a different peace and social justice cause at each of our monthly meetings. At

our June meeting, we will be supporting **the Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center (APRC).** Donated funds will be used to replace damaged equipment including an ultrasound machine, laptops, baby diapers, clothes, and office equipment. Everything in the APRC building was destroyed by a fire on May 20, 2018. You can mail donations to **415 N. McKinley, Little Rock, AR 72205, make a donation at our next meeting,** or you can donate directly: **pregnancylittlerock.com/donate/Donate.**

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PEACE PARTNERS

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



Pax Christi Little Rock is proud to partner with the **Fraternal Order of Eagles, Aerie 60**, both in our work in Puerto Rico as well as in our "back packs filled with school supplies" program. PCLR was informed last week that FOE is generously donating \$10,000 to be specifically used for these two mission projects.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles is "an international non-profit organization uniting in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills, and by promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope." Its objective is the promotion of social justice, with a specific focus on supporting those causes that positively affect the lives of children. FOE has provided support for medical centers across the US and Canada. They raise money to combat heart disease and cancer, help children with disabilities and care for the elderly and infirm. The FOE donates more than \$100 million annually to charitable causes. The Eagles initiated founding of Mother's Day, provided the impetus for Social Security and pushed to end job discrimination based on age.

JOHN DEAR DELIVERS POWERFUL SERMON ON CLIMATE CHANGE

On May 16, John Dear, internationally acclaimed Jesuit priest, activist, and Nobel prize nominee, provided an audience of approximately 50 people at St. Michael's Episcopal Church/San Damiano Ecumenical Catholic Church with captivating information on his new book, *They Will Inherit the Earth: Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of Climate Change*. John highlighted the beatitudes. He interpreted the word meekness in the third beatitude as the biblical word for nonviolence, saying that only those who practice nonviolence can inherit the earth. He stressed that there is a link between our practice of nonviolence and our unity with creation. And he stated that, with our propensity for war and conflict, it is no wonder we are having our current problems with volcanoes, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires and floods. John shared his own journey from Manhattan to the desert of New Mexico where he now lives "off the grid" on top of a mesa. He also spoke about serving as a pastor in Yosemite, encounters with



the indigenous women of New Mexico, resisting nuclear weapons production at Los Alamos, and his time standing in solidarity with the indigenous people at Standing Rock. This passionate peace activist urged everyone to take up the cross of nonviolence in order to change the world, before it is too late.

SAVE THE DATE

Sister Deborah Troillett, RSM, newly appointed **Executive Director of the Arkansas House of Prayer**, will be the featured presenter at the **July 12** Pax Christi LR meeting (7:30 pm). The meeting will be held at Fitzgerald Hall (Diocese of Little Rock, 2500 N. Tyler Street, Little Rock). Sister Troillett will begin her tenure as director of the House of Prayer on July 1, 2018. Prior to this position, she completed a six-year term of elected leadership for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Please join us. Admission is free and refreshments provided.

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VIGIL FOR OUR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN



PCLR was represented at the vigil for immigrant children held at McArthur Park on Tuesday, June 5 from 7-8 pm. Approximately 50 people turned out for the vigil and to listen to information provided by leaders of the Poor People's Campaign regarding the treatment of children whose immigrant families are taken into custody. As of May, 2018, the Department of Health and Human Services announced that 10,773 unaccompanied immigrant children were being

held in detention. This number rose 21% in the past month, an increase driven by the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" on families who cross the border illegally. There is significant evidence that often the treatment of these children is inhumane and that in some facilities they are being held in cages without any form of companionship, adult supervision or comfort. The Little Rock Air Force Base is being considered as possible housing for these children.

THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN: A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL



On Monday, May 21, PCLR participated in the Poor People's Campaign rally in the rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol followed by a march to the Supreme Court and a firm request to be allowed into the Supreme Court Building. The Poor People's Campaign, a movement started by Martin Luther King, Jr. right before his death, is being revived across the country in an organized

sweep of over 30 states. Rev. Anika Whitfield, leader of the PPC in Arkansas, spoke at the May 21 rally along with other faith leaders during this second week of planned protests held in the state capitol. The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness about poverty and economic disparities, systemic racism, ecological devastation, and increased military spending.

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A MISSION IN THE MAKING: EXPLORATORY PUERTO RICO TRIP SET FOR JULY



Since last October, Pax Christi Little Rock has been working to organize a mission to Puerto Rico in the wake of the devastation left by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September of 2017. In the beginning, there was only talk because

it seemed impossible for our small organization to raise enough money to actually be of any real assistance. So, our members just kept sharing, researching, planning and donating as we could to various charities active in the relief effort. Over time, though, this conversation began to spread and there were people who initiated offers to help out, both physically and monetarily. It is due to the assistance of these individuals, the faith of our Pax Christi fellowship, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we are now able to set a date, buy supplies, and coordinate a construction and assessment team to visit Puerto Rico during the week of July 30-August 5, 2018. At that time, Pax Christi will also evaluate the viability of organizing ongoing missions every 2-3 months to assist in long-term recovery.

Through the introduction of Linda Badami, a carpenter involved with the [Fort Washington Collegiate Church of NYC](#) (FWCC) and the daughter of one our CTK Honduran missionaries, we have had several conversations with representatives from the FWCC. Edna Benitez

(FWCC) and Amarilis Pagan ([Proyecto Matria](#)) have provided in-depth information on the work they have been doing even before the hurricanes hit the island in September.

Currently, Collegiate Churches is working in conjunction with Proyecto Matria (a Puerto Rican non-profit organization established to help eradicate poverty in areas that are not economically sustainable) to stabilize housing, provide solar panels, and assist individuals in reclaiming their communities post-disaster. Under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Demaris Whittaker, FWCC has invited us to partner with them to rebuild homes in the central village of Miraflores (Orocovis municipality). At the same time, we will send a team to contact other pre-identified villages to assess where we might best work together on projects targeted by the community. PCLR is currently interested in learning more about the village of [Patillas](#) (see map) as it was a town first hit by the eye of the hurricane as it made landfall in the



Patillas, Puerto Rico, recovers from Hurricane Maria as electricity returns

A MISSION IN THE MAKING (cont)

southeast corner of the island. The villages of Patillas and Miraflores have a history of working together, so this focus seems to be a natural outgrowth of the work that FWCC has already undertaken.

Pax Christi has continued to research the ongoing problems that plague Puerto Rico. More than eight months after the hurricane hit, the island's slow recovery has been marked by a persistent lack of drinkable water, a faltering power grid and a lack of essential services-putting the lives of many residents at risk, especially the infirm and those in remote areas hardest hit in September.

A new Harvard study published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine estimates that [4,645 deaths](#) can be linked to the hurricane and its immediate aftermath, making the storm far deadlier than previously thought. Official estimates have placed the number of dead at a mere 64, an estimate that has drawn criticism from experts as well as local residents.

The Harvard findings indicate that health-care disruption, particularly for the elderly, and the loss of basic utility services for the chronically ill had significant impacts on this death toll. The study also criticizes Puerto Rico's methods for counting the dead-and its lack of transparency in sharing information-as detrimental to planning for future disasters. The authors called for patients, communities and doctors to develop contingency plans for such disasters as there are no emergency plans in place at the current time.

Sadly, over eight months have gone by since the disaster, yet many towns remain without electricity, drinkable water or secure homes. It appears that our government has abandoned this island territory. Puerto Ricans are working hard day and night to repair and rebuild, but the ter-

ritory itself is \$70 billion dollars in debt, with an economy that is unsustainable to a rapidly shrinking tax base. So, if governments will not or cannot act, we as individuals must turn to our neighbors and ask what we can do to be of support in this rebuilding effort. Working side by side, the work will go forward (pa'lante) and new bonds will be forged so that together we may work to prevent these problems in the future.

Reflection Corner

Not the maker of plans and promises, but rather the one who offers faithful service in small matters. This is the person who is most likely to achieve what is good and lasting." - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

"Many people see life as a pyramid, with those on the bottom serving those above them. There is this idea that happiness comes from being on top and being served. In our society, true to this model, people strive for money, fame and power. This is what they are taught is good. Unfortunately, most don't realize that their strivings are futile until they have already sacrificed many years and many simple joys along the path of life.

Life is more meaningful and fulfilling when lived down below.

Choosing to help others flips life upside down. In helping others, we find great freedom because we are able to say no to our culture's rules about the importance of power and authority. We experience less stress, less anxiety, and less frustration. We begin to feel more fulfilled, energized, and alive. There is a great weight removed when we no longer seek power over others. Real joy is found not in being served, but in choosing to serve others.

CALENDAR OF PEACE

JUNE/JULY EVENTS

**June 14 - PCLR Board Meeting (6 pm) and Speaker
Nicole Lashbrook (7:30 pm)**

**June 18 - AR Poor People's Campaign-Week 6- A New
and Unsettling Force - Nonviolent Moral Direct
Action- Arkansas State Capitol 2-4 pm**

**June 21 - Welcome Home: An Invitation from the
Catholic Church to It's LGBT Brothers and
Sisters (7 pm) Fitzgerald Hall**

**July 12 - PCLR Board meeting (6 pm) and speaker
Sister Deborah Troillett, Executive Director
of the House of Prayer (7:30)**

**July 19 - Welcome Home: An Invitation from the
Catholic Church to It's LGBT Brothers and
Sisters (7 pm) Fitzgerald Hall**