



Pax Christi

LITTLE ROCK

Peace Offerings

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- Jerome Ngundue
- Sarah Ngundue
- Joanne Rausch
- George Simon

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

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Welcome Home Shares Its Vision Of Inclusion, Understanding and Peace

On March 22, 2018, Pax Christi Little Rock held the first **Welcome Home: A Conversation Between the LGBT Community and the Catholic Church** meeting. This encounter was a natural follow-up to earlier work with Father James Martin on building a bridge to span the gap between members/clergy of the Church and those LGBT individuals who have felt excluded from the Church either because of how its teachings are interpreted or due to personal experiences of rejection. Since that first meeting, Welcome Home has come together on a monthly basis, inviting all parties to engage with respect, sensitivity and compassion in a dialogue with one another. The goal of these meetings has been to increase understanding on all parts and promote an opening of hearts so that both the Catholic Church and LGBT Catholics can move together on a two-way bridge toward reconciliation and love.

On Thursday, November 8 at 7:30 pm in Fitzgerald Hall (Diocese of LR), a panel of those involved consistently in the Welcome Home series will provide a summary of the various issues addressed and field questions about the future direction of this ministry. Issues presented include LGBT issues



as right to life issues, use of respectful names and vocabulary on both sides of the dialogue, information on the vast and complex spectrum of human sexuality, the difference between pedophilia and sexual orientation as it pertains to the clergy abuse scandal, and Christ's command to be compassionate towards those who are persecuted and marginalized. Personal stories will also be shared. Lastly, a vision of the ongoing direction of this ministry will be shared and discussed with participants. All are invited to attend and provide feedback on this developing topic.

The discourse will be conducted with the compassion, respect, and sensitivity each person deserves as a human being and child of God.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know well. Psalms 139:13-14

Peace Offerings

Temple B'nai Israel Holds Memorial Service Following Shooting at Pittsburgh Synagogue



On October 27, 2018, eleven people were killed and seven injured by a lone gunman at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh during Shabbat morning services. The sole suspect, 46-year-old Robert Gregory Bowers, was arrested and charged with 29 federal crimes and 36 state crimes. Bowers posted anti-Semitic comments against the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), a group supported by the Tree of Life, on the social media network Gab, blaming them for supporting Central American migrant caravans and immigrants. This shooting was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the United States in history.

Rabbi Barry Block of Little Rock's Temple B'nai Israel shared his thoughts on the Saturday morning shooting through a letter addressed to his congregation:

"We are all deeply saddened by the murderous anti-Semitic rampage during Shabbat morning services at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania this morning. We pray for the healing of those who were wounded, both congregants and brave police officers. We mourn the dead and pray for their bereaved families."

On Monday, October 29 at 6 pm, Temple B'nai

Israel in Little Rock held a memorial service commemorating the eleven people killed in the Pittsburgh shooting. The temple was crowded with Jewish congregants as well as people of many different faith traditions. Many members of Temple B'nai Israel were moved by the outpouring of support from the community.

Rabbi Block said that the attack comes at a time when violence carried out in the name of hate has become common. An audit conducted last year by the Anti-Defamation League confirms that anti-Semitic occurrences rose 57% in 2017, the highest increase in a single year since the league began keeping records in 1979. The league also noted that the number of such events occurring in schools and on college campuses nearly doubled for the second consecutive year. Block said that those targeted in violence have been "mostly people who are considered other than somebody's idea of what is supposedly a real American." He said, "Mass shootings have become a plague upon America."

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 November meeting, we will be supporting **Catholic Charities Immigration Services-Little Rock**. This non-profit group provides low-cost immigration counseling and support to individuals and families who are eligible for immigration benefits and cannot afford private insurance. You may mail donations to **415 N. McKinley, Little Rock, AR 72205** or **make a donation at our next meeting**. Please be generous with your contributions. Thank you.

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.



Catholic Charities Immigration Services-LR

Catholic Charities Immigration Services provides low-cost immigration counseling and support to families and individuals who are eligible for immigration benefits and cannot afford private assistance. Their mission is to work for solidarity in our community by welcoming the stranger in the spirit of the Gospel. They recognize the inalienable right of all persons to human dignity. Therefore, they assist and advocate for immigrants to attain family unity, economic independence and social integration. Recently, Immigration Services has been assisting four families of immigrants who were separated at the border while seeking asylum in the US. They work to guide them toward sources for food, education for their children, employment, accessing safety and health and finding a lawyer for legal assistance of their immigration cases.



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK CHRISTMAS PARTY POTLUCK

WHEN: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13 AT 6-9 PM

WHERE: FITZGERALD HALL-DIOCESE OF LR
2500 N. TYLER STREET
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72203

PLEASE BRING YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY DISH. PAX CHRISTI WILL PROVIDE FUN BEVERAGES AND A MAIN COURSE.

WE WILL ONCE AGAIN ADOPT A FAMILY THROUGH HELPING HAND AND WE ASK THAT YOU BRING THEM A GIFT TO PUT UNDER THE TREE. WE WILL SEND OUT AN EMAIL SO YOU CAN PICK A GIFT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE. PLEASE CONTACT SHERRY AT paxchristilr@gmail.com TO CHECK ON GIFT LIST AND RSVP.



SOLES4SOULS CORK DONATIONS

Over the past month, 389 corks have been donated. Added to the corks (7054) sent out to Soles4Souls in October, our total is now 7443. Please save the corks from those wine bottles and remember to bring them to our next PC meeting, drop them off at 415 N. McKinley St., #1040, LR or call 663-5075 and we will pick them up. Thank you!

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi Little Rock Makes Plans For Second Puerto Rican Mission

Eight missionaries will return to Puerto Rico from November 12-19, 2018 to continue their work in the barrio of Miraflores, PR. During Pax Christi's first 10-day mission in July/August, 2018, volunteers spent half of their time working on homes in Humacao on the east coast of the island. Three days were also spent in Miraflores, working on two separate homes in that mountain village of about 500 people. During their stay in Miraflores, they met with volunteers from the non-profit organizations Proyecto Matria and Casa Solidaria, local groups that network with Puerto Ricans to rebuild their lives post-hurricane Maria.

It became apparent from these meetings that this centrally located mountain village and possibly other surrounding areas in the region would be a great fit for future Pax Christi missions. The most telling indication was the immediate synergy that developed between Pax Christi and the volunteers and leaders of Proyecto Matria and Casa Solidaria. Pax Christi worked hand in hand with volunteers throughout the mission and developed a close camaraderie. Secondly, the needs of the village were clearly more pressing than in the much larger coastal town of Humacao, and all volunteers indicated a desire to be of service where their efforts would have the most impact.

After much discussion with the Pax Christi board as well as with the missionaries, PCLR set a goal to return to the central region of the island every 3-4 months for at least the next two years to continue reconstruction and agricultural work in this area that has received very little assistance from the federal or local government. Casa Solidaria



Miraflores

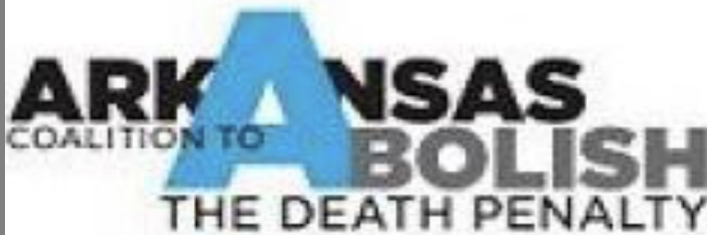
leaders Amarilis Pagan and Kamille Pagan agreed to provide Pax Christi with a project for each mission that would be suited to the skill sets of the volunteers involved. Projects for the upcoming mission will involve planting agricultural crops, small repairs/painting of several homes, and some minor construction around Casa Solidaria headquarters.

Casa Solidaria has offered to provide lodging for missionaries in their recently purchased home. This dwelling has three private bedrooms and a bed/sofa in a common area along with two bathrooms and a fully stocked kitchen. It can accommodate up to 8-10 missionaries.

PCLR is donating \$3000 towards supplies for these reconstruction and agricultural projects. They have pledged to fund projects for next 2 years as long as monies are available.

Peace Offerings

Arkansas Coalition to Abolish The Death Penalty Holds Annual Meeting and Dinner



The Arkansas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (ACADP) will host it's 2018 banquet honoring Furonda Brasfield as the Abolitionist of the Year. Furonda currently serves as the executive director for ACADP and has been tireless in her efforts to have the death penalty abolished in the state of Arkansas. Featured guest speaker will be Reverend Dr. Jack Sullivan, nationally known social justice advocate and death penalty abolitionist.

The banquet will be held Thursday, November 29, 2018, 6-9 pm at St. John's Center-Catholic Diocese of LR- 2500 N. Tyler St. Little Rock, AR 72203. Tickets range from \$15-\$250 and can be purchased through Eventbrite. Pax Christi LR has purchased a table. Please contact Sherry at 663-5075 if interested in attending.

For your own lifeblood, too, I will demand an accounting: from every animal I will I will demand it, and from man in regard to his fellow man I will demand an accounting for human life. If anyone sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; For in the image of God has man been made. Genesis 9: 5-6

ACPJ, Pax Christi LR, and World Beyond War Sponsor "Reclaiming Armistice Day"



Reclaiming Armistice Day: Remembering the Centennial of the End of WWI and Projecting a Future of Peace is a memorial program hosted by the Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice, Pax Christi LR, and World Beyond War. During this simple service, Bob Estes will share the history of Armistice Day and the shadow of the First World War. A veteran, Michael Vaughn, will provide his perspective on the importance of peacemaking. Poetry related to the lessons of peace learned in wartime will be read by Sherry Simon. Donnal Walter will share a vision of peacemaking in a future beyond war. Finally, Hamid Ebrahimifar will give a paper poppy-making demonstration, a symbol of peace following WWI. Please join us Sunday, November 11 at 4 pm at the Promenade on Kavanaugh.

He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. Isaiah 2:4

St. Theresa Catholic School Provides Scholarships For 2 Immigrant Children Separated from Parents at Border

As of the middle of September, over 400 migrant children remained separated from their parents and were still under the care of federal authorities as a result of the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy. The deadline set by a federal judge for the US to reunite more than 2500 migrant families separated at the southwest border was late July. The reality is that most of these children are being helped by non-profit agencies who reach out to help with reunification and support of these families. One such organization is Migration and Refugee Services, part of the USCCB, who helped facilitate the reunification of most children separated from their parents at the border during the federal family separation policy in place from April-June. In Arkansas, there are now eight children who are being sponsored by families or friends. Catholic Charities of Arkansas has been asked by the USCCB to assist in social work services for these children. They are reimbursed by federal funds.

Here in Little Rock, St. Theresa Church and School have stepped up and provided full scholarships, supplies, and uniforms for two of these children. Jennifer Verkamp of Catholic Charities Immigration Services has been working with Kristy Dunn, principal at St. Theresa's School, to support these young children. Dunn told a reporter at Arkansas Catholic that two parish families adopted the families separated at the border and help with things like babysitting and carpooling. School supplies were donated in part by Pax Christi Little Rock and Dunn's own children donated toys and clothes. St. Theresa's Church has also made donations to help these families. Kristy Dunn told the Arkan-



sas Catholic that the children are doing amazingly well. "They smile, they're engaged in the learning to the extent their English allows. . .we are a safe place."

It was like Jesus saying, "Let the little children come to me.' They're like little rays of light, so we brought them in and we are better for it." Kristy Dunn to AR Catholic reporter Aprille Hanson

CALENDAR OF PEACE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER EVENTS

- November 8 - PCLR Board Meeting (6 pm) and Speaker
Welcome Home Panel (7:30) Fitzgerald Hall**
- November 11 - Reclaiming Armistice Day-4 pm Promenade
at Kavanaugh**
- November 29 - Arkansas Coalition to Abolish the Death
Penalty Banquet-6-9 pm at St. John's-
Diocese of Little Rock Dining Hall**
- December 13 -Pax Christi Little Rock Christmas Party
Potluck-6-9 pm Fitzgerald Hall Diocese of
Little Rock Campus**

Peace Offerings

Relationships with the Marginalized Transform Hearts

I couldn't help but see a theme as I was putting together the newsletter this week. Immigrants. The LGBT community. Jews. People on death row. The forgotten poor in Puerto Rico. Of course, the common denominator is that all of these groups of people are marginalized, excluded from certain rights or privileges afforded to others in society. Many of these groups are viewed in a negative way their whole lives. Ridiculed, hated, reviled, put out of sight and in some ways out of mind. Why is that? What do we get from making a judgment that some groups of people are less valuable, less deserving of social opportunities and resources than others (us)? Why is it that we prioritize people and label them as good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable?

Of course, it is different for every person, but I understand from sociological studies that one of the dynamics responsible for marginalization is our tendency to stereotype those individuals and groups that are viewed as different in some significant way from us. We do not understand the outer aspects of them, so we place distance and refuse to commune. Perhaps these differences make us uneasy, Maybe its just easier to place our baser emotions on "the other." Contributing factors to this social exclusion and marginalization include race, income, employment status, social class, geographic location, personal habits and appearance, education, religion, and political affiliation. It seems to be a consistent tendency for us to negate those who appear different from us in any of these and other areas.

So, given our natural inclination to move away from those whom we see as different and whom we do not understand, why did Jesus encourage

us to "love our neighbor as ourselves"? What was he trying to get us to see in addition to the social justice teaching of caring for all people?

The Jewish philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) stated that the only thing that really converts people's hearts is "the face of the other." He noted that it is often the suffering face (Jesus) that is the most effective in this conversion process. Because actually, the change that is required is not in all of those people we deem unworthy. Rather, Jesus seems to be saying in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) that **our** inner attitudes are the real source of our problems. Therefore, we need to become aware of our inner reactions to others so that we can begin working on our own hearts. Instead of pushing folks to the margins, we could stay with them and get to know them better so we can begin to realize that our first judgments might be incorrect. That in fact our initial judgment of the other is simply a reflection of what is in our own heart. Jesus tells us not to harbor anger or call people names in our hearts (Matt. 5:22). How we live in our hearts is our deepest truth, and we must know that this truth is on the inside of us and not living over there, projected onto the "marginalized." One might say that the heart of the angry or rejecting person is "marginalized." Jesus says that we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matt 5:44). If we can do this consciously, without blame, then we begin the transformative process of allowing the love of God to cleanse our hearts.

Give yourself fully, hold nothing back because in this act of complete self-giving you make manifest what the kingdom of love looks like. -Cynthia Bourgeault