

PEACE OFFERINGS

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

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Pax Christi LR Speaker Series Presents Restore Hope Arkansas: 100 Families Initiative



Paul Chapman

Paul Chapman, Director of Restore Hope Arkansas, and Renie Rule, Restore Hope Arkansas' Director of Community Engagement, will present a program providing information on Restore Hope: 100 Families Initiative on Thursday, October 21 at 6:30 pm via zoom. The following zoom link can be used to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85374986391>.

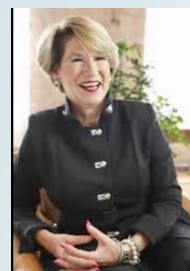
Paul Chapman is an attorney who left a career as an executive at Fellowship Bible Church to oversee Restore Hope Arkansas in 2015 at the request of Governor Hutchinson. At Fellowship, Mr. Chapman oversaw local and global rehabilitation and development efforts as well as directing grants through a member supported fund. He has been personally and professionally engaged in fostering, adopting, and prison reentry since 2005 after leaving a career in financial technology.

Renie Rule has a history of volunteering in the Arkansas Prison System for the past 30 years in numerous ways: founder of Paws in Pris-

on, chair of committee for building the Tucker Max unit chapel. She loves her position with Restore Hope, sharing that this program "takes inmates re-entering our communities and their families from crisis to stability to career."

In 2015, Governor Asa Hutchinson created Restore Hope Arkansas to bridge the recognized gap between government services and struggling to reduce the rate of incarceration, to facilitate a successful re-entry from incarceration to freedom, and to reduce the number of children entering Arkansas' foster care system. In order to meet these needs, Restore Hope Arkansas has developed three specific programs: the 100 Families Alliance, Alternative Sentencing and Re-Entry.

The 100 Families Alliance helps families move from crisis to an environment where they are thriving. The program uses existing community resources in areas that include housing, transportation, employment, education, ad-



Renie Rule

Peace Offerings

diction/recovery, and food stability to support families in coming back together after a member has been incarcerated and released. Case managers coordinate needed services in each of these areas so that families have an opportunity to return to successful and productive lives.

The Alternative Sentencing program works to interrupt destructive patterns of behavior in individuals by engaging them in proven programs that prevent rearrest. Individuals with district court charges are given the choice to enter counseling and education programs in lieu of fines, community service, or additional jail time. The Re-Entry program is a collaborative effort of government agencies, non-profits and the business community working together to provide needed services to incarcerated individuals prior to and after their release.

For more information, listen to [Paul Chapman's explanation of Restore Hope Arkansas' impact in our state.](#)

400 Bottles of Water Delivered to Washington Elementary

On Monday, September 27, Pax Christi Little Rock delivered 400 bottles of water to our peace partner, Booker T. Washington Elementary School. Their principal, Ms. Aleta Branch, let us



Washington Elem.

know during Peace Week that Covid restrictions prohibited them from using their water fountains, so they have been supplying bottled water to their students each day. They were having difficulty keeping up with the demand given increased costs to school.

PCLR Supports Hunger Action Breakfast

Pax Christi Little Rock members attended the



virtual Hunger Action Breakfast, a fundraiser for the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, on Friday, September 17. Although the event was live-streamed due to a spike in Covid cases, PCLR's \$100 donation allowed two breakfasts to be picked up curb-side prior to the event.

The breakfast, co-chaired by John and Renee Bethel, honored "Hunger Heroes," individuals, businesses and organizations who had played a role in the quest to feed hungry Arkansans. The Bethels stated that hunger has soared in Arkansas over the past year due to the pandemic. The state's six Feeding America food banks distributed more than 95 million pounds of food through the charitable food network in 2020. This is an increase of 30 million pounds over the previous year.

September was Hunger Action Month. The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance encourages individuals to begin the habit of doing your part to help alleviate hunger in Arkansas. For more information on contributing to the Alliance, visit their [website](#).

**For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I
was a stranger and you welcomed me.**

Matthew 25:35

Peace Offerings

ARKANSAS PEACE WEEK: TEACHING OUR CHILDREN ABOUT NONVIOLENCE

Pax Christi Little Rock (PCLR) actively promoted the 2021 Arkansas Peace Week (September 19-26) by focusing on educating children

regarding the tenets of peace and non-violence. PCLR began working with elementary schools in Arkansas in 2017, providing them with lesson plan ideas to be used during peace week. Activities such as peace walks, peace art contests, journaling for peace, raising funds for a charity, lessons on

nonviolence, etc. were utilized first at Rockefeller Elementary School in Little Rock. Since that time, PCLR has joined with Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice to provide a [peace curriculum](#) that goes out to school districts throughout Ar-

[illegible]

Washington Schedule



Peace Walk



Washington Elem

kansas every year
during peace week.

This year, PCLR actively supported three peace partner schools (Booker T. Washington Elementary, St. Theresa's Catholic School and Carol Smith Elementary)

who requested to be a significant part of Peace Week events. Booker T. Washington, for example, came up with a peace theme for each day of the week (see above). Angelia Johnson, the Community School Site Coordinator, with the help of the school counselor, Ms. Sproles, organized activities throughout the school. St. Theresa's also organized a peace walk through the school and taught lessons on peace during the week. PCLR provided peace stickers, necklaces and bracelets for all students at St. Theresa's and Washington Elementary.



Kids for Peace



Peace Banners



St. Theresa's Peace

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September Updates for Pax Christi Little Rock Pantry Box Program

Susi Blanco

Happy Fall, Pax Christi Pantry Box Volunteers and Friends of Pax Christi,

After a slow start, September got very busy! With Jericho Way still trying to replace social workers, Settled Souls reached out to other non-profits who had people moving into permanent housing. The Salvation Army connected us with Linda. Over a two week period, Settled Souls helped Linda get settled in with a bed, kitchen and bath supplies as well as some pieces of furniture. She was so grateful for the help and loves being in her new place with so many nice things that helped it feel like home.



We then helped two families back to back. Annie had been with the program at Our House. She has 6 children and 1 grandchild – a full house indeed! Annie works full time as a CNA at a nursing home. The size of her family meant that she was not able to stay at the shelters and instead spent 3 months in hotels and staying with friends until she could get back into housing. When she lost her housing she was able to put some things in storage, so she had a good start when it came time to move back into permanent housing. Settled Souls helped her with mattresses, some items of furniture, as well as kitchen and bath supplies. Given the size of the household, the Pantry Box program doubled the fresh food items for Annie and her family. Annie is so excited to have a place of her own again.



The next family was Shavon and Derrick and their 3 children – including their 10-day old baby! Shavon is employed full time and has been working from home. Right now she's on maternity leave. Shavon plans to register for college classes in the spring, with a goal to becoming a pediatric nurse. Although they had some furniture and things, Settled Souls filled in with what they needed to make things more functional for the children and baby. They are so happy to be together in a place of their own!

Our last move of September was Glenn and Kandice. They have been homeless off and on for the last 3 years. The struggles during this time were made so much more challenging because they did not have stable housing. Glenn has been working with Jericho Way for the past several years. During this past year Glenn has been working towards making a better life for himself and Kandice. Now that they are in permanent housing, Glenn hopes to find more steady employment and to continue to improve their situation.



While just a few families were helped this month, working with Settled Souls we helped 10 children move into permanent housing and get off to a good start! Thank you to all the Pantry Box volunteers and Friends of Pax Christi who support and pray for this ministry!

The October packing meeting was cancelled as we still have an abundance of packed tubs. **Our next packing meeting will be on Sunday, November 7th at 3pm in the dining hall at St. John Center.**

Peace Offerings

“Peace Across Faiths” Kicks Off Arkansas Peace Week



Ellen Brown

Peace Across Faiths is an Interfaith Celebration that has become the traditional kickoff event for Arkansas Peace Week. This year, it was held on Sunday, September 19 at Alsopp Park. The theme for the gathering was “Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World.” Representatives from several faiths spoke about the importance of coming together to address and mend the broken systems that contribute to inequities across race, gender, and socioeconomic class. The program was opened by Ellen Brown from ACPJ. Speakers included Annabelle Tuck from B’nai Israel, Imam Nawaz from the Madina Institute, and Dr. Jay McDaniel from Hendrix College.



Annabelle Tuck

prayer.



Marquis Hunt

Maylee Rollins and Maya Uwaydat are high school students from Pulaski Academy who represented ACPJ and spoke on sustainability issues. Marquis Hunt closed with music and

Pax Christi Little Rock Sponsors APRC: Legacy of Life Banquet 2021

Pax Christi Little Rock donated \$500 to sponsor a table at the Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center’s Legacy of Life 2021 Banquet. The fundraiser will be held both in person and virtually this year due

to Covid concerns. The banquet will take place on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at Embassy Suites from 7-9 pm.

St. Joseph’s Helpers is a Catholic, non-profit pregnancy resource center located in Little Rock. They serve women, children and families who are experiencing difficult pregnancy decisions. Arkansas Pregnancy Resource Center is a ministry of St. Joseph’s Helpers and is currently located at 2 Office Park Drive in Little Rock. APRC offers the following services: Medical-grade pregnancy tests, proof of pregnancy, limited obstetrical ultrasound, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, limited medical health assessment, community and medical referrals, and on-site or online classes to meet specific pregnancy needs. APRC serves as a resource to assist women in making the best decision for their pregnancies.

LEGACY OF LIFE 2021



Peace Offerings

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK JOINS AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT PROJECT

The Pax Christi Little Rock board made the decision in September to work with Catholic Charities and Christ the King Catholic Church to sponsor an Afghan family that has evacuated to the United States following the return of the Taliban. According to Governor Asa Hutchinson, approximately 98 Afghan families will be resettled in Arkansas with assistance from faith-based organizations and local sponsors. Reportedly, half of these families will be resettled by the Diocese of Little Rock's Refugee Resettlement Office through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's Migration and Refugee Services.

At this point, eight members of Pax Christi Little Rock comprise a "Care Team." This group, with significant assistance from Sophia Said and the Madina Institute, will be responsible for all personal connection, orientation, and teaching of cultural norms. For example, Pax Christi members will meet the family at the airport, provide them with a warm Halal meal, take them to their residence and spend time over several weeks/months going over safety lists, cultural expectations, shopping, bus lines, enrollment in school, medical needs, job applications, obtaining driver's license, etc. Members at Madina Institute will work with Pax Christi to provide supportive community, translators, and orientation to the culture.

Our sponsor partner will be Christ the King Catholic Church (CTK). CTK's mission director, Betty Jo King, will coordinate all financial and logistical efforts including location and provision of temporary housing, furnishings, food, clothing, and any immediate financial needs of the family. The mission is working with many CTK parishioners who are donating items that the family will need upon arrival.

At this point, it is not clear when the families will arrive. There have already been significant delays for the 50,000+ Afghans being processed here in the United States at different military bases due to a measles outbreak and the associated need for an extended quarantine. The first families are expected to arrive in Arkansas sometime in October.

Perhaps one of the most gratifying aspects of this project even before the families arrive is the bond forming between several faith communities in Central Arkansas. Representatives of various faiths are meeting via zoom weekly with Sophia Said of Madina Institute to learn more about Afghan norms and culture. Sponsor teams are also meeting with ESL teachers and other experts to facilitate communication. This project is pulling the faiths together as we work to house these families.

To donate to Catholic Charities of Arkansas' Refugee Resettlement program, go [here](#) and select "refugee resettlement" in the drop-down menu.

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi International Statement on Afghanistan: A Call for Nonviolence and Accountability

Pax Christi International and its member organisations are deeply concerned about the situation in Afghanistan where Taliban forces have seized control of the capital and the rest of the country.

Harsh rule by the Taliban two decades ago and [atrocities committed in recent weeks](#) in areas under their control have intensified the fear and sense of abandonment. This is especially true for those who have served the government, civil society organisations who have painstakingly worked for reforms, and women who have taken huge risks associated with defending their rights to education, free expression, and participation. Academics, writers, journalists, and other media workers; members of ethnic minorities and Shia Muslims, in particular Hazaras, are also at great risk.

As an international peace organisation with a deep commitment to nonviolence, we are heartbroken by what decades of war and violence have wrought. Immediate attention to physical and human rights protections for the most vulnerable; accountability for atrocities; and diplomatic efforts to engage the Taliban at every level—from the local to the international, as difficult and often unreliable as those may be, are essential. But a deep reflection on the failure of war and the need to invest in effective tools for building just peace must also be undertaken nationally and internationally.

Urgently, we call on the Taliban to remember and to act in accordance with your own

dignity as human beings, to honor what you have promised—not to take a path of retaliation and to create a secure environment. We implore you to reject abusive power, to respect the equal rights of your Afghan sisters and brothers and to recognise in particular the great capacity of women to contribute to the wellbeing of society.

With equal resolve, we call on the international community, particularly the United States, working with the United Nations and other multilateral bodies to:

- ensure human rights protections and pro-

SAVE THE DATE

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK SPEAKER SERIES

Afghan Resettlement Project

November 18, 2021

6:30 PM VIA ZOOM

**ZOOM LINK TO BE
ANNOUNCED**

Peace Offerings

vide for the safe evacuation of vulnerable Afghan populations;

- provide for visa/immigration accommodations for Afghanis everywhere, including in Europe and the United States;
- provide immediate aid for neighboring countries that will inevitably host Afghani refugees and coordinated protocols for prompt resettlement to third countries for people particularly at risk;
- increase significantly and negotiate reliable access for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, including emergency food and medical aid as needed; and
- ensure the participation of Afghan civil society groups in making decisions about humanitarian aid and the resettlement of refugees.

In particular, we call on the United Nations to remain fully engaged in the crisis, including at the Security Council level, undertaking efforts to negotiate or coerce Taliban respect for international law and standards of decent behavior, including in reality on the ground throughout Afghanistan. Careful thought should be given to what nonviolent strategies for the protection of vulnerable communities and, in particular of women and girls, could be applied in Afghanistan now. The UN Human Rights Council and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) should be prepared to collect information and publicly report evidence of serious violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict.

Finally, as a faith-based organisation, PCI calls on all people of goodwill to pray for the people of Afghanistan and to engage in every effort to end the suffering that the Afghan people have endured through decades of unending war.

SAVE THE DATE

PAX CHRISTI LR BOARD MEETING

via Zoom

Thursday, October 14

6 pm

Zoom link sent to Board
members

PCUSA Names Little Rock Site for 2022 National Council Meeting



Pax Christi USA has named Little Rock, Arkansas as the site for their October 2022 National Council Meeting. This event will take place October 7-9, 2022. Bishop-President John Stowe made this

recommendation at a recent council meeting, and the council immediately approved the location. The Pax Christi USA staff will work with Pax Christi Little Rock board members to organize the logistical details of the meeting. This designation is a great honor for Pax Christi Little Rock and will certainly lead to greater connection with our national organization.

Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good. Romans 12:21