



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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Joyce Raynor, Director of Center for Healing Hearts & Spirits, to Speak on Violence in LR

Joyce Raynor, the Executive Director of the Center for Healing Hearts and Spirits, (HHS) will be speaking at the March Pax Christi Speaker Series on violence in Little Rock and the many ways that HHS works with those who have been victims of violence. Ms. Raynor's presentation will preface the 7th Annual Pilgrimage for Peace to be held on Sunday, April 11. The Pilgrimage will include a remembrance service for all those who have died at the hand of violence in Pulaski County in the past two years. Pax Christi will be donating proceeds from the Pilgrimage to the Center for Healing Hearts and Spirits.

This organization is a project of the Women's Council on African American Affairs, Inc. (WCAAA) Staff and members have been working to connect people to services that affect their hearts, minds, souls and bodies since 2001. They provide grief counseling for crime survivors and/or their families, suicide prevention, rape crisis counseling, alcohol and drug treatment programs, community assistance programs, educational scholarships and

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK SPEAKER SERIES



JOYCE RAYNOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Center for Healing Hearts
And Spirits**

Thursday, March 18

6:30-8:00 pm

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88443453288>

back-to-school supplies for Arkansas youth, and emergency domestic violence shelter services. These are just a few examples of the many services provided across the state of Arkansas. Joyce Raynor was the 2012 recipient of the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award. She founded the Women's Council on African American Affairs in 1999. After a series of tragedies in her own family, she established the Center for Healing Hearts and Spirits in 2001. For more information on the Center, you can visit hhscenter.org.

Peace Offerings

Bluebird Houses Attract Donors to Pax Christi's "Backpacks for Kids" Program



A man on a mission

Raymond Bertasi made a commitment to support Pax Christi Little Rock by building bluebird houses to give to folks who donated money to fund the "backpacks filled with school supplies" project. And as everyone knows, Mr. Bertasi is a man of his word. Raymond has been working on bluebird houses non-stop for the past several weeks, stopping only



Home Sweet Home

long enough to deliver his product to homes from Little Rock to Memphis. He stated that his goal is to build and deliver 50 birdhouses and/or to raise \$5000 for Pax Christi Little Rock. So far, he has provided 32 bluebird homes to donors and is in the process of building several more, some of which are already being claimed. Records indicate



Moving In

that Raymond has already raised \$2155 that goes directly to provide school supplies for four elementary schools in Arkansas. This year, the

plan is to fund backpacks and supplies for St.

Theresa's, NLR Catholic Academy, Booker T. Washington Ele-

mentary, and Osceola Elementary. Basic supplies will also be delivered to several schools in the Pine Bluff area.

If you wish to donate to this backpack project and receive a bluebird house as our thank-you, you can contact

paxtinyworkshop@gmail.com to place



Assembly Line

your order.

If you donate a minimum of \$75, you will receive a free-standing bluebird house.

For a \$100 minimum donation,

you will receive a bluebird house along with a 6 ft. pole. And for a \$125 minimum donation, you will receive a house with a pole and a Pax Christi face mask. And best of all, if you are in the Little Rock area, either Raymond or one of our Pax Christi volunteers will install the house in your backyard. Order now, because the bluebirds are starting to nest and they are looking for a new home near you!



paxtinyworkshop



Raymond is still building!

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi LR Joins PCUSA in Book Study on Nonviolence

Pax Christi Little Rock has joined other Pax Christi USA members in studying *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and the World*. This book is a culmination of the three year global conversation among church leaders, community organizers, activists, social scientists and theologians on how the Catholic Church might return to its Gospel nonviolence roots and work together to transform the violence so prevalent in our lives.

The study will involve zoom presentations by contributing authors alternating with local group meetings. Marie Dennis, Eli McCarthy and Judy Coode will share their experiences working the Vatican and other groups in developing a better foundation for nonviolence in our world.

ADVANCING NONVIOLENCE AND JUST PEACE IN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

STUDY GROUP SCHEDULE

Participants: Sherry, George, Jan, Lee, Susi, Martina, Mary

Wednesday, March 3 (optional-90 min PCUSA zoom session-time TBA Monday, March 1-I'll let you know)- **Preface-Zoom link TBA**

Monday, March 8 @1 pm Local group meeting-Preface-Zoom link to be provided

Wednesday, March 17 (optional-PCUSA) **Part I: Returning to Nonviolence**

Monday, March 22 @1 pm Local group meeting-Part I: Returning to Nonviolence

Wednesday, March 31 (optional-PCUSA) **Part II: Foundation of Nonviolence**

Monday, April 5 @ 1 pm Local group-Part II: Foundation of Nonviolence

Wednesday, April 14 (optional-PCUSA) **Part III: The Practice and Power of Nonviolence**

Monday, April 19 @ 1 pm Local group- Part III: The Practice and Power of Nonviolence

Wednesday, April 28 (optional-PCUSA) **Part IV: Embracing Nonviolence**

Monday, May 3 @ 1 pm Local group- Part IV: Embracing Nonviolence

The zoom sessions with PCUSA will include one hour of information taught by contributors to the book plus one hour break-out sessions for discussion in small groups. These are optional but I think at least the first hour might be beneficial in helping us delve more deeply into the book. We will meet as a local group on Mondays at 1 pm. I will send a zoom link each Monday morning. I look forward to learning from this book and learning more about each of you.

Call or text Sherry at 258-8653 if you have any questions.

GERARD A. VANDERHAAR SYMPOSIUM AT CHRISTIAN BROTHERS UNIVERSITY Racial and Economic Equity Virtual Summit THE PATH TO A JUST MEMPHIS

Keynote Speakers:
PolicyLink's
Angela Glover
Blackwell and
Michael McAfee



**Thursday
March 25th
7-9pm**

Prayer for the Decade of Nonviolence

I bow to the sacred in all creation.

May my spirit fill the world with beauty and wonder.

May my mind seek truth with humility and openness.

May my heart forgive without limit.

May my love for friend, enemy and out-cast be without measure.

May my needs be few and my living simple.

May my actions bear witness to the suffering of others.

May my hands never harm a living being.

May my steps stay on the journey of justice.

May my tongue speak for those who are poor without fear of the powerful.

May my prayers rise with patient discontent until no child is hungry.

May my life's work be a passion for peace and nonviolence.

May my soul rejoice in the present moment.

May my imagination overcome death and despair with new possibility.

And may I risk reputation, comfort, and security to bring this hope to the children.

Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi Pantry Box: February Update

The Pax Christi Little Rock Pantry Box mission got off to a great start in February before the snow storm hit and shut everything down. Right before the storm, Pax Christi provided food and cleaning supplies to Andre, a 55-year-old man originally from Chicago. He came to Little Rock in 2017 looking for better housing opportunities, but became homeless while waiting for housing to become available. His name finally came to the top of the list through Jericho Way and he moved into permanent housing in December, 2020. Andre said that he is very happy to have his own place. He likes reading, walking and "chilling out."

Unfortunately, although Pax Christi generally plans for 4-5 moves each month, COVID quarantine and the snow limited us to only one move in February. However, with the weather improving and COVID numbers going down, no doubt March will bring many more opportunities.

There were so few moves in February that there are still several full tubs remaining in storage. With the food that will be packed on Sunday, March 7, there should be enough to last through the March and April moves. So, the packing day originally scheduled for April 10 will be cancelled. Our next packing meeting will be on **Sunday, May 2 at 3 pm**. See you there!

SAVE *the* DATE

Sunday,
April 11, 2021
2:00pm

Heifer International
1 World Avenue, Little Rock
to
Beacon of Peace & Hope
120 Riverfront Drive
North Little Rock

7th ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE For PEACE



Remembrance
Service
3:00 pm
Honoring those
who died at the
hand of violence.

www.pilgrimageforpeace.com

www.facebook.com/PilgrimageforPeaceLR



Thursday, April 16, 2021, 6:30 PM CST
Pax Christi Little Rock
presents a study of the Encyclical
Fratelli Tutti

Strangers in a Closed World

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Dark Clouds Over a Closed World

Open World — Open Hearts

- Chapter 2: A Stranger on the Road
- Chapter 3: Envisaging and Engendering an Open World
- Chapter 4: A Heart Open to the Whole World

A Political Culture of Kindness

- Chapter 5: A Better Kind of Politics
- Chapter 6: Dialogue and Friendship in Society

Healing: Justice, Mercy, and Religion

- Chapter 7: Paths of Renewed Encounter
- Chapter 8: Religions at the Service of Fraternity in Our World



"Let us dream as a single human family, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all." ~Pope Francis

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

Presented by: Dr. Donnal Walter

Peace Offerings

THE BEACON OF PEACE AND HOPE: BRINGING LIGHT TO A TROUBLED WORLD



The Pilgrimage Begins

On Sunday, April 11 at 2 pm, the 7th Annual Pilgrimage for Peace will begin in front of Heifer International (One World Avenue, Little Rock) and participants will walk through downtown Little Rock to the Beacon of Peace and Hope located across the Arkansas River in North Little Rock. Once there, a beautiful Interfaith Remembrance Service will be held for those who have died at the hands of violence. This annual event attracts people from all over the state who have been affected by violence and who gather to mourn these needless deaths in our community. Local churches, mosques and synagogues as well as many different peace and social justice organizations and the general public are invited to take part in the march and the service held at the Beacon of Peace and Hope, recognizing that violence



Many join along the way



Remembrance Service

is a constant in our world that is grieved by all people, regardless of their religious beliefs. Im-



The Beacon

plicit in this service is the message that all faiths must come together to address the violence that surrounds us.

Prayers and readings to memorialize the victims of violence will be read by representa-

tatives of these different faith groups. Additionally, the names of all people killed at the hands of violence in Pulaski County will be read aloud, followed by a moment of silence. You can learn more about the Pilgrimage for Peace at pilgrimageforpeace.com.



Caroline Stevenson

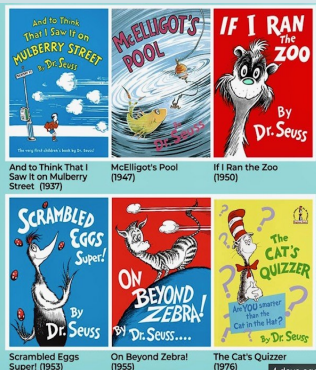
The 36-foot-tall Beacon for Peace and Hope and the surrounding Peace Garden were dedicated on Saturday, November 5, 2011. The construction of this symbol of nonviolence was sponsored by the Board of Women's Action for New Directions (WAND). This organization, with leadership from Jean Gordon and Caroline Stevenson, raised \$150,000 over seven years

to build the Beacon. There are two lights that shine from the beacon into the night sky, emblematic of Hope and Peace shining together in our world despite the darkness.

BEACON OF
PEACE AND HOPE
A gift to the people of Arkansas.
Dedicated to all who aspire to live in a
world
of peace and justice and who are
actively working to accomplish that goal.
In memory of victims
of war and violence in the world.
With thanks to all who
contributed to make this memorial possible.
Arkansas Woman's Action for New
Directions
City of North Little Rock

Peace Garden

Peace Offerings

DR. SEUSS "CANCELLATION" DEBATE REVEALS
PROCESS THAT WIDENS THE GREAT DIVIDE

Discontinued Seuss Books

In spite of all the really serious problems facing our world today, I strangely found myself spending way too much time this past week thinking about the uproar in our country over the “cancellation” of Dr. Seuss. The whole conflict really bothered me. First, of all, I have loved to read since I was four-years-old, and I have always loved Dr. Seuss. So when I heard the first sound bytes on this subject, I was really upset. Who in their right mind would ban Dr. Seuss, an icon in children’s literature and beloved by so many? I started digging deeper to try to find the facts and began to understand what had actually happened. You see, the facts tell a different story than the superficial accounts that filled the news and social media. It turns out that Dr. Seuss was not cancelled at all. The organization that manages his legacy and trust, Dr. Seuss Enterprises, simply made a decision to pull six of the over 60 books he has published over the years from future publication. These early

books were discontinued due to racist, hurtful and stereotypic images of Black and Asian characters.

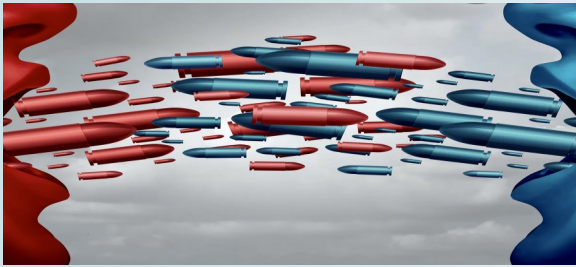


Stereotypic Racial Bias

Some specific examples include *If I Ran the Zoo* illustrating a white man holding a large gun while standing on a cage being carried by three Asian men. In *To Think I Saw it on Mulberry Street*, a white man is shown using a whip on a man of color. A survey in 2019 of Dr. Seuss’ works found that just 2% of human characters were people of color—98% were white. So, while Seuss used his incredible talent to instill universal values in the children who read his books, it was found that the outdated stereotypes in several of his earlier books could affect the racial biases that children begin to form as early as the age of three. Additionally, children of color can be harmed developmentally by seeing negative depictions of themselves in the media.

Interestingly enough, Dr. Seuss himself expressed some sensitivity to racial bias in his work later in his life. Like most of us, he evolved in his attitudes

Peace Offerings



Red vs Blue

over time and was able to recognize the harmful effects that racially biased images could have on children.

In researching this very gifted but human author, I found out that he was a political cartoonist during WWII when our country imprisoned Japanese-American citizens in internment camps. Given the context of the time, he drew many anti-Japanese cartoons which he later realized were not representative of the Japanese culture after he visited that country. In his book, *Horton Hears a Who*, Seuss issues an apology with the line, "A person is a person, no matter how small."

As I continued to read about Dr. Seuss's life, it struck me that this heated debate that one side labels "cancel culture" and the other side calls "racial sensitivity" is generally carried out with very few facts making it into the argument. It made me realize that, more and more, we are not as interested in finding out the facts as we are in finding some piece of information that will damage "the other side" and enable us to prove that "we" are right and "they" are wrong. Rather than spell out the principles we believe in, it seems that these days we tend to look for anything negative to criticize in "the other." And,

since we are human, we will always find something to criticize. It never ends.

So what is the solution to this great divide between us that seems to continue growing? How do we begin to act like a civil society once again? Perhaps the answer lies in **learning to listen to one another** rather than relying on the paid "talking heads" to tell us what it is we believe and how "the other" is not to be trusted. Life isn't simple and it is rarely wrapped up in a neat 15 minute black and white news segment or a short article or opinion piece on Facebook. We are all different, but during this pandemic we have been isolated and connected to our screens to the point that we have forgotten that it is ok to celebrate these differences. Rather, we have been encouraged to reject those who see things differently from us.

I believe that much of our division is also based in stoked fears that "the other" is going to destroy our way of life as we know it. There are certainly corporate and political forces that benefit from people raging at one another and remaining distracted rather than working together to address the problems that beset our planet. We can start to heal, one person at a time, one relationship at a time, if we choose to treat others with respect and dignity. Yes, stand for your truth. And in the same breath, take an interest in learning what is behind the truth of those who oppose you. Take the time to listen to their story. In doing this, we may find a space in the middle where we can learn to work together towards a more just society. Sherry Simon

Peace Offerings

Pope Francis Visits Iraq



The historic trip Pope Francis made to Iraq serves as a living testament to many things. The power of faith, the willingness to embrace self-sacrificing servi-

tude, and a firm commitment to nonviolence and active peacemaking, are just of few of them, and they were all clearly on display for the world to see. I was humbled, and I was also proud.

While the pontiff has been criticized by some for the lack of precaution he appeared to take in some instances, his outreach left no doubt that care for both his flock and for this troubled and divided world takes precedence. And personally, I was struck by what I saw as Pope Francis's determination, despite appearing to be bearing excruciating physical pain the entire time. As I watched him travel to war-torn villages and pay a visit to the country's most revered Muslim cleric, I like to imagine that the pain of mankind's capacity for inhumane behavior must have weighed on him more heavily than either his sciatica, compelling him to undertake this venture despite what it might cost him. And given the country's history, its current instability, and the ages-old struggles of its Christian minority, he had to know it could easily have cost him his life.

Active peacemaking is not for the weak or faint of heart. Risk is an ever-present reality. But



without risk there is no prospect for change. And while whether genuine or lasting change will come of Pope Francis's efforts remains to be seen, one thing is cer-

tain: a man of faith took a risk for the sake of peace. And in so doing, he set an example for us all. Written by George Simon

SAVE THE DATE

PAX CHRISTI LR BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 11

6 pm via Zoom

**All Board Members have been
emailed a Zoom link**

"In our complex and violent world, it is truly a formidable undertaking to work for peace by living the practice of nonviolence. Equally daunting is the aim of achieving full disarmament by reaching people's very souls, building bridges, fighting fear and pursuing open and sincere dialogue. The practice of dialogue is in fact difficult. We must be prepared to forgive. We must not assume that the others are wrong. Instead, accepting our differences and remaining true to our positions, we must seek the good of all; and, after having finally found agreement, we must firmly maintain it."

-Pope Francis

"Peace I leave you, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." John: 14-27