



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.**

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Voices from Inside: Israelis Speak

Pax Christi Little Rock will present the 2008 award winning documentary, "Voices from Inside: Israelis Speak" as part of their monthly Speaker Series on Thursday, August 19 at 6:30 pm CST via zoom. The zoom link for this presentation is as follows:



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88316378786>

Voices from Inside is based upon interviews with 16 Jewish Israeli voices of conscience. Each representing a different facet within the peace movement there, the film traces Zionism from its beginnings to the reality that exists today, with brutal honesty. Through their eyes and perspectives, it is a film about personal development, the evolution of consciousness within each mind, moving from a perspective of nationalist myths to a revelation regarding moral choices for their society—a society that is permeated and defined by militarism and denial. It is a system they perceive as occupying and destroying the lives of not only the Palestinian people, but simultaneously consuming itself in that process. These cross-

generational voices have all chosen to break Israel's silence. They have created a path of transcendence, reconciliation and solidarity, working together with the Palestinians, to forge a path for peace.



The film provides solid documentation revealing that over 75% of the indigenous Palestinian population, over 800,000 people, were expelled from the area during the 1948 occupation. Since, 1967, Israel has detained and imprisoned over 650,000 Palestinian citizens. Even today, Palestinians who continue to live in the region are having their homes destroyed on a regular basis to make room for more Israeli settlements. They are denied access to roads throughout the region and can be arrested if caught driving on certain highways. There are significant restrictions on travel between Palestinian cities in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Discussion and Q & A will follow viewing of the documentary. Admission is free and all welcome.

Peace Offerings

HIROSHIMA REMEMBERED: 76TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOMBING



Mary Cantwell

Arkansas Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice (ACPJ), Pax Christi Little Rock and Pulaski Academy came together to present a program memorializing the 76th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This event took place on Friday, August 6 at 7 pm at Reservoir Park. Its purpose was to serve as a reminder of the urgency to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Mary Cantwell, chairperson of WAND, introduced the program, emphasizing that this was the first anniversary of the bombing since the signing of the UN Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. She also spoke of the Hibakusha, the survivors of the bombing, who have shared their stories and spoken out against nuclear arms for the past 76 years.

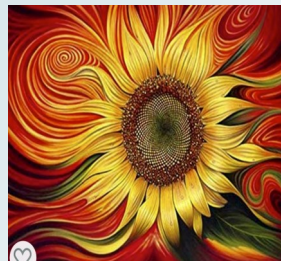
Several students from Pulaski Academy shared poems and stories of survivors of the bombing. Particularly moving was a poem read by Nora entitled, *Flames*, written by TOGE Sankichi, one of the hibakusha, a poet and a leader in the peace movement in Japan.

There were several musical interludes throughout the program performed by Suzanne Michel. Bob Estes provided quotes from US

Arkansas Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice (ACPJ), Pax Christi Little Rock and Pulaski Academy

military personnel including Admiral Nimitz and General Dwight D. Eisenhower who were of the opinion that the bombing was unnecessary.

Towards the end of the program, Anncha Briggs read excerpts from the writings of Art Hobson, a professor of physics at the University of AR. Rev. Matt Bryant closed the program with an overview of the program hosts as well as providing several different ways that people could get involved in peace activism in Little Rock. He



also provided scriptural support for the work towards nonviolence and peace through social justice in our day.



Jean Gordon



Suzanne Michel

SAVE THE DATE

PAX CHRISTI LR BOARD MEETING

via Zoom

Thursday, August 12

6 pm

**Zoom link sent to
Board members**

Peace Offerings

July Updates for Pax Christi Little Rock Pantry Box Program

I hope everyone's summer is going well! Sadly, Covid numbers are going up as we speak, making the various precautions we take to prevent infection while we set up individual food pantries even more important. Take good care of yourselves and get vaccinated!

These are the people you helped in July:

On July 8, we (Jan Pipkin) helped move and set up a food pantry for Demetrius, a 55-year-old gentleman from Memphis, TN. Demetrius experienced homelessness related to alcohol and drug addiction for a period of years. In 2019, he wanted to make a fresh start so he moved to Little Rock. Demetrius began attending AA meetings and changed his environment. He is currently looking for a steady, consistent job to better support himself. Demetrius enjoys bike-riding and exercising.

On July 15, we (Mary Hunt) helped settle in Nathan. He moved to Little Rock from Kentucky after meeting someone in the area. When his plans to move-in with his friend diin't work out, he became homeless. However, he decided to stay here and make a



fresh start anyway and he has been working to get back on his feet. With help from Jericho Way, he found a small apartment. Before Settled Souls and Pax Christi got there, all he owned was a sleeping bag. Settled Souls provided furniture for each room and Pax Christi provided enough food to get him

started. The best part was that the day the furniture and food were delivered was his birthday! What a fun birthday gift to give, and he was so very appreciative! While we can't promote our singing skills, we did have fun singing to him and having him blow out some candles.

The next move we had was on July 22. We (Mary Dandurand) moved in Norman, both helping with the move and providing pantry food for his first few weeks. Norman is a Little Rock native with four older children. He experienced homelessness after coming out of prison. Norman works doing different jobs through a



temp service to make ends meet. He was so grateful for the help from Settled Souls and the food from Pax Christi. When we were leaving he said, "I still felt like I was homeless, but now I feel like I have a home."

As always, thank you to all the volunteers who make this program possible. You made a difference to these three people this month and helped them get off to a great start in permanent housing. Thank you for all you do!! If you are not already a Pantry Box Program volunteer and are interested in learning more, please contact Susi Blanco (susikblanco@gmail.com) and she will send you our new Pantry Box Program booklet. We are also looking for volunteers to sign up to help with move-ins.

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You get a chance to see the Settled Souls volunteers in action and meet the people we serve. To get on the list of volunteers for move-ins, please email Jan Pipkin (minimite1@yahoo.com) or Lee Bass (lee.e.bass@gmail.com.) Move-ins are usually scheduled on Thursday mornings and volunteers meet at the storage unit to caravan to the move-in site.

Please make a note that our **next packing meeting is in the dining hall at St. John's Catholic Center on Sunday, September 12 at 3 pm. It has been postponed for one week as the first Sunday of the month is Labor Day weekend.** Enjoy the rest of your summer!

The Pantry Box Program Committee with the majority of text and photos provided by Stephanie Byers and Lindsey Taggart of Settled Souls

In solidarity with the Church in Japan, let us pray with the words that Pope St. John Paul II shared at the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima on 2.25.1981.

To the Creator of nature and man, of truth and beauty I pray:

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons and war;

Hear my voice when I beg you to instill in the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship;

Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and in every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace;

Hear my voice and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with the sharing of self, to war with peace. Amen

PCLR Donates 50 Pounds of Cork to RECORK

As you may remember, Pax Christi collected corks from wine bottles for several years for RECORK, a non-profit company that made cork shoes and donated them to Soles4Souls to donate to underprivileged children. Unfortunately, Covid shut down both companies for awhile, but they are now back in business. PCLR shipped out 50 pounds of corks just last week. Members continued to save throughout the pandemic and so we were able to donate these corks to RECORK. We are exploring the new costs for shipping and whether they continue to donate to Soles4Souls. More information will be provided soon.

SAVE THE DATE

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK SPEAKER SERIES

Duffy-Marie Arnoult
Co-founder and Co-Chair of
Memphis and Mid-South
Chapter of Climate Reality

THE CLIMATE REALITY PROJECT

September 16, 2021

6:30 PM VIA ZOOM

**ZOOM LINK TO BE
ANNOUNCED**

Peace Offerings

BACKPACKS DELIVERED TO FIVE SCHOOLS ACROSS ARKANSAS



Organized by School

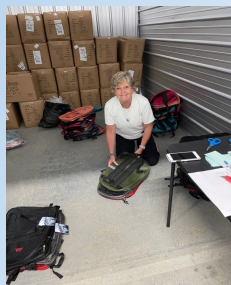
Even though Pax Christi Little Rock originally planned to hold a backpacking party on Monday, August 9 and invite the public to help us pack backpacks with school supplies as in years past (pre-Covid), the exponentially increasing Covid numbers in August led us to rethink this plan. Given the number of infections, hospitalizations and deaths in the last few weeks, higher than at any point during the pandemic due to the emerging delta variant of the virus, a decision was made to cancel the event and so avoid putting anyone at risk of exposure. So, Plan B was put into place and several members of Pax Christi

went to work organizing the bulk school supplies that were ordered and delivered to our new storage unit. Simply separating these supplies according to school and grade took several people several days to

accomplish. However, the new idea this year to have our supplies delivered and stored in a climate-controlled storage unit allowed several folks to work together at once on this project. In years past, Sherry Martin had the supplies de-



Organizing Crew



Counting & Sorting



Happy Helpers

livered to her home and had single-handedly sorted and organized the supplies to prepare for packing. As we increased the number of schools to five this year, it became apparent that we would need the involvement of more people this time around.

The original Plan B was to furnish St. Theresa's Catholic School (Little Rock), North Little Rock Catholic Academy (North Little Rock), Booker T. Washington Elementary (Little Rock), Broadmoor Elementary (Pine Bluff), and Carroll Smith Elementary (Osceola) with bulk supplies and backpacks separated by grade. Indeed, St. Theresa's Catholic School and North Little Rock Catholic Academy had already requested bulk supplies only.

So, bulk supplies were delivered to St. Theresa's, North Little Rock Catholic Academy and Washington Elementary. In the meantime, Sherry Martin, treasurer and head of the backpack committee, came up with her own idea. Unbeknownst to anyone on her committee, she began to visit the storage unit containing the supplies after work and on the weekend to individually pack the backpacks herself.



St. Theresa's

Peace Offerings



Supplies before Packing

Over several days, she managed to pack supplies for Carroll Smith Elementary single-handedly. Then, she wanted to be sure that Broadmoor Elementary in Pine Bluff was packed as had been promised as this was the first year to work with them. So, she asked another Pax Christi board member, Sandee Haslauer, to help her and they spent an eight-hour day packing backpacks with supplies for those students. There are 314 students at Broadmoor Elementary and 343 students at Carroll Smith Elementary. That's a lot of backpacks to fill with lots of supplies!



NLRCA Delivery

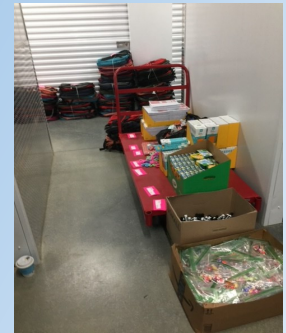
Several people also went above and beyond to deliver these backpacks to the schools. Many thanks go to the volunteers who are delivering these



Washington Delivery

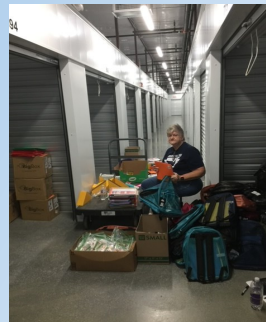
school supplies- Sandee Haslauer and Raymond Bertasi (that's right, our generous bluebird house benefactor) to Osceola (Tuesday), George and Sherry Simon to Pine Bluff (Monday), Jan and Tony Pipkin

to NLR Catholic Academy (delivered) and Booker T. Washington (delivered) and Sherry Simon to St. Theresa's Catholic School (delivered).



Backpack Filling Setup

Pax Christi's budget for the supplies and backpacks for 1500 students (5 schools) was \$18,500 and we came in just under this amount. This money was raised through the generosity of many people. Our biggest contributors were The Fraternal Order of Eagles, Raymond Bertasi



Sandee and Sherry M

(and all those who bought a bluebird house!), Christ the King Catholic Church, and Tony and Jan Pipkin. We plan to add another school to our list next year, so stay tuned!

"None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful."



Mother Teresa



Peace Offerings

Paul Crum, Memphis Singer and Songwriter, Featured in National Online Music Festival

Memphis singer-songwriter Paul Crum will join forces with dozens of performers from around the nation, including the world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, for an online music festival on August 21 called *For Goodness Sake: Music for the Nonviolent Future*.

The event is being presented by Campaign Nonviolence, a project of Peace e Bene. The group was founded in 1989 by the Franciscan Friars of California with a mission to foster justice, peace and the well-being of all through education, resources and action for nonviolent change. Paul, who plays regularly at Memphis venues such as Westy's and South Main Sounds, is also known in activist circles and is a frequent musical guest at rallies and events promoting social change. He has also worked with local groups to promote the study of nonviolent conflict resolution in public schools.

Joining Paul at the free online event, which will begin at 1 pm, will be popular artists such as Kate Taylor (sister of James), Ray Benson of Asleep at the Wheel and Nashville songwriter Gary Nicholson whose name has appeared on over 600 recorded songs, including the title track of Ringo Starr's latest album, *Give More Love*. Nicholson will be joined by popular blues-folk artist Ruthie Foster. In all, over 40 musicians will offer performances. A full roster and registration details can be found at goodness-sake.org.

Paul was asked to perform a song inspired by the controversy surrounding the removal of the Nathan Bedford-Forrest statue from a Memphis park and similar actions, particu-



PAUL CRUM

larly in southern cities. He is excited to be on a bill with such prominent artists, especially Yo-Yo Ma, whose accomplishments go beyond winning 18 Grammys, Kennedy Center Honors and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Ma is a UN Messenger of Peace and the first artist ever appointed to the World Economic Forum's board of trustees. He is a member of the board of Nia Tero, the US-based nonprofit working in solidarity with indigenous peoples and movements worldwide.

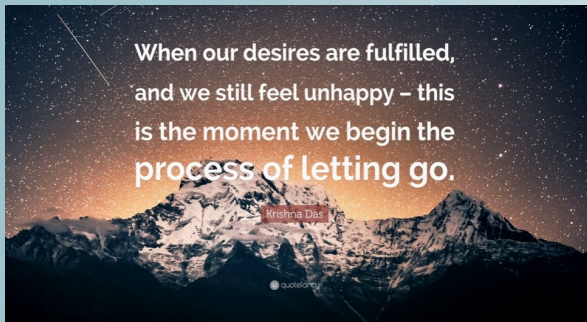
Contact Paul Crum at

bartart@bellsouth.net or 901-569-0573.

Peace Offerings

Learning to Let Go: One of Many Lessons Presented During the Pandemic

Sherry Simon



As I write this, COVID-19 is making a third surge on our planet as an evolved delta variant of the original virus. It has been disheartening to realize that, as a people, we might have conquered this disease early on if we had better cooperated with one another and made our mutual welfare top priority. Our scientists performed a miraculous feat in developing a vaccine quickly that is extremely effective in fighting this virus. Understandably, many were fearful of this antidote as it was so new and had to be developed in an inordinately short period of time, so the majority did not readily follow the recommendations of scientific experts to get vaccinated. There was also conflict over the idea that mandating masks or promoting these vaccinations might violate individual rights rather than seeing how carrying through with these recommendations might help others as

well as ourselves. As this crisis unfolds, many of us seem to be taking out our fear and frustration on those who we see as having solutions that are different from their own. These solutions might even seem threatening to our way of life. Certainly, many fringe-political groups and self-serving politicians have also taken advantage of the current situation, proposing conspiracy theories that only serve to intensify the conflict. This has led to a divided world, where we have set up camps to fight one another rather than work together to defeat our common enemy: the virus.

And yet, so long as the pandemic remains, there are still lessons that we might learn that could mitigate the deadly costs. This virus will not go away until we figure out a way to work together towards its eradication. I'm pretty sure that we will have many more opportunities to learn from our mistakes. Yet I pray that we learn before this virus mutates to the point that it evades our vaccines. Already, the COVID-lambda variant has been identified in the United States, a mutation that has the potential to be vaccine resistant. As we progress in this

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battle, it seems we will either need to learn some lessons or pay a terrible price for our resistance.

So, here is where it becomes personal for me. I was diagnosed with COVID several days ago. Fortunately, I am vaccinated so my symptoms are mild. But self-quarantining has given me time to reflect on this pandemic and some of the lessons it brings to my table as a white woman of privilege. I say this as I am aware that my situation is much less threatening than many of my brothers and sisters who may not have the economic or vocational option to quarantine (healthcare workers, service workers), to work from home, to get a vaccine (children 0-12 years old) or avoid situations that promote spread of the virus (factory workers, service workers, nursing home residents). The past 18 months have already presented a multitude of lessons to us all regarding ongoing inequitable treatment of people of color, disastrous effects of climate change, the importance of caring for our neighbor, and the immense value of relationships in our lives. And although I have spent some time reflecting on these bigger issues, I am for some reason intensely struck in these days of quarantine by the importance of learning to “let go” so that I might better love. This means letting go of my need to be right, my need to be perfect, my need to be loved, my need to be in a certain class, my need to be make a certain amount of money, and so on. These were a few of the things that my

culture told me were important in the first half of my life, so I’ve been working hard on “me” for over 60 years. And now, in the middle of this pandemic, some things happened that showed me I must now let go of this perspective on life that is seen through the lens of “ME.”



I believe that this lesson was initially presented to me almost two weeks ago right before I contracted COVID. I had a dream of a golden robe hanging from a tree. Two men came to see this beautiful robe. They were so amazed by its beauty that they each surreptitiously tore off a square of the robe to take for themselves. However, the moment they tore these pieces from the robe, the material turned gray and tattered even though the robe itself remained golden. This did not stop them from trying to gain something from the robe, however, as they couldn’t get the beautiful vision out of their heads. They went around for the rest of their days placing these gray pieces of cloth on different items, trying to change the items into gold. And so, they wasted their lives, vainly attempting to recapture the original beauty and value of the golden robe.

You might wonder what this dream has to do with COVID or with “letting go so that I might better love.” I interpreted

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We practice letting go.
And in the process, we find peace.

- Leo Babauta



the dream to mean that I was holding onto things in my life that are no longer of value even though I continue to long for them. These are all the things in this world that seem so beautiful that I seek them rather than seeking God. The small, tattered pieces of cloth taken from the whole robe signify how, in my separated egoic state, I desire to take for myself many things of beauty and value that don't really belong to me. Everything in this world is a gift to all, not something we should covet individually. As in addiction, when we try to hold onto these things selfishly, they will eventually destroy us. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't have "possessions" at all, but more speaks to how we gain these possessions (do others suffer so we might have more for ourselves) and then what we do with them (keep for ourselves or share with others). As I sit alone in my room or office in these days, I find myself experiencing a detachment from things that I thought I would never want to live without. Material things, relationships, personal perspectives on life, my individual thoughts and feelings, and just about anything that I always saw as "mine" suddenly seems unimportant. Instead, my thoughts have strangely nar-

rowed and become focused on those folks I might have harmed by contact while I was contagious with COVID. These thoughts have led me through so many emotions—grief, remorse, appreciation for my friends and family, and gratitude. And these emotions have then extended to other people I have harmed over the years of my life, intentionally or unintentionally. This focus on others has moved me towards some detachment from the "important" things I thought defined me. I think sometimes we have to get hit upside the head in order to see things in a different light. I am slowly beginning to realize that these "possessions" just defined a small part of me—my ego. Ego is tricky, and it often gets in the way of love.

Jesus Christ told us two very important things in the gospels that I believe speak to this lesson on letting go so that we might better love. In the gospel of Matthew, he told the young rich man, **"If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. Afterward, come back and follow me"** (Matthew 19:21). And he also said, **"This is the first [commandment]: Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is God alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind,**

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and with all your strength. This is the second [commandment], You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:29-31).

I am seeing a connection between these two passages. I believe we must let go of our individual desires for ourselves in this world (our possessions) if we desire to truly know God and remain in the flow (the robe). Our pursuit of riches in the form of anything that aggrandizes ourselves blocks our relationship with God, keeping our focus on our own needs and wants instead. Also, I think Jesus gives us a big clue when he tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves. In loving others, we again take focus off ourselves and therefore are able to see Jesus more clearly when we meet him in the middle of our relationships. Over time, this will hopefully lead to the decline of ego so that we might better stay in right relationship with God. It seems that attachment to anything that builds us up in this world puts us at risk of losing everything that really matters. I am reminded of Jesus telling us, **“I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing”** John 15:5. We



will not do well attempting to walk through this world solely as individuals, apart from God and from one another.

Our experiences during this pandemic have placed light on the fact that we live in a society where the push for “more and better” has created and sustained deep inequities in our system. A few live off the backs of many even though this fact is not generally recognized or appreciated. The lesson that stands out, present in the sacrifice we make to mask/distance from others in order to keep them safe and the inequity that became apparent when we realized that we couldn’t function without our essential low paid workers is that, to prosper as a people, we must take into account the needs of all our people collectively rather than being so focused on our individual desires. And that will necessarily mean **letting go** of some of the things we take for granted, listening to others, and not automatically considering our own needs at the expense of others. It requires looking at the entire system as a whole rather than simply looking at the world we have built for ourselves. Let us pray that we find ways to let go of our individual desires, changing our perspective so that we might learn to better love and so work together to heal our world.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love. You will live in my love if you keep my commandments, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and live in his love. All this I tell you that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. John 15: 9-13