



Fertile Ground

Journal of Peace House, the Kalamazoo Quaker/Catholic Worker

Issue 10

November 2013

Peace House News

by Molly Mechtenberg

Next summer I'm going to wear a pedometer. Yes, that's right, a pedometer that counts how many steps are taken in a given day. My son Amos, now in 4th grade, is wearing a pedometer at school for a class project. Every day they add up how many steps the whole class has taken, with the goal that they will "walk" to different places in the U.S. Well, last summer if you added the steps everyone took at Peace House, I think we would have "walked" around the world.

I hope that gives you a sense of how active our eight-week summer Peace House program is. It is nonstop, energetic, demanding, hectic, joyful and hard. We welcomed more kids than ever into our space, ran more programs than past summers, were better organized, played more basketball, ate more food and built more relationships with families than ever before.

Indulge in me as I carry the "walking" metaphor a little further. Where did we really "walk" this summer? To begin with, we established a relationship with Kalamazoo City Parks and Recreation that was mutually beneficial in many ways. The older kids were able to participate in the "Future Chefs" program, which taught cooking skills with a master chef, and offered field trips to various restaurants in the area. City Rec also provided transportation to a lovely beach and playground 20 minutes from here that all Peace House kids were able to enjoy at least once.

We started a basketball program called Peace House Hoops, and we walked the six blocks to and from St. Mary's Church once a week to practice in their gym. With volunteer coaches, drills were run and games were played. We joined the Boys and Girls Club twice for "away" games.

As in past summers, we welcomed an intern from the

Kalamazoo College Community Building Internship Program into our summer. Bret Linvill was a great presence here at Peace House. He had an infinite amount of patience and positive energy. He was even brave enough to let the kids shave his head at the end of the summer before he headed off to Ecuador for Foreign Study! Other volunteers and friends joined us to help out and run special activities. Science projects, "trash" art, blueberry jam, paper lanterns, volleyball skills and a history of Michigan dirt were some of the results. We appreciate these fresh ideas and creative energy that visitors bring.

Other summer standbys include the Reading Porch, which was busier than ever. There were times when the reading porch was full of 10—12 year old boys quietly reading. That is a sight to treasure! We also continued fixing bikes with the help of the Open ROADS bike program. Many a flat tire was repaired over the course of the summer.

Here's a riddle for you: What activity, that doesn't involve a screen, can take large groups of high-energy kids and result in complete focus and quiet? The answer is.....perler beads! Laurie Hays was a genius for bringing the large bin of multi-colored perler beads to Peace House—it was the most-demanded activity of the summer. Sure, we were cleaning little plastic bits out of every crack and

crevice of our back deck, but we loved the calm that would descend when we brought them out.

We also need to give a huge shout out to Patrick Hershberger, muralist, artist and all-around great guy, who spent a week this summer painting a mural on the back of our garage. Make sure you take a look at the painting process via photos on page 5. Peace House kids had the opportunity to paint the background and he added the more detailed final layers.

During our summer program, Mike, Jen, Jerry and I take turns in the role of "floater,"— the person who floats around monitoring activities, taking kids inside to use the bathroom, interacting with new kids as they arrive, dealing with problems, etc. The floater would

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October brings pumpkin carving to Peace House. This year someone got creative!

Dear Friends,

It has been a full year at Peace House.

And when I say it's been a full year, what I really mean is that this place has been totally full, all year long.

We've been seeing far more kids at Peace House than ever before. In the peak of the summer, we averaged about thirty-five kids a day. Now that the school year has started, we've been helping about two dozen young people with their homework every weekday— about double of what we saw last year.

If we haven't reached our capacity yet, we're close. The place just feels *packed*, and we always struggle a little bit to contain all of that youthful energy in limited space. It's peaceable chaos, and somehow, in the midst of it, homework gets done. And stickers get earned. And prizes get won. Geniuses are crowned. And a whole lot of fun is had.



Volunteer Joan Carey helps Ayanna and Aalaziah be super-awesome students.

It's exhaustingly beautiful, and credit goes to you, our amazing volunteers and supporters who have built this place and filled it with such a spirit of love and joy and fun that children will come by the dozens, eagerly lining up at the door, to do, of all ridiculous things, their homework. This Peace House experiment that you and we started a half dozen years ago seems to be working: "Build them a place of nurture and love, and the kids will come." That's what we did, and that's what they do.

This time of year, we all open our hearts wider to the children in our lives, and many of us think about how we want to share our blessings with others through charitable giving. Some children need your help the most: the homeless, the refugees, the victims of natural disasters and of war. Please give to them first, and give recklessly.

But if you have time or resources to spare, we hope that you will think of Peace House, too, and the children of Eastside Kalamazoo. We can't do this without you. We and are very good at making a little go a long way, but it still takes plenty of community support to make this place run.

As always, we are deeply grateful for all of your love and support. Thank you for being part of the Peace House community. Blessings through the holidays and in the New Year.

Peace,
Mike DeWaele, on behalf of Peace House

Peace House, like many communities in the Catholic Worker movement, is not a 501(c)3 organization. Gifts to Peace House are not tax deductible. If you are interested in making a donation and require a tax deduction, please contact us.

Has the Catholic Church Made Its Peace With War?

by Jerry Berrigan

On Nov. 10, Catholic Parishes nationwide held a special collection in support of the Archdiocese for Military Services USA, which oversees the spiritual and pastoral care of the 1.8 million Catholic U.S. military personnel stationed overseas. In response, Jerry was asked to share his thoughts on faith and war as part of a panel discussion at St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish in Kalamazoo. His remarks are reprinted below.

It is a privilege to be with you all here tonight, exploring questions of war and peace and the formation of conscience. This is a question of means and ends, but perhaps more fundamentally it is a question of authority. Throughout his short career, Jesus waged an ultimately fatal contest with temporal rulers over the issue of who

A Parable

by Thomas Merton

The Hassidic Rabbi, Baal-Shem-Tov, once told the following story. Two men were traveling through a forest. One was drunk, the other was sober. As they went, they were attacked by robbers, beaten, robbed of all they had, even their clothing. When they emerged, people asked them if they got through the wood without trouble. The drunken man said: "Everything was fine; nothing went wrong; we had no trouble at all!"

They said: "How does it happen that you are naked and covered with blood?"

He did not have an answer.

The sober man said: "Do not believe him: he is drunk. It was a disaster. Robbers beat us without mercy and took everything we had. Be warned by what happened to us, and look out for yourselves."

For some "faithful"— and for unbelievers too—"faith" seems to be a kind of drunkenness, an anesthetic, that keeps you from realizing and believing that anything can ever go wrong. Such faith can be immersed in a world of violence and make no objection: the violence is perfectly all right. The drunkenness of this kind of faith— whether in a religious message or merely in a political ideology— enables us to go through life without seeing that our own violence is a disaster and that the overwhelming force by which we seek to assert ourselves and our own self-interest may well be our ruin.

Is faith a narcotic dream in a world of heavily-armed robbers, or is it an awakening?

Is faith a convenient nightmare in which we are attacked and obliged to destroy our attackers?

What if we awaken to discover that we are the robbers, and our destruction comes from the root of hate in ourselves?

Preface to Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Christian Practice, Notre Dame Press:1968.

would be in charge. The conflict comes up again and again. Jesus announced the Reign of God, which trumps, supersedes, and renders void all the kingdoms of the world. It did then and it does now, if we happen to believe in that sort of thing.

The Kin-dom is based on a completely different set of principles than those followed by the nations, whose actions in the Gospel stories follow a standard playbook, the same one used by the nations today. Backroom deals, political maneuvering, the perceived irrelevance of basic moral principles, the ostracizing of certain groups who are labeled "unfit" for "polite" society, and the willingness to kill large numbers of people are shared traits of the nations, then and now.

In the Gospels, the conflict between Christ and worldly power begins right away. We're almost to Advent, when the stage is set. The Magi visit Herod, whose thoughts upon hearing of the birth of a "King" immediately turn to the elimination of a rival. Ever the savvy politico, Herod's tongue is candy-sweet: "*When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage*" (Mt. 2:8). Of course we know the story: but for the intercession of an Angel, Jesus never would have made it out the gate. Others were less fortunate:

When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more.' (Mt. 2:17-18)

This atrocity is memorialized in the Church calendar: we observe the Feast of the Holy Innocents on Dec. 28. There are a few lessons here. First, the Hope of the Gospel presents a threat to those who hold power today. The powerful are usually prepared to meet such threats with violence. Second, the victims of state crime are multitudinous, for the most part unguilty, and are, by an unbearable percentage, children.

When I was young, the Feast of the Innocents was observed religiously, annually. Christmas over, meager presents unwrapped, our family and the community in which we lived traveled to Washington DC, where for three days we slept on a church floor as part of a "Faith

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definitely earn the highest count on the pedometer at the end of the day. This person attempts to have a sixth sense, so if you're in the front and you sense something might be going wrong in the back, you get there as fast as you can. Sometimes we got there in time, but along with our high numbers came more fights and more problems. We broke up a record number of fights this summer. Even worse than the physical fights was the behind-the-back talking and rumor spreading that the girls favored.

This is all very hard for us, and yet it is an inevitable part of our work. It is important for us to establish a zero tolerance for fighting but also give kids a second and third chance to do better in the future. We will continue to search for methods and ways to encourage a culture of peace, rather than the culture of violence that is so prevalent in our society.

We did "walk" many places this summer with all of the activities and field trips, but it's also important for us to walk *with* the kids who attend Peace House. The ups and downs of daily life are hard for all of us, but they are especially hard for some of these kids. Most of us reading this newsletter take for granted that our basic needs are met, beginning with having enough to eat and getting a good night's sleep to having a safe home environment. When basic needs are not met, or when emotional and behavioral issues are in play, kids struggle. It is impossible for us to address all of these needs for every kid, but we recognize that extra patience, attention and care is needed in many situations.

Now here it is November, and we are fully into our "Help with Homework" program. Last week over the course of two hours I welcomed 24 kids into our home to work on homework. This is triple the number we had two years ago. And, despite moments of craziness, *a lot* of homework gets done. Thanks to the help of many volunteers, snacks are prepared and served, pencils are spread around, worksheets filled out, math



Kirsten and Darquan doing one of our all-time favorite summer activities — making ice cream.

problems solved, books read. You can feel the brain activity buzz during those quiet moments.

There have been other changes in our community this fall. Next door, Mike has left his work at Open Doors and Jen has taken a job with Kalamazoo Communities in Schools at Woodward Elementary School. Her job provides kids with many different kinds of support with the hope that they might succeed in school.

In our household, Leah started preschool this year which means there are two kid-free days during the week. With the extra time that this allows, Jerry is pushing ahead on construction projects in the community. This fall he is hard at work installing a new furnace (with 5 new heating vents) in our house. He will move on to repairing the siding at Jen and Mike's house to keep the bats and flying squirrels out of their attic.

In some ways, we are a community in transition right now. We are reaching capacity, in terms of space, for our programs. We are transitioning out of full-time care for our children as they start school. What does this mean for our lives and work? What challenges does this bring? Where are we headed as a community? Are we ready to take on new projects in the neighborhood? Do we need a larger space so we can continue expanding? These are all questions we are asking right now.

You can be assured that we are a community that believes a good process is the key to good decision making. So as we grapple with and brainstorm answers to these questions, we will be mindful of our process. It has served us well in the past and gotten us to where we are now.

I celebrate the fact that the neighborhood has embraced and welcomed us so fully. As the years go by I feel more invested in our work here. I rejoice in the fact that we will never be shut down due to lack of funding. This is our promise to the neighborhood, even as kids come and go. We are not going anywhere,



Perler bead magic!

Evolution of a Mural

1. The back deck was built onto the back of the garage in 2010. This covered site was prepared for the mural with five sheets of pre-primed half-inch plywood, nailed and caulked in place.
2. Patrick works with kids on creating paint drips that serve as a background.
3. Angel practicing his new skills.
4. The third step was a paint-throwing process. We covered the kids well!
5. Patrick did the final layer, the branch and woodpecker, on his own.
6. The final product! Black and white does not do it justice — check out our website to see it in color: peacehousekzoo.org
Photo credit: Nicholas Zastrow



Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.



Jojuan and DQ attempting to sing karaoke and eat a snack at the same time.



One of our Peace House Hoops teams poses with their coach, Brandon Lindsley.



One of the bonuses of having a rim that can be lowered!



Open Roads mechanic Mack helps Artez fix his bike.



The 1st annual Peace House Talent Show was a huge success. Here, Antoinette, Pere, Arnaja and LaJoya show off their dance moves.

You don't have to have a college degree to serve.



Future Chefs presenting their homemade marinara sauce and fresh herb buttered garlic bread.



Josh enjoying a book on the reading porch.



Summer intern Bret Linvill get his hair buzzed on his last day with us.



The Fresh Food Fairy visited Peace House this summer and we made smoothies with her bicycle-powered blender.



Lester and Amare enjoy the playground on our field trip to Ramona Beach in Portage.



Edwin and Michael (yes, they are twins) show off their fly new t-shirts.

You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.



The back of the Peace House Hoops shirts read: "Respect Yourself, Respect Your Opponent, Respect the Game."



Some happy readers with Bookbug co-owner Derek Molitor.



LaTae, LaShawn, Kevlin

You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

Martin Luther King Jr., "The Drum Major Instinct" sermon, Feb. 4, 1968

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and Resistance Retreat” involving 50 to 100 other people. My sisters and I had friends there, whose parents would bring them too, so it was like this: Cool part- hang out with friends. Uncool part- go protest and watch your parents get arrested.

For the grownups, there were intellectual sessions on history, politics and theology; there was prayer; there was resistance at sites in and around DC where wars are planned and otherwise policies are considered which lead to the destruction of innocent life. I have protested at the Capitol, Air and Space Museum, Supreme Court, IMF, World Bank, Israeli Embassy, and the Treasury, to name just a few in the District, and have been arrested many times in front of the White House. The dawn of every December 28th found us on the cold marble steps of the Pentagon, where we would join often spectacular campaigns of what has been called “liturgical direct action.” Our prayer, our plea, which usually featured nonviolent civil disobedience, was simply this: Stop the killing.

My sister Frida once reflected that we were aware as children that we were growing up under the shadow of the mushroom cloud. But on the other side of things, we were held in the arms of a devoted community of people who strove to live according to, and publicly champion the law of love. I think that pretty much captures it. Some of these folks were pretty weird, if the truth be told, but most were great and some were holy. My parents practiced voluntary poverty, but we were raised rich.

Nevertheless, the slaughter of the innocents was a very powerful image for me as a child. Tireless antinuclear work notwithstanding, I knew my future was insecure. My life was expendable; I was a potential one among five billion casualties in the final act of human violence. We had some ten thousand nuclear weapons aimed at Russia, give or take, the number doesn't really matter; they had a similar number pointed back at us, and the official policy was Mutually Assured Destruction. Our witness at the Pentagon was an attempt to say, “This is insane! Nothing is worth the total destruction and defilement planned and prepared inside this building. Please put the brakes on; there must be another way.”

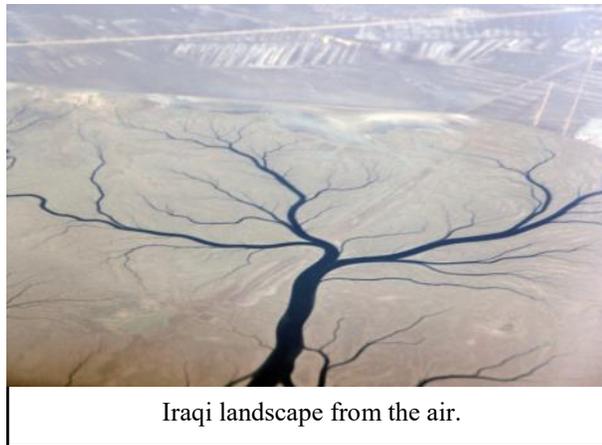
Indeed there is another way; for the Church, it is provided by our faith. Faith, in the estimation of a great professor/ mentor of mine at Kalamazoo College, is where we place our ultimate security. So: either we have faith in Christ, or we have faith in the gun, the Bomb, the state. We cannot have both.

In the Eucharist, our central and most meaningful ritual, Jesus says, “This is my Body, which will be broken

for you. Do this in memory of Me.” *Do this* does not just mean, ‘come to Church once a week.’ It means: offer your life as a living sacrifice, a gift to others. It will be painful and hard, but joyful as well, and Resurrection will result somehow, a thousandfold return on your gift to the world.

Crucifixion/ Resurrection: do we really believe this stuff? We say we do. But I think when the chips are down, what we really want is a life that is easy, comfortable, and predictable, and if that is our aim, we *do* need men with big guns to keep it that way.

‘My body, broken for you’ stands in contradistinction to the ways of the world, which say, “This is *your* body, broken for *me*.” The Tea Party position on social programs; any justification of armed self-defense; genocide in Rwanda; sweatshop labor providing us with cheap consumer goods: all are based on the idea that if someone's got to suffer, it had better not be me.



Iraqi landscape from the air.

Take as an example of “Your body, broken for me’ the unfortunate country of Iraq, which I visited and toured as part of a humanitarian delegation in 1998. Say what you will about our purposes there; oil is the lifeblood of our economy and they have a lot of it. Our attempts to subdue this country and bend it to our will have created an absolute disaster for the people who happen to live

there, people who, for the most part, have no role in the conflict and just want to live in peace.

By some estimates we killed 158,000 Iraqis in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Our use of depleted uranium munitions against Iraqi tanks, a war crime, has created a bloom of cancers in the south of Iraq. From 1990 to 2003 we had a stranglehold on Iraq's economy and foreign trade with our Sanctions, which, according to UNICEF, had killed half a million children under the age of 5 by 1999. This is in a country of 23 million people. And, finally, the initial blitzkrieg of the most recent war, “Shock and Awe” in 2003, killed some 118,000 people in Baghdad alone in three days of bombing. These people, again, had no part in the conflict and nowhere to hide.

We Catholics believe life to be sacred. Where was the outcry? Our silence was incredible. We, who profess a hatred of abortion, spared not a thought to the pregnant mothers among the 118,000 dead in Baghdad. For all that we care about the sacred institution of Family, we carried on with our business, untroubled by the truth that families were being torn apart by our weapons half a world away. *‘A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more.’* I met Rachel in the Iraqi hospitals which I toured.

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She was watching her children die.

Of course, Iraq is not the only country in whose affairs we have meddled. In my lifetime the United States has conducted military operations in at least the following countries: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Lebanon, Korea, Zaire, Nicaragua, Iran, El Salvador, Libya, Sinai, Egypt, Grenada, Honduras, Chad, Italy, Haiti, Bolivia, on open seas in the Persian Gulf, Panama, Liberia, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Peru, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Kuwait, Somalia, Macedonia, the Central African Republic, Albania, Gabon, Guinea/Bissau, Kenya, Tanzania, Afghanistan, Sudan, East Timor, Serbia, Yemen, Pakistan, Georgia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and, it seems, Syria. This list of **47 countries** does not include countries to which we have sold weapons or sent military advisors; it also does not include covert operations of the CIA or other groups. We're talking about troops on the ground. Admittedly, some of these operations were quite minor- but many were not.

It has been said, truthfully, that war is our #1 business, and I think it can truthfully be said that, broadly, the American Catholic Church has made its peace with war. The calculation was made, and made again and again and again until it became unspoken policy, that to raise concerns such as these is simply too costly. It is perceived as bad ministry, because the troops came up in our churches and the troops need our moral support, and it is certainly seen as bad manners. I am in breach of etiquette right now. Please forgive me for this. My concern is for the honor of the Gospel, the spiritual health of young people who might be turned into killers,

and a peaceful future for my children and for yours.

There is a lot at stake.

I am not so thick as to assert that people who serve in the military are wrong. I have met many soldiers and veterans in my time, and without exception they are good people who want to contribute to society as best they can. I have to assume that they have taken the ethical principles by which they were raised and added the best information they could gather and come up with a decision in good faith. I disagree with the means they are prepared to employ, but identify with their impulse to serve and respect their willingness to lay down their lives.

I am gravely disappointed by my Church, however, for not championing the fundamental moral principles which we profess. Pastorally, I am convinced we do our young people a great disservice if we do not beg them to stay out of the military. Huge fractions of our soldiers return from the field shattered by what they have seen and done, ruined potentially beyond repair. It is all avoidable.

My friends, we are the people of God. Truth-telling and conscience formation are our prophetic responsibility. If we shirk this duty, the integrity of our worship is compromised and our future is signed over to the furies of violence. Where do we really place our faith? In whom, or in what, is our ultimate security? What are we teaching our young people? What is God asking us to do? I'll let the questions stand, because *we* are the Church, the choice is ours in freedom, and the stakes are high. Thank you so much..



2nd Annual
PEACE HOUSE STOMP
A Square Dance Benefit
FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2014

We had so much fun last year that we're going to do it again!

Dance, laugh, eat, talk, watch and raise money for Peace House.

Don't miss it! Mark your calendars now. Details TBA.

For the Love of Justice

Seven sacred works for young activists (like me)

by Lydia Wylie-Kellermann

Lydia Wylie-Kellermann lives in Detroit, Michigan with her partner Erinn Fahey and baby Isaac. She is part of the Jeanie Wylie Community <http://jeaniewyliecommunity.blogspot.com/>, focused on urban agriculture, immigrant justice and nonviolence. She works for Word and World, an experiment in alternative theological education bridging the seminary, the sanctuary and the street. She finds hope as she watches her 6-month-old son learn to laugh. “My love for him forces hope into my bones and drives me to work for a peaceful world for him and all children.”

Know your history

Walk it. Breathe it. Build deep relationships with the elders in your circles. Listen to their stories. Let the listening and retelling become resistance. Remember your ancestors. Say their names out loud and often. Give thanks that you are not alone. You are not creating this movement out of nothing. It’s been done over and over again. Know it. Honour it. Your work is simply to offer new gifts to old work.

Place matters

Ground yourself somewhere. Get your hands in the dirt. Plant asparagus and fruit trees. Put down roots. Let the land tell you her story. Weave together the struggle and history of the people and land on which you stand. Know your neighbours. Create local economy. Be present to the here and now while working for the future. Build community. Build community. Build community.

Honour your anger

Undo the learning that anger is bad. Read the news and accept your desire to scream. Look around you – weep. Feel it. Express it. Move it into your feet and hands and voice. Let your anger at injustice drive you toward the love and urgency of justice.

Understand your privilege

Acknowledge and leave behind feelings of arrogance and entitlement – the curses of this generation. Know your privilege. Be mindful of it in every meeting, in every action, in every community. Work against it. Surrender it when you can. Surround yourself with people who don’t look or think or act like you. Let others take the lead. Stand in solidarity. Listen always. Learn stories by heart. Don’t be reduced to your privileges or oppressions. Don’t label one another – know one another. Be people first. Remember Martin Luther King Jr.’s triplet of evil – racism, militarism and materialism. The struggles against these three are all the same struggle.

Nourish your spirit

Read the sacred and ancient texts of communities from long ago. Dance in the rain. Climb trees. Wonder at the stars. Laugh till your stomach hurts. Be still and silent. Honour the darkness. Let voices be raised

Peace House is excited to announce our new website:

www.peacehousekzoo.org

and email address:

peacehouse@peacehousekzoo.org

At the website, you can sign up for our monthly e-mail newsletter by clicking on “Stay in Touch” at the top. Fill out the form and click “Join our mailing list.” Within a few minutes, you will receive a confirmation e-mail from us. Click on the link inside and you’ll be signed up. Easy as falling off a log, right?

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Clarification of Thought Series

Peace House hosts monthly presentations on critical issues led by invited speakers. These lectures and discussions have the goal of creating a better shared understanding of the issues we face as peacemakers and the course we can take to address them. All events are held at 7:30 at either 313 or 321 Phelps unless otherwise noted. Light refreshments will be served. Events are free. If you are interested in receiving Clarification of Thought updates by email, let us know.

Jan. 15: “Continuing the Discussion: Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace”

This event continues the conversation that began Nov. 20 at St. Thomas More Parish on the topic of faith and violence. No presentation: this will be a group-led conversation.

February 13: Timothy Raedy, Ph.D. “Building the Beloved Community at a Time of Shrinking Resources, Misplaced Priorities and Misinformation”

Dr. Timothy Raedy, Director of the Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations at Western Michigan University, will offer an overview of recent national- and state-level policies which have made life more difficult for low-income people nationally and in Michigan. Tim will also share ideas regarding how we may proceed in the vital work for racial and economic justice in Kalamazoo.

March 13: Elizabeth McAlister “Contemplation and Violence”

The incomparable Liz, Jerry’s own dear mum, has spent nearly 50 years in the struggle for peace and justice. In

1973, along with her husband Philip Berrigan, she formed Jonah House, a community in Baltimore, MD dedicated to prayer, nonviolence and resistance to the warmaking of the US empire. In this milieu she raised three children and organized tirelessly for the abolition of nuclear weapons, spending two years in federal prison (1984-86). An artist, gardener, llama herder, and ‘mother to a movement,’ she brings her deep understanding of the liberating message of the Gospel to this discussion.

Friday, April 25: Peace House Stomp, the Second Annual Fundraising Square Dance.

May 15: Dini Metro-Roland, Ph.D. “Human Flourishing and the Pursuit of Happiness”

Dr. Metro-Roland is the Assistant Professor of Educational Studies at Western Michigan University. This past semester he taught a brand new course that explores the question, “What is human flourishing?” He will give us an overview of how philosophers, writers, social scientists and others have attempted to answer this question and lead a discussion about our own ideas of what it means to flourish.

in harmony. Nourish your spirit alone. Nourish it in community. Taste your tears. Feel joy in your gut. Live deeply. Celebrate resurrection in its many forms.

Refuse to give up

Fight with everything you’ve got. Stand at this critical historic moment. Injustice is coming from every direction. Let go of the obsession with perfection or results. Do what feels right in your bones and don’t worry about what will be most effective. Take serious risks. What are you willing to die for? Put your body somewhere . . . anywhere. Find hope even when there is no logic.

Give gratitude

In everything, give thanks. Thanks be for those who have gone before, who have sung the songs, who have given their lives. For the cloud of witnesses who watch over you now and who prayed for you before you born. Offer gratitude that you are not alone in this struggle. There are many resisting and creating in infinite ways and in every direction. Give thanks for this beautiful earth that gives you life, feeds your spirit and holds a history and a future beyond you. And give thanks that although “the arc is long, it bends towards justice.”

We see it and know that it is so.



Peace House

321 Phelps Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Fertile Ground is sent twice a year to friends and supporters of Peace House. If you would rather not receive this newsletter, please return this page with a note to that effect. If you would like to receive periodic electronic updates from us (no more than twice a month), please send an e-mail to peacehouse@peacehousekzoo.org

"The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us." —Dorothy Day

Who we are.....

Peace House, a community in the Catholic Worker movement, is dedicated to fostering peace, justice and relationship in the Eastside neighborhood of Kalamazoo. We believe that the good of each person is bound to the well-being of society as a whole; therefore we advocate taking personal responsibility for creating, in the words of Catholic Worker co-founder Peter Maurin, "a new society within the shell of the old...a place where it is easier for people to be good." We are here to be a resource for our neighbors. We rely on the involvement of a loving, dedicated extended community to do this work. We welcome new friends from all backgrounds. Please feel free to visit, call or send an e-mail.

Jen and Mike DeWaele
Clara and Alice
Jerry and Molly Mechtenberg-Berrigan
Amos, Jonah and Leah
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(269) 492-1206
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How you can be a part.....

We welcome your presence and involvement in Peace House. Here are different ways you can help:

- Donate a healthy snack on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons. Ideas include: fresh fruit and vegetables, muffins, crackers and cheese, yogurt.
- Donate a dessert to our holiday party — pies, cakes, cookies, etc. Our party is scheduled for Dec. 20. Please call if interested.
- We always need prizes for our "prize box." These are small gifts and toys that kids can select after they have spent a certain amount of time on homework.
- Put your name on our list of "substitute" tutors. We will call you when our regular volunteers are out of town or sick.
- Come to our Clarification of Thought events. They are fruitful presentations and discussions.
- Join our email list (see page 10) to get regular updates and discover other ways to help.