

PEACE OFFERINGS

Pax Christi Little Rock Board Members

- Mary Hunt (President)
- Sherry Simon (V. Pres.)
- Sandee Haslauer (Secretary)
- Lee Bass (Chairperson)
- Al Adams
- Sr. Iliana Aponte
- Ingrid Castrillo
- Serge Nganou
- Jan Pipkin
- Rosalyn Pruitt
- Tim Pruitt
- George Simon
- Father Warren Harvey

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

Contact Information

- **Website:**
www.paxchristilittlerock.org
- **Facebook:**
Pax Christi Little Rock
- **Address:**
3 Noyal Drive
Little Rock, AR 72223
- **Phone:**
(501) 258-8653
- **Email:**
paxchristilr@gmail.com

Pax Christi Little Rock to Screen the Documentary *My Tree*



Pax Christi Little Rock will screen the documentary, *My Tree*, on Thursday, November 16 at 6:30 in Fitzgerald Hall on the St. John's Campus (2500 N. Tyler St.). There will also be a zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82560436807>

for those unable to attend in person.

My Tree is the third document in a three-part series

that Pax Christi Little Rock is presenting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The video follows Jason Sherman's journey to find the tree that was planted in his name in Israel many years earlier. When he discovers that it stands on the remains of a Palestinian village that was destroyed in 1967, he embarks on another journey—to determine his responsibility in helping to cover up the destruction of Palestinian homes in the region.

All are welcome to attend this screening and admission is free. A collection will be taken up following this event to aid all civilians suffering from the ongoing war in Gaza and Israel.

A Prayer for Peace in Our War-Torn World

Oh gracious God, Thank you for all the gifts you so generously offer us each day. It is only through your grace that we draw each breath and experience the beauty of your Creation.

In this moment, we pray specifically for all those living in places devastated by war, whether it be civil war, terrorist insurgencies, drug wars, or invasions by other countries. Particularly, we hold up the people of Gaza and Israel, Ukraine and Russia, Yemen, Uganda, Syria, Tanzania, Nigeria, Mozambique, Mali, Libya, Ethiopia, Chad, Benin, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia, Togo, Myanmar, Niger, Afghanistan,

Peace Offerings

Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Libya, and Mauritania. A world filled with war that we so often know nothing about. Bless the poor in spirit who are living in such conflicted and hate-filled spaces in the midst of your creation.

Let us pray that we as a world can together find a path to peace through your grace, as we have not been able to find that path on our own. So, together we pray:

A Prayer for Peace

How do we pray for peace from half a world away?
How can words salve and soothe real wounds,
Assuage real fears, Wipe tears from real eyes?
God of endless compassion, transform our prayers
From words into bridges, that span the distances
Between us, uniting our hearts in yours.
Every time we turn our keys in a lock,
May we remember all who are losing their homes.
Every time we step into our cars,
May we remember all who are having to flee.
Every time we embrace our children,
May we remember all who are trying to shield theirs from war.
May our besieged sisters and brothers
Be drawn into the arms of the suffering Christ,
And may our cry be heard as one voice,
Ringing out from every corner of the earth:
God of endless mercy, grant us peace.
Amen.

— Cameron Bellm



JESUITS

spirit &
verse

As peacemakers, we must resist all the powers of war and destruction and proclaim that peace is the divine gift offered to all who affirm life. Resistance means saying “No” to all the forces of death, wherever they may be. Henri Nouwen

Peace Offerings

Pax Christi Little Rock October Food Pantry Notes



Ms. Sarah and 3 children

On October 24, Pax Christi members provided food and helped Settled Souls move in furniture for Ms. Sarah and her 3 kids. She recently received a housing voucher to help her get back on her feet with her family. Sarah is active in the family stability program at Our House. She

was so grateful for the assistance in becoming more stable in her home situation. Thanks to Mary Hunt for bringing food.



Mary Helps Load



Ms. Toni

On October 31, Pax Christi provided food and helped Mike's Settled Souls team settle in Toni. She had been homeless since last March due to loss of her previous job. Toni is currently working with FedEx and is

excited to be back on her feet, having a place to call home with a comfortable bed, couch and desk that she can use to work remotely from home. Thanks to Sherry Simon for bringing food for Toni.



Sherry Brings in Food



Leslie Unpacks

Echoes from Elaine: The Long Shadow of a Massacre



Mosaic Templar Cultural Center

On the evening of November 5, Pax Christi Little Rock members attended the documentary in the making, *Echoes from Elaine: The Long Shadow of a Massacre* at the Mosaic Templar Cultural Center. The executive producers are Drs. Jerrilyn and Chris Jones. Following the screening of excerpts from the film, there was a conversation with the filmmakers, Franziska Blome and Llewellyn Smith and the current mayor of Elaine, Arkansas, Lisa Gilbert. The most memorable message delivered in the documentary and reinforced by the filmmakers as well as Ms. Gilbert was the necessity of reconciliation following the 1919 senseless massacre of over 200 African Americans in Elaine and the surrounding areas. The mass shooting was triggered when black sharecroppers were meeting in a church and trying to unionize. White landowners sent men to investigate the union meeting and a shooting broke out that triggered a bloodbath that lasted for days. Some Elaine residents were also captured, labeled insurrectionists, jailed, and tortured.



Drs. Chris and Jerrilyn



Llewellyn Smith

As Catholics understand, the first step in reconciliation is sharing the truth so that wounds can heal. The truth of the Elaine massacre was suppressed for two generations, creating intergenerational trauma that continues to affect everyone in the town to this day. This documentary suggests a healing response to racist acts of murder committed in our state.



Documentary Panel

Peace Offerings

PCUSA Launches 2023 ‘Bread Not Stones Campaign’ Focusing on Urging Bishops Across the US to Support Efforts to Re-Direct Military Funding

In the preamble of Jesus’ teaching of the “Golden Rule,” he poses this question, “*Which of you, if your child asks for bread, will give them a stone?*” (Matthew 7:9). This question frames the moral basis of Pax Christi USA’s Bread Not Stones campaign.

In 2022, PCUSA reimagined Bread Not Stones, a campaign that had been launched back in 1999, aimed at redirecting the obscene amount of money the U.S. invests in military spending to the challenges presented by the pandemic, the climate crisis, racial oppression, and economic injustice. [Find the initial statement launching this campaign here.](#)

In 2023, the Bread Not Stones campaign is addressing the fact that too many Church and religious leaders of all stripes have remained silent in response to the scandal of unfettered military spending. Pax Christi’s prophetic witness has never been solely directed to the political establishment, although we continually lobby our elected officials. From the beginning, the focus of our speaking truth to power has been directed at our own faith community and our own religious establishment. Not to condemn, judge or vilify, but to challenge and insist on a commitment to the Church’s social vision and to an authentic witness to the Gospel of Jesus.

The teachings of the Church are clear regarding the issue of military spend-

ing and funding human need. From the beginning of the modern era of Catholic Social Teaching, the Church has warned about the dangers of unfettered spending on weapons and preparations for war.

As St. Pope John Paul II reminds us in his 1991 encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*,

“Enormous resources can be made available by disarming the huge military machines which were constructed for the conflict between East and West. ... But it will be necessary above all to abandon a mentality in which the poor – as individuals and as people – are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others have produced.”

The primary focus of our 2023 Bread Not Stones Campaign is the Catholic bishops of the United States. We will continue to lobby Congress, but this year our advocacy will be directed to our bishops across the country. Specifically, we will invite our local bishops to add their names to the [Pax Christi USA Bread Not Stones bishop sign-on statement](#).

By inviting our bishops to add their names to this sign-on statement, we hope to begin a larger conversation in the Church around the connections between issues of war and peace, nuclear deterrence, nonviolence, and economic justice.

Peace Offerings

Bishop Anthony Taylor Supports Bread Not Stones



On October 26, Bishop Anthony Taylor added his name to the signatures of Bishops across the country supporting PCUSA's Bread Not

Stones statement that will be sent to leaders in the US government. This campaign requests that some portion of military spending be redirected to fund human needs.

It is so important that our religious leaders provide a clear moral vision about those things that make for genuine peace and security for our nation and the world. Bishop Taylor supports Catholic Social teachings which include guidelines on military spending and working for peace. Catholic teachings declare that militarism, especially the

expansion of weapons of mass destruction, undermines the human family, and Pope Francis has said that peace can only

flourish where there are abundant investments in diplomacy and basic human needs. And yet over half of this year's discretionary budget goes toward funding warfare despite the deterioration of poor and working class people's lives. Thank you, Bishop Taylor, for standing up for your Catholic faith and providing moral direction for the people in your diocese despite the political pressure that has led to the US funding wars across the world.



Bishop Taylor Signs BNS

Dear Friends,

On December 5, we will celebrate the 7th anniversary of Pax Christi Little Rock's first meeting back in 2016. I will never forget that day. Looking back, as I've been doing a lot of over the past few weeks, it is absolutely amazing to see all that the Holy Spirit has accomplished through your efforts. I'm so proud to be a part of such an awesome group of people who understand the importance of promoting nonviolence, peace, and social justice in our world.

With that said, I need to let you know that this will be the final newsletter that I write for Pax Christi Little Rock. I appreciate so much the support and encouragement you have given me with each of these 80 issues. When I think of how all this started with a two page letter with horrendous mistakes throughout as I had no idea what I was doing, I am grateful to each

person who shared their wisdom and assisted me along the way.

The Pax Christi Little Rock board is very resourceful, growing stronger every day, and I am sure that they will find a person to take on the communication of all their important projects. It seems time for a younger person to step in and share their perspective on our ever-changing world.

Although I am discontinuing my work on the newsletter as well as my official position on the board, I plan to remain active in many of the different projects that Pax Christi Little Rock has initiated. I love working with all of you. You mean a great deal to me. Each of you has come together within this group to make a very bright light that is shining in an increasingly dark world.

Peace and all good,
Sherry

Peace Offerings

PCLR Members Attend Spiritual Retreat at Subiaco

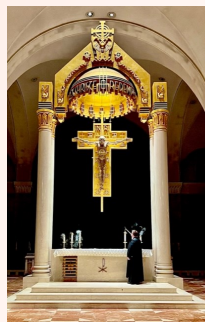


Pax Christi Members

Over the weekend of November 10-12, many Pax Christi Little Rock members attended a retreat led by Cackie Upchurch on *Jesus and the Art of Storytelling* at Coury House on the grounds of Subiaco Abbey. Cackie was a founding member of Pax Christi Little Rock. She is also a renowned theologian, a former director of Little Rock Scripture Study, and editor of the Little Rock Catholic Study Bible. This is the second retreat that Pax Christi members have attended with Cackie as the director in the past two years. Phyllis Baltz and the Hot Springs Bible study group organized both of these retreats.

Over the course of three

Over the weekend of November 10-12, many Pax Christi Little Rock members attended a retreat led by



Subiaco Abbey



Cackie Upchurch

days, Cackie did an outstanding job of interpreting many of the different parables that Christ shared with his disciples. Cackie noted that when Jesus uses parables, there is always more than just a moral of the story. There is always an element of surprise. A parable elicits a strong response because it holds a paradox within the story. For example, she talked about the parable of the widow's mite. The widow gave all she had to the temple, which was actually supposed to be caring for the widows and the poor. Cackie noted, in context, that the temple was not left standing and noted that this might have been a remonstrance to the Pharisees for not caring for the poor. She said these earthly things will not remain for eternity, so perhaps we are called to invest in one another.



Beautiful Grounds



Peace Offerings

REFLECTIONS ON PAX CHRISTI

George Simon



Pax Christi is Latin for the Peace of Christ. And these days, that name means something much deeper to me than it did when I first became acquainted with the organization bearing its name several years ago.

The Gospels have Jesus often offering others the traditional “peace” greeting common to his culture. But they also tell of him offering the particular, personal peace that he so deeply harbored in his soul. It’s described as an unshakable peace, defying “all understanding.” And it’s a peace he was able to maintain through many trials, temptations, tribulations, rejections, rebukes,

scorns, and abandonments—even while bleeding and suffocating to death on the cross.

I’ve contemplated this kind of peace for several years now, its nature becoming progressively clearer to me. And I’ve prayed for this kind of peace to reign in my own heart. And what I’ve come to appreciate is that none of us can find this peace on our own. It comes only by grace. But we have to be open to it. And it comes in strange ways, too, so we have to be open to how God ordains that we receive it. That kind of openness only comes with a genuine leap of faith—a leap that can truly change everything.

I love the Pax Christi organization for many reasons. I love its model of prayer, study, and action. When our actions are deeply contemplated and informed through intimate connections with the Divine, just a bit more justice and right-

Peace Offerings

eousness has a chance of making its way into this troubled world of our. And I love the sweet souls I have met through Pax Christi. Souls who, like me, seem to have found in our organization and in our many activities together a powerful pathway for spiritual growth.

Over the years Pax Christi Little Rock has afforded me many blessings. But by far the biggest blessing has been a radical change in my relationship with the Lord. I hear his words in my head constantly. And I continue to find deeper and deeper meaning in them. But perhaps most importantly, I've come to take Jesus **at his word** and *more seriously than ever before*. It's one thing to profess his saving kingship with our lips. But it's quite another to heartfully embrace him as the ultimate authority on how to navigate this life and prepare myself for the life to come—a life both promised and paid for by him personally, and that I know I could never possibly merit on my own.

It's a matter of the heart to accept that Jesus is indeed, *the*

way, *the* truth, and *the* life. As naturally stubborn and "stiff-necked" as we tend to be, in our hearts it's too easy to see him as an idealist, agreeing with him "in principle," but regarding that principle as impossible, or at least impractical to really put into practice. The world simply doesn't operate that way, we insist. And of course it doesn't. But that is largely because we are too faithless to heed his commands. Still, if we didn't have a choice about things, we couldn't possibly be free to genuinely love. And for me, that's what Pax Christi is ultimately all about: the internal peace that comes from taking the leap—taking him seriously and at his word—and becoming freer to love and love abundantly in the process, no matter how the world, in its seemingly endless brokenness, tries to convince us to do otherwise.

Pax Christi Little Rock has been a remarkable way to help prepare me for what the Lord has promised life can be if we would but truly trust *Him*, Pure Love come in human form, so that we might recognize Love's nature. And for that, and for the peace it's helped bring to my heart, I am truly grateful.