



PEACE OFFERINGS

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- Tamara Tahat
- Father Warren Harvey (Chaplain)

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

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PCLR February Speaker Series: “Sustaining Little Rock”

Brittany Nichols and Lennie Massanelli



Brittany Nichols

Brittany Nichols is the Sustainability Educator and Lennie Massanelli is the Sustainability Officer for the Little Rock Sustainability Office.

They will be presenting information regarding the various programs instituted by this office that help research and develop strategies and innovations to promote environmental and economic health and prosperity within the City. This presentation will be held via zoom as part of the February Pax Christi Little Rock Speaker Series on Thursday, February 17 at 6:30 PM CT. To join, you may go to this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84171317811>. The Little Rock Sustainability Office provides education, leadership and vision for current and future citizens, organizations, and departments of the City of Little Rock to sustain our environment, enhance our economy and achieve social equity. The different types of programs to be considered within this office include but are not limited to

the preservation and enhancement of green space, the reduction in City energy consumption, the development



Lennie Massanelli

of community design recommendations and tools, the assurance of access to healthy food sources, and the construction of green buildings and other infrastructure to provide utilitarian use while minimizing environmental impacts.

PAX CHRISTI LITTLE ROCK SPEAKER SERIES

presents

“SUSTAINING LITTLE ROCK”

**BRITTANY NICHOLS
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATOR
LENNIE MASSANELLI
SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17
6:30 PM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84171317811>

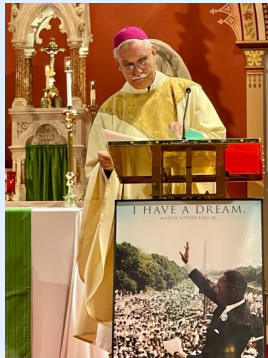
Peace Offerings

PAX CHRISTI LR MEMBERS ATTEND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MASS AT ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL



The Cathedral

Bishop Anthony Taylor celebrated the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial mass at the Cathedral of St. Andrew's on Saturday afternoon at 5 pm. The weather was cold and snowy, but that did not prevent several Pax Christi Little Rock members from attending. The mass was co-celebrated by Fr. Warren Harvey, Fr. Leon Ngandu, and Deacon Richard Papini. The entire fifth year Diocese of Little Rock deaconate class attended the mass as well as the Knights of Peter Claver and members of the Diocesan Council for Black Catholics.



Bishop Taylor



Fr. Harvey

Amazing music was provided by a combined choir that included members from St. Augustine, St. Bartholomew and St. Peter Catholic communities. Additionally, Jeremiah Herman of St. Bartholomew



Presentation of Gifts

Catholic Church sang an inspirational solo that got the congregation actively involved in the spirit of the mass. Bishop Taylor's homily focused on the need for conversion of hearts in our country around issues of racism. He stated: "This human dimension is what is missing in our national discourse—hence the need to insist repeatedly that Black lives really do matter, because as a country we don't act that way. Look at the glaring disparities in access to health care and medical outcomes, in education, in law enforcement, in employment and indeed almost every other area of life."



Jeremiah can sing!



Ms. Claudette Votor

Following mass, Mrs. Claudette Votor from St. Augustine's Catholic Church was awarded the Daniel Rudd award by Bishop Taylor for her outstanding leadership in her parish and community.

Peace Offerings

JANUARY 6, 2022: A TIME OF RECONCILIATION AND HOPE



A flame is symbolic of transformation, and that was the hope of Caroline Stevenson as she planned a meeting of peacemakers in Little Rock at the first of January,

2022. Initially, Caroline hoped that members of Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice (ACPJ), Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), Braver Angels, Pax Christi Little Rock (PCLR), and other interested parties could come together on the World Day of Peace (January 1) for the second year in a row to share dreams of a nonviolent, unified and reconciled 2022. However, there was heavy rain throughout the afternoon and evening, so it was not possible to hold an outdoor gathering. Planners of the event then set the date for January 6. The thought was not to protest the insurrection that occurred at the Capitol on that date last year. Rather, it was to create a different energy, one of unity and peacekeeping with one another and the world.

Several representatives from each organization shared their vision for 2022 and the different ways they intended to



reinforce nonviolence and reconciliation in the world. Mary Hunt, President of Pax Christi LR, shared this excerpt from a piece written by Amanda

Gorman called *New Day*: "May this be the day we come together. Mourning, we come to mend. Withered, we



come to weather, Torn, we come to tend. Battered, we come to better. Tethered by this year of yearning, we are learning that though we weren't ready for this, we have been readied by it. We steadily vow that no matter how we are weighed down, we must always pave a way forward. This hope is our door, our portal. Even if we never get back to normal, someday we can venture



beyond it, to leave the known and take the first steps. So let us not return to what was normal, but reach toward what is next. What was

cursed, we will cure. What was plagued, we will prove pure. Where we tend to argue we will try to agree, those fortunes we forswore, now the future we foresee. Where we weren't aware, we're now awake; Those moments we missed are now moments we make, the moments we meet, and our hearts, once all together beaten, now all together beat."

So this meeting of peacemakers on January 6, now a day of peace, shared a new vision for our country and our world. It is a vision of strength and unity in the face of adversity. We do not search for a path back to the "way things used to be," but strive for growth and new connections in our ever-informed future.

Peace Offerings

Christ the King Catholic Church and Pax Christi LR Work Together to Prepare Home for Afghan Family



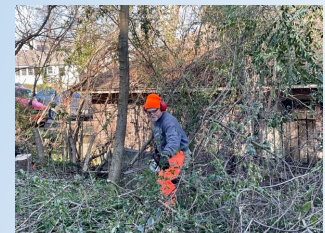
Over the past two months, members of Christ the King Catholic Church (CTK) and Pax Christi Little Rock (PCLR) have been working together to prepare a home for the Afghan family of seven they began sponsoring upon their arrival on December 6, 2021. Betty Jo King, Mission Director at CTK, heads up the Logistics team that takes care of financial issues as well as requirements regarding appointments, social services, donations, etc. PCLR has put



together a 20-person Care team that provides all of the transportation to school/appointments, stays updated as to the needs of the family, and responds to any problems that arise on a daily basis. Over the course of the past two months, there has been constant communication between these two teams and folks



have begun to volunteer to take on tasks regardless of their team affiliation. For example, both teams were present along with the father of the family for the outdoor cleanup day scheduled Saturday, January 22. Team members pruned, raked, cleaned up the yard, and cleared vines from the house. Volunteers talked afterwards and decided to get some bigger equipment over at a later date to grade and completely take out the vegetation that had taken over the backyard. CTK brought in professionals to replace the ductwork, improve the bathroom and repair drywall inside the house. CTK and Pax Christi members also worked together with the father of the family to paint several rooms of



the house on January 29. Members cleaned windows, completely cleaned all the rooms and appliances, vacuumed and steam-cleaned the carpet, preparing

Peace Offerings



the house for the CTK Settled Souls team to move in furniture on Tuesday, February 1 in the morning.

Settled Souls provided a great deal of the furniture and CTK parishioners also donated furnishings as well as accessories such as dishes, blankets, kitchenware, bedding, vacuum, lawn mower and a washer/dryer. That afternoon, the family moved from their temporary quarters outside the city to their permanent home in town.

Several volunteers helped move the family with their belongings to the house and then stayed for an orientation to the home facilitated by Dr. Ali Kahn, a member of Madina mosque. Now that the family is settled in their home, team members will continue to work with them on issues such as continued education, learning the bus system, applying for jobs, dealing with ongoing medical issues, learning to budget/pay bills, and learning the new customs here in the US. The volunteer base contin-



ues to grow, with more and more people signing on and finding ways to support this beautiful family as they continue to settle into their new country.

HOME

WARSAN SHIRE

no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark. you only run for the border when you see the whole city running as well. your neighbours running faster than you, the boy you went to school with who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory is holding a gun bigger than his body, you only leave home when home won't let you stay. no one would leave home unless home chased you, fire under feet, hot blood in your belly. it's not something you ever thought about doing, and so when you did- you carried the anthem under your breath, waiting until the airport toilet to tear up the passport and swallow, each mouthful of paper making it clear that you would not be going back. you have to understand, no one put their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land. who would choose to spend days and nights in the stomach of a truck unless the miles travelled meant more than the journey

SAVE THE DATE

PAX CHRISTI LR BOARD MEETING

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10
6-7:30**

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

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi LR Pantry Mission Updates: January, 2022

As many of you know, Mandy Davis has moved on from Jericho Way but will continue to be involved in her work with the homeless as she starts her new job with Woodland International Research group. We will miss you, Mandy! Pax Christi LR Pantry Box team welcomes the new director of Jericho Way, James Evans-Hammond. We look forward to meeting and working with him to support the efforts of those who are doing their best to escape the complicated cycle of homelessness.



Earnest

In January, the Pax Christi Little Rock Food Pantry team provided start up pantries for three families housed by Settled Souls. Our first move was settling in Earnest, who hasn't had his own place since 2011. He slept under a carport in his truck for 10 months before getting this apartment through Metropolitan Housing Alliance (MHA). Earnest worked many years in a bicycle factory and has also worked in construction. He is currently 70 years old and was so grateful to get a bed and off of the floor! Earnest repeatedly expressed his gratitude and love for all the help, giving out many "Thank you Jesus and Hallelujahs!" upon which we all agreed- God is good. Many thanks to the Settled Souls move team and Sherry Simon for helping with move and providing the initial



Earnest and Move Team

food pantry.

Our second move occurred on January 20 when we helped settle in Carl. He has had a difficult life, having been homeless a good part of it. He said that he is tired of living that way and wanted to work to make a change. Carl is currently looking for a job and hopes to have a position secured soon. Carl was very grateful for the help in making his new place feel more like a home and being provided with fresh, canned and staple foods to get his pantry started. We all hope that his housing will be a change agent and supportive hand to help him move in the right direction for the long term. Many thanks to Mary Dandurand for providing nourishing food for Carl.



Carl and Move Team

On January 28, PCLR helped settle in Tasha and her two children. While she had a head start on many furniture items, Settled Souls helped fill in with beds, living room, dining room and some kitchen items. Tasha was living in a trailer when the new owners told all tenants they had two months to get out or purchase the trailer. This decision led to her losing her housing. Tash volunteers at both Our House and Jericho Way and is so grateful to have a place to call her own again as well as the help to make it more comfortable. Many thanks to Mary Devine for taking the initial food pantry and helping with the move!



Tasha and Family

(Information provided by Lindsey Taggart and Stephanie Byers of Settled Souls).

Peace Offerings

**SAVE *the*
DATE**

**Sunday,
April 24, 2022
2:00 PM**

**HEIFER INTERNATIONAL
1 WORLD AVENUE,
LITTLE ROCK
BEACON OF PEACE & HOPE
120 RIVERFRONT DRIVE
NORTH LITTLE ROCK**

**8th ANNUAL
PILGRIMAGE
For PEACE**



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

www.pilgrimageforpeace.com www.facebook.com/PilgrimageforPeaceLR

A PRAYER FOR PILGRIMS

God of the guiding star, the bush that blazes

SHOW US YOUR WAY

God of the stormy seas, the bread that nourishes

TEACH US YOUR TRUTH

God of the still, small voice, the wind that blows where it chooses

FILL US WITH LIFE

God of the elements, of our inward and outward journeys

SET OUR FEET ON YOUR ROAD TODAY

MAY GOD BLESS US WITH A SAFE JOURNEY

MAY THE ANGELS AND SAINTS TRAVEL WITH US

MAY WE LIVE THIS DAY IN JUSTICE AND JOY. AMEN.

1972
2022



**Pax
Christi USA**

Weaving Threads of Peace for 50 Years

Peace Offerings

A STORY OF INCLUSION: FINDING GOD IN UNFAMILIAR PLACES

Sherry Simon

The following is more of a journal entry than an article. It describes only a small portion of the many interactions over the past two months, with the Afghan family we are helping to sponsor, that have contributed to changes that I don't yet know how to define in my heart and in my life. I have purposely kept the names of these family members anonymous to protect them. I wish I could introduce you to each of them because they are very important to me. In addition to their friendship, they show me every day now what can happen when we heed Jesus's command to "welcome the stranger." This inclusion of someone so very different from ourselves in our lives has led to an encounter with angels and resulted in an ongoing transformation in our own hearts.

I didn't know it would be so hard. It sounded wonderful, this idea of supporting a family who was fleeing Afghanistan in the face of an imminent Taliban takeover and helping them make a new home here in the United States. I did not understand at all what that would really look like or how it would drastically alter my day-to-day life in what I now humorously call "the bubble." My romantic

ideals regarding this whole endeavor came crashing down to earth very quickly when I realized how difficult it was going to be to communicate with this family. They speak both Dari and Pashto, but they are not literate in either language as the family came from a small village with minimal opportunities for education. Unfortunately, there are no online or mechanical translators available that could bridge the gap. And, there are very few human interpreters of these languages in Little Rock, Arkansas. We have worn out the few translators we have, calling on them whenever we have more in-depth concepts to explain like budgeting, the expectations of their child's school, the school/city bus system, transportation to and purpose of medical appointments, explanation of prescriptions, differences in cultural norms, to name a few. I thank God everyday for Donnal Walter, a brilliant physician who heads up the Sponsor Team for St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. He actually developed a verbal English-Pashto translator that has a data base of about 50 common words. This link enabled me to learn several words in Pashto so that I could communicate basic ideas. More im-

Peace Offerings

portantly, I think this family saw me trying to learn their language and it became sort of a game where we would trade Pashto and English words with one another.

During these first weeks, I found myself constantly anxious about the family's welfare. My mind would run rampant with possible disasters that might occur. These horrific scenarios would play out often in the middle of the night. For example, there was a lake by the cabin where the family stayed initially, and I was very worried that the children (ages 7, 5, 4, 3, and 6 months) would wander down there without being seen. In Afghanistan, we discovered very quickly that parents do not supervise their children the way we do here. They are given fairly free rein and the older (meaning 5-7 years old) children often care for their younger brothers and sisters. There is more a sense of community responsibility in Afghanistan, but this family was suddenly alone much of the time and definitely out of their element.

Because of the isolated nature of our family's temporary home, George and I (as team leaders on the Care Team) felt "obligated" to visit with them often through the month of December. Take note of the word obligated, because initially that is how I felt-

obligated. Many of our other team members were out of town and most had their own pre-set Christmas obligations. You see, this family came to Little Rock unexpectedly on December 6, so even though our team had prepared for weeks, we could not have foreseen the scheduling of their arrival. Given their newness to this culture, we visited almost daily, checking on what needs they might have, playing with the children and sitting in a circle drinking tea that was offered hospitably at every occasion.

There was a very important exchange between G. (mom) and myself over the course of our conversations around the tea circle that led to a change from obligation to deepening friendship. During the first couple of weeks, G. would pre-add the sugar to the tea in the kettle. Each cup of tea was so sweet, probably containing about 5-6 tsp of sugar. I don't really need that much sugar, so I would take very small sips and generally not even finish half of my cup. I think G. paid attention to this. After about two weeks, she began to ask, "Sugar?" and I realized she hadn't added the sugar to the kettle. I would then say no and she would look at me like I was crazy, but she didn't add the sugar. I would then proceed to drink 2-3 cups of tea. Then, about three weeks ago, she looked at me with a big grin and asked, "Sugar?" I grinned back at her, then laughed aloud and said, "No." I

Peace Offerings

know this sounds weird, but this was a clear sign of a big turning point in my relationship with this family.

I wish I had the words to explain what those first weeks were like. There were so many moments of feeling overwhelmed, inadequate to the task, and completely responsible for any problems that arose. I was so neurotic! After several nights with very little sleep, I realized that something in me needed to change if I was going to continue in relationship with this family. The worries were far outweighing those moments of grace.

Then, several things changed all at once. I think one of the most important of these was the support of many friends (more angels) who volunteered their time, effort and care. We ended up with a list of 20 “transportation volunteers” who all worked together to get M. to school, A. to ESL classes, and different family members to doctor’s appointments. It is miraculous how people have come together and each one has found the perfect way to contribute to this family’s welfare. And the list keeps growing! Once CTK found a permanent home, we began to have workdays to get the house ready for occupancy. All of us talked everyday making plans and offering to pick up the slack for one another. Suddenly, I realized my mistake in thinking that I had to do everything perfectly. Through my friends, I was able to re-

member what the Holy Spirit tried to teach me that first night the family arrived. GOD’S GOT THIS. I realized that all I have to do, with the help of my friends, is show up and “do small things with great love” (St. Theresa) one day at a time.

Now, I can tell you that I really look forward to visits with this family. We laugh and somehow, even though the language barrier remains, we find ways with emojis, pictures on our phones, charades and broken sentences to communicate pretty well with one another on the day-to-day things. We are introducing one another to our extended families. A’s, G’s, and M’s (7-yr-old in first grade) English are improving by leaps and bounds.

What I notice now is how my thoughts and feelings have turned from anxiety to an incredible respect for this family that has risked so much over these past months and continues to push forward in this new culture. They do not seem afraid. They’re excited! And I am in awe of what they have faced and how much they have trusted all of us to help settle them into this new space. All of these angels continue to teach me although I do not yet know where this particular path will lead. Perhaps all I really know is how wonderful it is to share tea and laughter with my new friend who is still introducing herself to me each day. And with each new gift she gives of herself, I can feel my own heart changing in lovely, yet unfamiliar ways.