



# 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
- Ashley Legere
- Martina Pierini
- Jan Pipkin
- George Simon
- Father Warren Harvey

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

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## Little Rock Peacemakers Gather To Commemorate World Peace Day



Caroline

Caroline Stevenson, member of WAND, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice, organized a gathering of Little

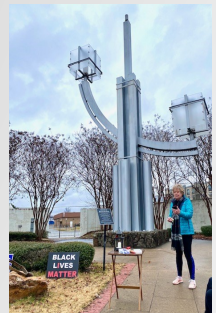
Rock peace activists on World Peace Day, January 1, 2021 at the Beacon of Peace and Hope in North Little Rock. Ms. Stevenson stated that there was "no one I'd rather be with than a group of peacemakers to start this new year."

Approximately 20 peacemakers braved the freezing temperatures for 90 minutes to listen to speakers who shared inspirational quotes, speeches and poems. Afterwards, folks wrote their aspirations and resolutions for 2021 and placed them in

the fire.

Several Pax Christi Little Rock members attended the gathering, including Sandee Haslauer, Mary Hunt, Jan and Tony Pipkin and George and Sherry Simon. This year marks the 54th anniversary of the original World Peace Day, established by Pope Paul VI in 1967. It is a feast day of the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to universal peace and celebrated along with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. This day is often an occasion on which Popes made declarations of social doctrine. In 2021, Pope Francis' message is entitled, "A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace" and can be found [here](#).

**The world must be educated to love Peace, to build it up and defend it."**  
Pope Paul VI, 1968



Sherry Simon-



Peace and Hope



Matthew Bryant



J Gordon-WAND

## Peace Offerings

## PCLR PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR NURSES



**Pax Christi LR Board Members  
Deliver cookies to UAMS**

On December 17, Pax Christi Little Rock board members Lee Bass, Mary Hunt and Jan Pipkin delivered 15 dozen individually packaged homemade cookies for the nursing and support staff at UAMS. The delicious cookies were constructed by 17 dedicated volunteers who wanted to share a message with these front-line healthcare workers that we support them and keep them close in our prayers during these days of the pandemic.



**Claire and Mary Anne**

On December 14, Lee, Jan, and Susi Blanco also took about 10 dozen cookies over to the nurses and staff at the Little Rock VA. The incredible women and men who work tirelessly to get us through this COVID crisis are owed a deep debt of gratitude for their service.

## BELTS DELIVERED TO JERICHO WAY

Pax Christi Little Rock very quickly surpassed its goal of 150 belts needed by Jericho Way, a Little Rock day shelter for homeless individuals. The unexpected early success was in large part due to the creative and tenacious work of Amelia Byers. She is the daughter of our Settled Souls partner, Stephanie Byers. Amelia made flyers and put them in mailboxes all over her neighborhood urging folks to contribute gently used belts by bringing them to a Pax Christi decorated box on her front porch. The result? Amelia collected 82 belts on her own initiative in just a very few days. A great example of the Holy Spirit making things happen through the sweet heart and big effort of a young girl. Around 85 belts were also collected by Pax Christi at St. John's and some last minute donations brought the total number up to 189. With the overflow, PCLR was then able to donate extra belts to Our House.



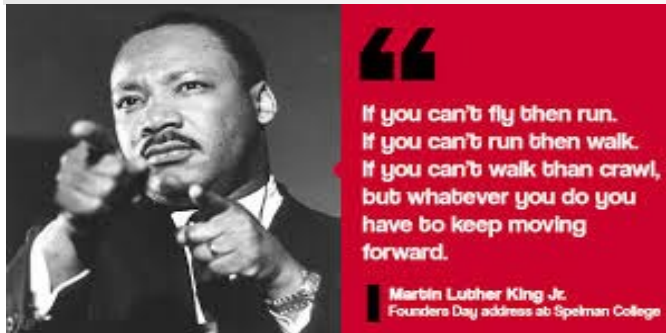
**Lee Bass, Mandy Davis, Jan Pipkin, Mary Hunt**



## Peace Offerings

## Excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Most Famous Speeches

In honor of Martin Luther King Day (January 18, 2021), here are a few memorable excerpts from several of Dr. King's most impactful speeches. His words ring as true today as they did in his lifetime.



**MONTGOMERY, ALA., 1955:** If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, "There lived a great people—a black people—who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization." This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility.

**ALBANY, GA., 1962:** It may get me crucified. I may die. But I want it said even if I die in the struggle that "He died to make me free."

**WASHINGTON, 1962:** Hate is always tragic. It is as injurious to the hater as it is to the hated. It distorts the personality and scars the soul ... As a race we must work passionately and unrelentingly for first-class citizenship, but

we must never use second-class methods to gain it. If this happens, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of mean-ingles chaos.

**WASHINGTON, 1963 (THE MARCH):** I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the people's injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

**Peace Offerings**

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

**BIRMINGHAM, ALA., 1963:** We are tired of living in the dungeons of poverty, ignorance and want. We have come to the day when a piece of freedom is not enough for us as human beings ... If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not extinguish our existence, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We feel that we are the conscience of America.

**OSLO, NORWAY, 1964:** I am only too well aware of the weaknesses and failures which exist, the doubts about the efficacy of nonviolence ... But I am still convinced that nonviolence is both the most practically sound and morally excellent way to grapple with the age-old problem of racial injustice.

**THE SELMA MARCH, 1965:** I know you are asking today, "How long will it take?" ... How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow ... because the aim of the

moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.

**MEMPHIS, TENN., MARCH 31, 1968:** The world is changing and anyone who thinks he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution ... We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools ... Racial injustice is still the black man's burden and the white man's shame ... The government must certainly share the guilt, the individual must share the guilt and even the church must share the guilt.

**MEMPHIS, TENN., APRIL 3, 1968:** And then I got into Memphis. And some began to ... talk about the threats ... Or what would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers. But I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop, and I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life; longevity has its grace. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land.

## Peace Offerings

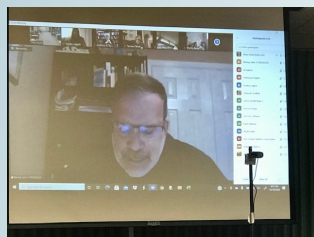
## PAX CHRISTI MEMBERS SEEK UNITY AT SPIRITUAL RETREAT



Unity Ceremony

The Pax Christi LR board divided its annual retreat into two separate events: spiritual renewal and planning for 2021. The spiritual retreat took place on Sat., Dec. 19 from 8 am-2:30 pm at St. John's Catholic Center. The theme this year was **Unity** as we were working to better understand and move towards healing the divide that threatens our individual relationships as well as our country at large in these difficult days. The full retreat was planned for PCLR board members only, but Bishop John Stowe, Bishop-President of Pax Christi USA, was the keynote speaker and several others joined us from Little Rock and from Pax Christi Memphis.

In addition to hearing from Bishop Stowe on building unity in a broken world, Pax Christi board members engaged in prayer/contemplation, journaling, and spiritual exercises designed to focus attention on personal and community healing. Mem-



Bishop Stow via Zoom



Unity Candle

bers both present and online opened the day with a blessing from Fr. Harvey and the lighting of a unity candle. All members then lit their own candles from their neighbor and shared a specially selected writing pertaining to the concept of unity. The unity candle remained lit throughout the retreat, serving as a reminder of our purpose that day. Dr. George Simon led everyone in an exercise that emphasized the importance of communication in improving our relationships.



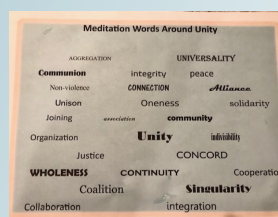
Mass with Fr. Harvey

Throughout the day, there were periods of reflection that served to connect members with the Holy Spirit. After reflection, the group met for discussion of issues prayed and journaled over. These issues included Bishop Stowe's message of unity shared in scripture and healing in relationships. Members also took a vow of non-violence that was shared with Pax Christi USA and with our

Bishop Taylor. Finally, our time together was concluded with a beautiful Mass in the chapel with Father Harvey.



PCLR Spiritual Retreat



Unity Words



## Peace Offerings

## Our Words: Keys to Bridging the Divide

Dr. Sherry Simon



**“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with the world, all the nations.”**

These are words spoken by President Abraham Lincoln on the occasion of his second inauguration on April 10, 1865. Words that apply today as much as during the end days of the Civil War. We need to take these words to heart and strive with new resolve to heal our country by having the difficult conversations around the issues that divide us without harming one another and sadly, often killing the messenger. When we strive to harm others with our words to prove our own point, walls go up. When our words are aimed at one another with the intention of doing harm and “winning,” we destroy relationships and any possibility of mutuality. The real truth is, neither side can win as long as we remain divided.

We can thank God that our war with

one another has been for the most part up to this moment, a war of words. History shows us, however, that inflammatory words are how the physically devastating wars of the past are often initiated. And sadly, just a few days ago on January 6, acts of deadly violence were perpetrated in an attempt to subvert the rule of law and electoral succession of leadership in our country. And so it begins.

Let us not allow the venom injected into our “united” states over the past few years poison us to one another. Of course, each political party rallies to its own standard and reason as to how our country has become so divided. One side blames the president for his hate-filled rhetoric while the other lays the culpability on fake news and biased media.

Meanwhile, though, rather than focusing on solving the tremendous problems that face our country today (pandemic, racism, otherism, disrespect for life, homelessness, over-incarceration, economic inequality, education, etc.), we fight amongst ourselves on social media and hurl verbal bullets at one another as if each person who believes differently from us is to blame for all the problems that face our world. This must change if we are to survive in a country with democratic ideals.

What actions can each of us take to begin the healing process? It seems the most important first step is to do a thor-

### Peace Offerings

ough examination of our own hearts and begin to evaluate how we personally communicate with others. Our words reveal who we are, so take care to only use those words which are creative and healing. Yes, use your words to take your stand and call out injustice where you see it. Do not remain silent on these issues. But take the time and effort to construct your words based in lovingkindness and care for our brothers and sisters. Otherwise, we become complicit in widening the already existing chasm that isolates us from one another.

God bless all of you who work and pray for peace and justice in our world. Remain on that path each day and do not become disillusioned. A good friend of mine, Janice Vanderhaar, encouraged me to read Psalm 37 during times of conflict and self-doubt. I would encourage all of you who feel helpless and beaten down to do the same. Here is a portion of that psalm that I found most helpful:

“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him;

Do not get upset because of one who is successful in his way,

Because of the person who carries out wicked schemes.

Cease from anger and abandon wrath;

Do not get upset, it only leads to evildoing.”

## FRATELLI TUTTI



You are invited to join a four-week study of Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*-Brothers and Sisters All. Sponsored by the Institute for Theological Studies at St. Margaret's (ITSSM). The Zoom study will convene on **Sunday afternoons, 1-3 pm CST** for four Sundays beginning **January 17, 2021**.

Please read the encyclical ahead of time (two chapters each week). It may be found online at:

<http://bit.ly/fratelli-document>

If you wish to participate in the study online, You Must Register in advance:

<http://bit.ly/fratelli-study>

You may review an outline of the study: <http://fratelli-study.online>

## Peace Offerings

## WORDS

Dr. George Simon

God has been singing a love song to me for days now. And He's also been inviting me to reflect deeply on the words. He inspired some famous musicians to craft the words quite a few years ago. But they're as timely today as they were then. They had a different meaning to me when I first heard them as a young man looking for love than they have now as I attempt to be a better lover and hear them over and over again in my nightly dreams, in my waking moments, and throughout the day. Perhaps you might hear something different in them, too.

Most of our formal prayers are not written as love conversations. But my prayers of late have adopted a very different character. And I hear a truly loving God trying to reach my heart with inspired words. Maybe that's why I keep hearing these particular words given to the artists years ago, over and over again in my mind. See what you think:

Talk, in *everlasting* words, and *dedicate* them all to me.  
And I will give you all my life, I'm here if you should call to me

This world has lost its glory, let's start a brand new story *now*, my love  
**Right now**, there is no other time, and **I** can show you how, my love

For some time it seems like God has been trying to impress upon me the importance of words. As a therapist, I've listened to hundreds of relationship stories where certain words whether or not uttered in the heat of passion, inflicted serious damage on a bond once present but subsequently broken beyond repair. And my heart aches with almost every word I read when folks get to debating one another on social media, especially on political topics. And lately, things I've been reading from fellow Catholics about Pope Francis and his vision for the faithful, the Church's liturgical rites and the changes ushered in by Vatican II, and a host of other topics, make me fearful that a movement so vital to the world's salvation could find itself torn apart – again, by words.

Even those not informed by Christian teaching, as Don Miguel Ruiz notes in *The Four Agreements*, knew that being “impeccable with your word” is of paramount importance. And Jesus, making clear that it's what comes out of us that defiles us, told us we needn't even swear an oath to affirm the integrity of our words because every word we utter should inherently be as good as any oath, reflecting a sacred bond between us and our Maker to be of pure heart.

The evangelist tells us that all creation came to be through God's impeccable Word and that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” And during His earthly walk, while some found His teachings too hard to accept, others came to believe that He had “the *words* of eternal life.”

In my dreams and in the lyrics that are with me pretty much every moment these days, I feel God telling me to be as mindful as I know how to be with my words. I'm hoping these words I've written might inspire you to do the same. Too many words have cut like a knife into the very fabric of both our Church and our society, only furthering the divisions among us. The world has lost its glory. Let's start a brand new story. Now – by being ever so mindful of our words.