



PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK

July 6, 2020
Volume 4, Issue 7

Pax Christi
LITTLE ROCK

Pax Christi Little Rock

PCLR Board Members

- Sherry Simon (President)
- Mary Hunt (V. President)
- Tamara Tahat (Secretary)
- Sherry Martin (Treasurer)
- Lee Bass
- Susi Blanco
- Sandee Haslauer
- Martina Pierini
- Jan Pipkin
- George Simon

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

Contact Information

- Website:
www.paxchristilittlerock.
wordpress.com
- Facebook:
Pax Christi Little Rock
- Address:
415 N. McKinley St., #1040
Little Rock, AR 72205
- Phone:
(501) 258-8653
- Email:
paxchristilr@gmail.com

**Kwami Abdul-Bey, AR Peace and Justice
Memorial Movement Co-founder and Author,
to Speak on Racism and White Privilege**



Pax Christi Little Rock

Welcomes

**Arkansas Peace and Justice
Memorial Movement
Co-founder**

Kwami Abdul-Bey

On **Thursday, July 16 at 6:30**, we will have the opportunity to hear from one of the many informed voices in the Black Lives Movement in Arkansas regarding the issues of racism and white privilege that continue to divide our city, state and country. For years, Kwami Abdul-Bey has been at the forefront in educating others on the conditions in our country that serve to maintain the disparity of opportunity experienced by white people and people of color. He is the co-author of the book, "The Tables have Turned: A Street Guide to Guerrilla Lawfare." Join us and learn what you can do to support this hard fought movement to address and rectify the systemic underpinnings of racism here in Little Rock.

If you are interested in joining this meeting, here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87022781842?pwd=Mmo0eURaWdVqYVlabTdSY1ltcUFxdz09>

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi LR Joins the Rally Against Fear

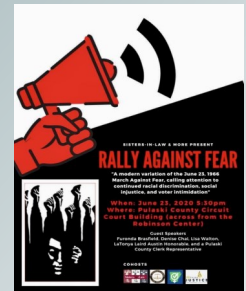


Latonya

Members of Pax Christi Little Rock took part in the Rally Against Fear scheduled on June 23 at 5:30 pm. The rally was held in front of the Pulaski County Courthouse and was sponsored by a group of Little Rock female defense attorneys known as “Sisters-In-Law” along with several other local peace and social justice organizations. Several attorneys shared their personal experiences on how racism affects voting, the legal system and interaction with law enforcement. The focus of the rally was to shine a light on racism and voter suppression in Arkansas. Latonya Austin Honora-

ble, a Little Rock attorney, stated that the situation in Jefferson County, KY is an example of how racism affects the turnout of black voters. There are over 600,000 people in Jefferson County, the majority of them black, and this county had only one polling place available to them in this last primary election. Honorable is working with other organizers including Indivisible, DecARcerate and Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice to help ensure that voter suppression is not an issue during upcoming elections here in Arkansas.

Voter registration will continue to be a strong focus for this group as they plan for another rally to be held in July.



SAVE THE DATE

DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF

BLACK CATHOLICS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

6:30 PM

Meeting Via Zoom

To obtain link, email

paxchristilr@gmail.com

Pax Christi's Monthly Mission



Our custom is to contribute to a different peace and social justice cause at each of our monthly meetings. In July, we will collect donations for the Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial

Movement. APJMM embodies a collaborative effort to acknowledge and learn from the history of hundreds of incidents of racial, political and religious injustices, with the goal of creating meaningful avenues for transformative peace and restorative justice through truth-seeking and reconciliation. If you would like to send a check, you can mail it to 415 N. McKinley St., #1040 LR, AR 72205. You can call 501-258-8653 to donate via phone.

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.



The **Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial Movement** is a joint project of the Washitaw Foothills Youth Media Arts and Literacy Collective and Just Communities of Arkansas, in collaboration with the Equal Justice Initiative and Coming to the Table. APJMM embodies a statewide collaborative effort to acknowledge, and to learn from, the shared documented history of hundreds of incidents of extra-legal racial, political and religious violence and injustices, with the goal of creating meaningful avenues for transformative peace and restorative justice through truth-seeking and reconciliation.

If you would like more information, visit apjmm.org.

PRAYER. STUDY. SILENCE.

ASHLEY LEGERE

I'm 27 and a white woman. I have disappointed myself. I have disappointed others. I have exemplified Jesus at times, but often I have fallen short. I believe in God, a much higher power than I can comprehend, and I believe in the example Jesus set for each of us—an example of inclusivity and love always and in all ways. I believed this even before I could articulate it. In my heart I knew and know that love sets hearts free and hate imprisons them.

At age 5, and while I couldn't name most of these terms, I had a much clearer sense of injustice in all its forms— racial, gender, orientation, ethnic, cultural, age. I was continuously confused as to why people were treated with such hate when they were very simply being exactly who God created them to be. Our lives are a celebration of God's creation in all their uniqueness. What a gift He gave each of us that we aren't like each other! I don't know everything. I have so much I need and want to learn from those who aren't like me.

Then I went to school. A private Catholic school to be specific. There I saw a system that perpetuated the idea that we should all fit into a box, curated not by God, but by man. If we don't fit, we are no longer "good." If we aren't "good," we aren't deserving of love, compassion, or mercy. I was never going to fit in this box and I really didn't care to. Much of what I learned in school was to be fearful and ashamed, causing a lot of confusion in my heart and mind. I found myself questioning how to apply Jesus' example of Love in my own life and in a way that fit the "good" system. Only to see I can't follow Jesus' example *and* the "good" system. Jesus didn't follow the "good" system. Jesus modelled that every

Peace Offerings

human being in all of their unique brilliance is deserving of Love in its purest truest sense.

Despite my own understanding, the “good” system remained my school’s god of choice. I learned what “good” meant by how I was treated and how I was expected to treat others, both by verbal statements and through osmosis. I’ll use recess as an example. I had two options. Sit with the girls and talk poorly about people, which I didn’t want to do, or sit by myself. I didn’t have the option of playing soccer with the boys—believe me I tried and that resulted in me sitting in timeout by myself. Why couldn’t I play with boys? It wouldn’t meet the “good” standard. I, as a girl, was a “distraction.” Their words not mine. I, as a girl, needed to change my wants and my behavior, none of which were wrong, in order to accommodate the boys. The boys were not asked or expected to treat me with respect, they weren’t expected to include me. I was instructed and expected to know my place and live in it, and that was “good.” What I learned: I am a girl. Girls have a place. Girl is a label. People with labels have a place. Fear. Shame.

This is one example of many and it speaks to a lack of perspective, a lack of modelling, a lack of accountability, a lack of representation, a lack of compassion, a system of silence. I recognized all of this as a child. What I didn’t recognize until recently is how much

this type of education affected me, silenced me, silenced Jesus’ example of Love in my life, silenced my ability to support and affect change for those who are oppressed in our world. I literally knew better and I still let the “good” system get to me.

But we can change the system, we can love one another as the unique individuals God created us to be, as equals, regardless of our differences. Jesus did not love only those who fit in the box. We must create a system where the model of Jesus’ Love for all people is central in guiding all of our interactions. We can do this by asking how we can lend our support instead of wondering why we are different. We can do this by listening and holding space for their pain instead of thinking about our own pain. We can do this by acting when people share exactly what they see and what they need instead of walking away, thankful it doesn’t affect us. We can do this by taking accountability and own our mistakes instead of staying silent. In the face of injustice, we cannot allow silence, fear, or shame to fill the space. We must speak truth in our words and show love in our actions. We can create an inclusive environment where gender, race, orientation, creed, ethnicity, and age can connect us in love instead of dividing us in hate. Only in this way can we truly embody Jesus’ model of Love.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and not all the members have the same function, so too we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us. Romans 12: 4-6

Peace Offerings

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PROJECT: PLANTING PEACE IN OUR TIME



Pax Christi Little Rock worked with several peace partners to raise \$2500 so that we could landscape three Habitat for Humanity homes once they were built. Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice (ACPJ), Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), Episcopal Peace Fellowship and World Without War have contributed significantly to this project and will be working with Pax Christi to actually landscape these three homes. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has created some delays, but it looks like the

first landscaping work should begin in late July or early



August depending upon the virus count at that time. The second project should start in late August and the final work will hopefully occur in October.

We believe that this project will be an opportunity for all of us to work together not only to create a space where folks might thrive and prosper, but also for each of us to grow in relationship with one another, preparing us to better work for peace through social justice in our world.

SAVE THE DATE
PAX CHRISTI LR BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, JULY 9 at 6 PM

ALL BOARD MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SENT AN INVITATIONAL LINK FOR ZOOM MEETING. IF YOU AREN'T ON THE BOARD AND WANT TO ATTEND, EMAIL US AT paxchristilr@gmail.com.

Peace Offerings

PCLR EXPLORING ALLIANCE WITH SETTLED SOULS AND JERICO WAY

In Pax Christi, often one project leads seamlessly into another through our model of prayer, study and action. For several months, PCLR has been providing food for a family of 10 during the COVID-19 crisis. In the course of working through the process of fulfilling the needs of this family every other week, several Pax Christi members formed a committee and began to explore the idea of working with Settled Souls and Jericho Way to provide a welcome box of groceries for the previously unsheltered individuals and families that these organiza-



tions settle into homes. Settled Souls provides the furnishings and the moving power and Jericho Way funds the housing for approximately 50 unsheltered families a year. At that rate, Pax Christi will need to furnish groceries on pretty much a weekly basis. The committee is working on a list of staples that would be most helpful in getting a home pantry started. Talks are ongoing



with Settled Souls and Jericho Way, and a start date should be announced in the near future.

PAX CHRISTI SUPPORTS A VIRTUAL TASTE OF FAITH

Pax Christi will be “hosting a table” for the 2020 Taste of Faith fundraiser to help pay for seminarian education in the Diocese of Little Rock. This year, due to Covid-19 safety concerns, the event will be held via Zoom. Seminarians will entertain attendees with a “Late Night Talk Show” format and share videos that illustrate different aspects of seminarian discernment and

formation. Further details including the zoom link will be provided as the date

of the event draws nearer. Due to the Zoom format, attendance is unlimited. Please call Sherry at 501-258-8653 if interested in taking part in this entertaining event that goes a long way in supporting our seminarians.



Peace Offerings

BISHOP ANTHONY TAYLOR RESPONDS TO BLACK LIVES MATTER



Bishop Anthony B. Taylor issued the following statement to the people of the Diocese of Little Rock, July 2, 2020, about Black Lives Matter.

"When I came to Sacred Heart Parish in Oklahoma City as pastor in 2003 the parish was 95 percent

Hispanic and I inherited a weekend schedule with six Masses — three in English and three in Spanish. The Spanish Masses were packed, with people standing in the back, in the side aisles and at times even outside the front door of the church. The English Masses were less than half full even though they had the more desirable Sunday morning time slots.

"I asked what we would do if the tables were turned and we had English speakers standing in the back, along the aisles and outside the front door and they realized that of course, we would adjust the Sunday schedule to provide more English Masses. In that way, the eyes of these well-meaning people were opened to the hidden injustice embedded in our Sunday schedule. When I left that parish five years later, we had nine weekend Masses that better corresponded to the makeup of the parish: seven in Spanish, one in English and one bilingual. When people know that they matter things begin to change.

"That is the contribution that the Black Lives Matter movement is offering to us today. All lives matter, of course, but as a society we don't act that way — and that's the point. There are injustices embedded in the way our society is structured to which we

are often blind. Most of my Anglo parishioners were aware of the crowding at the Spanish Masses, but they didn't think of it as a problem, indeed viewing it from outside, they spoke with admiration of the fervor of their fellow parishioners and were blind to the underlying injustice.

"In a similar way, most of us are aware of some of the disadvantages that come with being Black in America, but from the outside we tend to ascribe these disadvantages to internal factors within the African American community and we miss the point that if Black lives really mattered as much as white lives, our whole society would be structured differently. If you search the Internet, you will find many examples of structural problems in law enforcement, employment, health care and education that especially impact Black lives and to which even well-meaning people are often blind. The causes of these injustices are often complex, and some seem due more to class than to conscious racism because poor people of other races often suffer some of the same disparities, but the following seem very significant to me:

"Structural injustices in law enforcement:

Black people are more likely to be arrested, are more likely to be convicted and on average are given sentences 19 percent longer than white people convicted of the same crimes — meaning that in the criminal justice system as presently constituted, white lives seem to matter 19 percent more than Black lives. (1.) In New York City 88 percent of police stops in 2019 involved people of color — Black and Hispanic — 66 percent of which did not lead to arrest, while only 9 percent of stops involved white people. (2.) These were "stops" not arrests. When Black people feel targeted disproportionately, resentments grow, as does the need to insist that their Black lives really do matter.

Peace Offerings

"Structural injustices in employment:

Black people are twice as likely to be unemployed as whites and once employed they earn nearly 25 percent less than their white fellow employees and are less likely to be employed in a job that is consistent with their level of education. (3.) One study found that job resumés with traditionally white-sounding names received 50 percent more callbacks than those with traditionally Black names. (4.) When the playing field is not level, it is clear that their Black lives don't matter to employers as much as other people's lives do.

"Structural injustices in health care: A study by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found that from 2013-2017 Black patients received worse care than whites in about 40 percent of quality measures. (5.) One result is that Black women are 3 to 4 times more likely to experience a pregnancy-related death than white women, even at similar levels of income and education. (6.) This is undoubtedly due in part to the way our health care system is structured, the way that health insurance is tied to employment and the high numbers of uninsured members of these minority groups in the workforce. We may be aware that these disparities exist, but apparently the lives of Black people don't matter enough for the general population to demand change, for instance to provide universal health care available to everyone, which is what we would have if Black lives — and indeed, all lives — really mattered.

"Structural injustices in education: During the 2015-2016 school year, Black students constituted only 15 percent of the total U.S. enrollment but made up more than one-third of students who were expelled, even though the U.S. Department of Education concluded that this disparity is "not explained by more frequent or more serious misbehavior by students of color." (7.) Moreover, as much as our Catholic schools try to enroll as many students of

color as possible, the fact is that the cost of tuition — even with scholarships — puts parochial school education out of reach for most of these children. This is a structural problem for which we have not found a solution.

"If you and I are truly pro-life, we are obligated to work for the protection and respect for human life from the first moment of conception to natural death and every stage in between, and thus it is obvious that racism is a pro-life issue. Racism is a sin, and we have to admit that even as Church, we have not been immune to racial bias and the blindness to structures of sin that affect how our own institutions are run.

"Of course, we condemn the acts that have led to the deaths of George Floyd and countless other people of color, but we are often blind to the other things described above that are part of our lives and continue to do harm. And of course 'the generational effects of slavery, segregation, and the systemic use of violence, including the lynching (publicly approved hangings) of more than 4,000 black men, women and children across 800 counties throughout the United States between 1877 and 1950, are realities that must be recognized and addressed in any process that hopes to combat racism.' (8.)

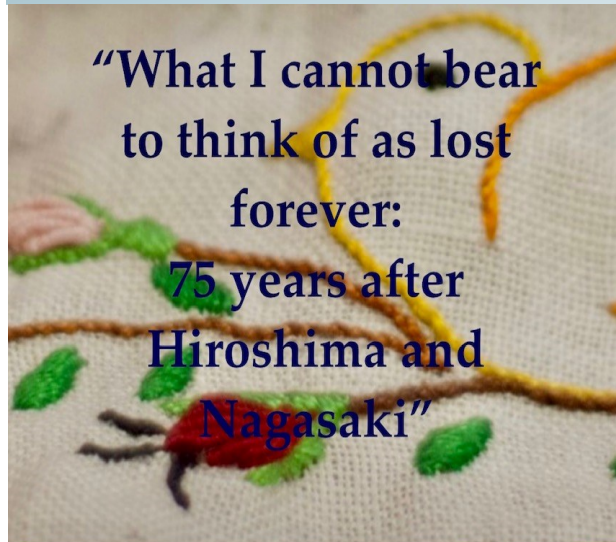
"I hope this has helped you understand why it is so important for us to insist that Black Lives Matter and to view the task before us through the pro-life lens of our Christian belief in the God-given intrinsic dignity of every person, in this case Black people, rather than the more secular Marxist-inspired class struggle lens that some would propose and which sometimes gets disproportionate coverage in the news.

"I encourage you to read the pastoral letter of the United States bishops titled "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, A Pastoral Letter Against Racism," which provides a comprehensive discussion of the ills of racism and how we can draw on our faith to combat it.

Peace Offerings

THE PEACE RIBBON 2020

PAX CHRISTI USA



"One of the deepest longings of the human heart is for security, peace and stability. The possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is not the answer to this desire."
 ~ Pope Francis, Nagasaki Hypocentre Park, November 2019

For peacemakers around the globe, the **75th anniversary** of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a call to recommit ourselves to advocate for a world free of the threat and tyranny of nuclear weapons. On this solemn anniversary, Pax Christi USA and a coalition of partner organizations are raising awareness of the imminent threat of nuclear weapons in our world today and reflecting on what befalls us if nuclear weapons were to ever rain down on the Earth again. This project, the Peace Ribbon 2020 aims to spur the im-

agination of all that would be lost if we succumb again to the use of a nuclear weapon.

We stand with the *hibakusha* whose **very presence** is a witness to the road we must never again take. We honor them and the memory of all who lost their lives 75 years ago and in the aftermath whenever we raise our voices to say "No! Never again!"

We undertake this project as our contribution to the ongoing effort begun by Justine Merritt and carried forth by **The Ribbon International**, a nongovernmental organization at the UN that seeks to keep alive Justine's vision to protect life and achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

This website is our way to encourage you to join us by making a ribbon panel — either by cloth or on poster board — sewing, painting, drawing or writing to capture "what I cannot bear to think of as lost forever in a nuclear war." Despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed upon us, we can display our ribbon panels in our windows, on porch railings, at our community centers or places of worship as a way of commemorating this 75th anniversary and pledging to work for a world that will never know such destruction again. You'll find resources here on the [website](https://www.peaceribbon.org) and we encourage you to take photos and share with us and the world over social media what you have done. For more information, please go to:

[peaceribbon.org](https://www.peaceribbon.org)