

# Peaceways

CENTRAL KENTUCKY COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

February 2019

## An Open Letter to my Grandson

by Margaret Gabriel

*On December 23, 2018, my daughter, Ellen, and her husband, Jordan, had their first child, our first grandchild, Connor Aaron Ricks. As you can see from the picture, Connor is quite the good-looking boy. At this writing he is a little over a month old and we think he's a genius so I'm sure he'll be able to read this before he starts kindergarten.*

Dear Connor,

On the day you were born, December 23 (very early in the morning), your family was happy to welcome you into the world. Your mommy had decided that you could do worse than to share a birthday with Jesus if you had come just two days later, but your Great-uncle Charlie was thrilled to celebrate your birthday on Festivus and we dubbed you our "Festivus Miracle." (Ask Uncle Charlie about Seinfeld. Mommy might let you watch a couple of pre-selected episodes on Netflix).

While Mommy was in labor, the Christian world was anticipating the celebration of Christmas and your family was eagerly anticipating your birth, the federal government went into partial shut-down at midnight on December 22. At issue was a wall that Donald Trump, during his campaign for president in 2016, promised supporters would be constructed on the border of the United States and Mexico. He pledged that Mexico would pay for a wall that would keep babies like you safe from people who don't look like

you.

Three hours and forty-one minutes before you were born, the federal government shut down. President Donald Trump, a Republican, and the United States Congress were unable to agree on the appropriation of the funds needed to keep the government running. President Donald Trump has included \$5.6 billion for the wall on the southern border in the appropriation. While the Senate passed the resolution to fund the government and build the wall, the House of Representatives, which is controlled by the Democratic party, voted to pass legislation that would keep the government running, but without the funding for the wall. President Donald Trump had pledged to veto any funding bill that did not include money for his wall. For that reason, Senator Mitch McConnell (not YOUR senator, Connor, because you were born in Indiana!) refused to call for a vote.

In a nutshell, Connor, the federal government was shut down for the first 35 days of your life.

Although Uncle Charlie calls you Festivus Baby, your grandfather, Papa Jim, calls you "Shutdown Baby."

I'm happy to tell you that as of January 25, the circus has returned to Washington, D.C. The grown-ups there have given themselves three weeks to craft a negotiation that will fund the government and avoid another shut-down (which has been threatened).

The two sides only agree that the government needs to function. The president insists that the American people need and want a physical barrier; Congress insists that security is needed but a physical barrier is not the answer.

Could it be, Connor, that the impasse over the wall is President Donald Trump's way of keeping attention away from other issues, issues that really ARE a threat to national security?

Could it be that the wall would be a \$5 billion waste of tax payer money but President Donald Trump continues to



Connor Aaron Ricks, aka Shutdown Baby.

talk on about a security risk that does not exist because of an impetuous campaign promise he knew he could not keep?

Could it be that the Republican-held Senate is caught in a power struggle, caring more about their own political careers than the welfare of the American people?

I don't know.

I do know, Connor, that we were talking about another wall when your mommy was born. That was the Berlin Wall, erected to divide Germany in 1961. Taking it down was a process that took several years to complete (beginning in 1989) but by the time Mommy was born in 1991 the reunification of East and West Germany was complete. Several reflections on the Berlin Wall focused on the ideological divide more than the physical, not unlike the wall we're talking about today.

I don't really believe the Mexican wall will ever be built, but that could just be your Peggity hoping blissfully, to tell you the truth. As you'll learn, I have a tendency to look at the bright side. The Trump wall has already created a divide—more than one, really—and I'm not sure how those divides will be healed.

I'm happy I've had to amend this letter before going to press. But I hope I don't have to start calling you "Shutdown Baby" again after February 15.

With all my love,  
Peggity

### Gun Violence In America as of 1-30-19

(excluding suicide)

**2019** (year to date)

Killed	1,144
Wounded	2,007

**2018** (annual)

Killed	13,321
Wounded	25,734

Source: [www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org)

# Room In the Inn, Berea

In October 2018 a group of concerned citizens in Berea gathered to discuss the growing problem of the number of people in their town who experience homelessness. Barb Anspach reported to the group that she had researched "Room In The Inn," a program that was started in 1985 in Nashville by Father Charles Strobel, a Catholic priest who opened the doors of his church to people who had no home. In the next few years other churches joined and today over 200 churches of a wide variety of traditions in Nashville provide shelter for 1,500 men and women from November through March.

Barb researched the model because while Berea citizens saw a need to provide shelter for people experiencing homelessness, the city did not have the revenue for opening such a shelter.

"The Salvation Army has eight beds for men and 8 for women in Richmond and Liberty Place takes families, but it can have a waiting list of two weeks to two months," Barb said.

The October meeting ignited the Berea community to organize and on January 15 Room In The Inn Berea provided shelter for the first time. They will provide overnight accommodations

through March 15.

At an empty store front on Chestnut Street at 5:00 each evening, RITI Berea volunteers register and vet people in need of shelter for the night. At 6 p.m. guests are escorted to the church where they will spend the night. Volunteers called "innkeepers" serve a meal, talk with their guests and provide such activities as watching a movie or working on a craft. "At one church, they had live music," Barb said. In the morning, guests are served a light breakfast and given a snack they can take with them for the day.

Four Berea congregations are currently participating in RITI and they are in need of additional churches and community agencies that would like to join them. The group is also in need of volunteers to do laundry, provide transportation and move mattresses from church to church. You can volunteer through the RITI Berea Facebook page and send contributions through Berea Faith Community Outreach. Other RITI communities in Kentucky include Bardstown, Elizabethtown, Bowling Green and Somerset.

"Berea has a wonderful coming together of the community," Barb said.

## Public invited to Peace Studies talk

The UK Department of Peace Studies is sponsoring a talk by Dr. Scott Wolford on February 22, at 2 p.m. in Kincaid Auditorium on the campus of the University of Kentucky. "How Peace Ends: Making and Unmaking Global Orders" is open to the public.

Dr. Wolford is an associate professor in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. He has a Ph.D in political science from Emory University, and has attended both UK and Transylvania University in Lexington. On his website, Dr. Wolford says, "My research interests include war and peace, international military coalitions, international law and institutions, national leaders and international conflict, and game theory. For more information on published work and current projects, see the Publications and Research sections at [www.scott-wolford.com](http://www.scott-wolford.com),

as well as my fitfully updated blog. My first book, *The Politics of Military Coalitions*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2015, and replication data can be found on the Book page."

Dr. Wolford's talk will explain current challenges to the global order by examining past peace settlements and what made some of them durable and others fragile. This is a timely and policy-relevant talk. It is intended for a general audience and will be followed by a reception where students can learn more about UK's Peace Studies program.

*Afflict the comfortable;  
give comfort to the afflicted.*

## The Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice

*Board of Directors:* Rebecca Ballard DiLoreto, Rick Clewett, Bilal El-Amin, Mary Ann Ghosal (secretary), Heather Hadi, Randolph Hollingsworth, Rahul Karanth, Steven Lee Katz (treasurer), Richard Mitchell, Bruce Mundy, Steve Pavey, Nadia Rasheed, Rabbi Uri Smith, Teddi Smith-Robillard, Craig Wilkie.  
*Peaceways Staff:* Margaret Gabriel (editor); Penny Christian, Gail Koehler, Betsy Neale, Mary Ann Ghosal, Jim Trammel (proofreaders). The views expressed in *Peaceways* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of CKCPJ.

*Member Organizations:* ACLU-Central Kentucky Chapter; Ahava Center for Spiritual Living; Amnesty International, UK Chapter; Bahá'ís of Lexington; Berea Friends Meeting; Bluegrass Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program; Bluegrass United Church of Christ; Catholic Action Center; Central Christian Church; Commission for Peace and Justice, Catholic Diocese of Lexington; Gay and Lesbian Services Organization; Humanist Forum of Central Kentucky; Hunter Presbyterian Church; Islamic Society of Central Kentucky; Jewish Federation of the Bluegrass; Kentuckians for the Commonwealth; Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Central Kentucky Chapter; Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; Kentucky Resources Council; Lexington Fair Housing Council; Lexington Fairness; Lexington Friends Meeting; Lexington Hispanic Association (Asociación de Hispanos Unidos); Lexington Labor Council, Jobs with Justice Committee; Lexington Living Wage Campaign; Lexington Socialist Student Union; Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church; Newman Center at UK; North East Lexington Initiative; One World Film Festival; Students for Peace and Earth Justice (Bluegrass Community and Technical College); Peacecraft; The Plantory; Progress (student group at Transylvania University); Second Presbyterian Church; Shambhala Center; Sustainable Communities Network; Union Church at Berea; Unitarian Universalist Church of Lexington; United Nations Association, Bluegrass Chapter.



*Peaceways* is published 10 times a year by the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice, 1588 Leestown Rd., Ste. 130-138, Lexington KY 40511. The next issue of *Peaceways* will appear in March. Deadline for calendar items is Feb. 10. Contact (859) 488-1448 or email [peacewayseditor@gmail.com](mailto:peacewayseditor@gmail.com).

# Calendar for Peace & Justice

The council seeks to promote dialogue as a path to peace and justice. Consequently, we announce events that we do not necessarily endorse.

**Tues., Feb. 5**

**CKCPJ Peace Action committee,** 5:30 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Ongoing discussions of nonviolence training for trainers of nonviolence, nonviolence efforts in schools, youth summer jobs program, and other peace-related activities.

**Wed., Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27**

**Black History Month Film,** 7 p.m. Lyric Theatre, 300 E. Third St., Lexington. *Hidden Colors 1-4.* Around the globe, people of color reveal their histories. Free

**Thurs., Feb. 7**

**Black Lens Film Series,** 7 p.m. Lyric Theatre, 300 E. Third St., Lexington. *A Raisin in the Sun.* The film tells of a black family's experiences in the Washington Park Subdivision of Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood as they attempt to "better" themselves with an insurance payout following the death of the father. Free.

**Sun., Feb. 10**

**One World Film Festival,** 2 p.m., Michael and Ellen Karpf Auditorium, UK Health Care Hospital, 800 Rose Street. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,* the true story of an African-American woman who becomes an unwitting pioneer for medical breakthrough in the early 1950s when her cells are used to create the first immortal human cell line. Free.

**Tues., Feb. 12**

**PFLAG Central Kentucky,** 6:30-8:30 p.m., St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. This month's speaker is J.R. Zerkowski, leader of Fortunate Families, which provides a network of support for families with LGBTQ+ loved ones within the Catholic Church. The presentation will be followed by a confidential support group meeting.

**Tues., Feb. 12**

**CKCPJ Single-payer health care committee,** 5:30 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington.

**Thurs., Feb. 14**

**One World Film Festival,** 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main Street. *Dealt,* the story of Richard Turner, one of the most renowned card magicians of all time. He astounded audiences around the world. Through determination and force of will, he overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to rise to the top of his profession. Free.

**Sat., Feb. 16**

**One World Film Festival,** 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main Street. *I Am Evidence,* a documentary that explores the problem of the thousands of rape kits in the country that have not been tested by police for DNA evidence. Free

**Mon., Feb. 18**

**CKCPJ steering committee meeting,** 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave., Lexington. Discussion will include planning for the upcoming committee meetings, proposals for new initiatives and continuing action.

**Tues., Feb. 19**

**Black Lens Film Series,** 7 p.m. Lyric Theatre, 300 E. Third St., Lexington. *The Pursuit of Happiness.* The true story of Chris Gardner, a San Francisco salesman struggling to build a future for himself and his 5-year-old son. Free.

**Thurs., Feb. 21**

**One World Film Festival,** 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main Street. *Wondrous Oblivion,* The story of David, an 11-year-old who loves to play cricket, but is not very good at it. A Jamaican family moves next door and builds a cricket net in their back garden. David is happy but this is Britain in the 1960s, and others make life difficult for the new arrivals. David's family must choose between fitting in or standing up for new friends.

**Thurs., Feb. 21**

**Black Lens Film Series,** 7 p.m. Lyric Theatre, 300 E. Third St., Lexington. *In The Heat of the Night.* African-American Philadelphia police detective Virgil Tibbs (Sidney Poitier) is unjustly arrested on suspicion of murder by Bill Gillespie (Rod Steiger), the racist police chief of tiny Sparta, Mississippi. Free.

**Fri., Feb. 22**

**UK Department of Peace Studies,** 2 p.m., Kincaid Auditorium, UK. Dr. Scott Wolford, "How Peace Ends: *Making and Unmaking Global Orders.*" Open to the public.

**Sat., Feb. 23**

**Christian-Muslim dialog,** 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Masjid Bilal Ibn Rabah, 1545 Russell Cave Rd, Lexington. Topic: TBD. There will be a potluck meal following the presentation. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

**Sat., Feb. 23**

**One World Film Festival,** 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main Street. *RBG.* At the age of 84, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has developed a breath-taking legal legacy while becoming an unexpected pop culture icon. The documentary explores Ginsburg's life and career. Free.

**Tues., Feb. 26**

**Black Lens Film Series,** 7 p.m. Lyric Theatre, 300 E. Third St., Lexington. *Queen of Katwe.* A Ugandan girl sees her world rapidly change after being introduced to the game of chess. Free.

**Thurs., Feb. 28**

**One World Film Festival,** 7 p.m., Kentucky Theatre, 214 E. Main Street. *Moonlight.* 2017 Best Picture Academy Award winning film follows the life of a black gay youth growing up in a rough neighborhood in Miami. Free.

**Thurs., Feb. 28**

**Black Lens Film Series,** 7 p.m. Lyric Theatre, 300 E. Third St., Lexington. *Black Panther.* 2018 Academy Award Best Picture nominee. T'Challa returns home to Wakanda to take his rightful place as king. T'Challa, as Black Panther, is tested in a conflict that puts the fate of Wakanda and the entire world at risk. Free.

**Tues.-Sun., March 19-24**

**Catholic Committee of Appalachia,** Cherokee Spirituality: *Walking Our Spiritual Paths. Black Panther.* An introduction to the spirituality of Cherokee People. Arrive for a gathering at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, depart after churches services on Sunday morning. Contact Father John Rausch, 606-663-0823 or Mary Herr, 828-497-9498. Partial scholarships available.

# Outrage in Appalachia—and in America

Review by Jim Trammel

**Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America.** By Beth Macy. Steven Levitsky & Daniel Ziblatt. Published 2018 by Little, Brown and Company, New York, a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc., 232 pages plus acknowledgments and end notes.

It's a sad convergence of social problems that has wound up ensnaring Appalachia and other regions of the nation in what we call, with somewhat of a distancing effect, The Opioid Crisis. It's much more immediate and much sadder when The Molecule, as journalist Beth Macy calls it, rips apart a family and turns a once happy, proud, productive person into someone who cares for nothing more than the next pill, snort or injection to keep from getting "dopesick."

It isn't the high they're looking for; no high will ever be better than your first. After a while, users are merely hoping to not feel dopesick for a while.

It starts with pills prescribed by a doctor for pain you suffered. The doctor gave you more pills than you needed – maybe absurdly more. Behind him, a drug company encouraged him or her with false reports of one-percent addictions, or marketing bribery to promote this inadequately tested wonder drug.

So soon you need more. You start doctor-shopping. You steal a prescription pad and go into forgery. Then you run into someone who has the pills and you don't need the medical establishment. This arrangement gets seedier and seedier. Then something interrupts your pill

Thanks largely to the efforts of Richard Mitchell, the CKCPJ Facebook page had 20-plus posts in December and January. The posts that received the most attention focused on: the Covington Catholic students and Native American confrontation; Mitch McConnell and his role in the government shut-down; Robert Reich's data on immigration; the Gillette "men can do better" ad; the Women's March; bail reform; the Kentucky General Assembly; US and Israel withdrawal from UNESCO; changing the narrative around racism; white privilege; the Kentucky pension law.

For some really interesting posts, visit the CKCPJ Facebook page and visit often.

supply, so your friend suggests a brown powder that you can get without so much hassle – heroin.

You can snort it, but it's better injected into a vein. There swiftly ensues fentanyl, 25 to 50 times stronger than heroin, and, if you're unlucky, the elephant sedative carfentanil, 100 times stronger than fentanyl. In Huntington, West Virginia, this killed 26 people in a single day. And University of Kentucky Emergency Department Vice Chairman Dr. Charles Eckerline, Jr., has told WKYT reporter Miranda Combs that "elephant heroin" is in Lexington.

You can be outraged in so many directions by award-winning reporter Macy's work. Get angry at ...

- Purdue Pharma, who developed Oxycontin and boosted its marketing far past the time they should have known to pull back; (They were tried, found guilty, and fined a little.)
- Ronnie Jones, a one-man heroin ring who unleashed a "tsunami of misery" on Woodstock, Virginia in 2012 and 2013;
- Or, be angriest (as I am) at the authorities and politicians who wouldn't listen to the early warnings of concerned citizens such as Sister Beth Davies, CND, whose Appalachian community activism goes back to 1971 and the War on Poverty.

Sister Beth faced down the Pittston Coal Company and their hired protesters in 1989, actually lying on the ground to block coal trucks to support striking miners. She had also demanded reparations from the Lone Mountain coal company for a burst slurry pond that laid waste to her village of St. Charles in 1996. No one knew at the time that 1996 was also the year OxyContin was developed and unleashed, and the comparisons to the slurry wreckage are inescapable.

(We're arranging an interview with Sister Beth in the next issue of Peaceways.)

The pharma companies tried and failed to buy Sister Beth and the other activists with philanthropy. But she couldn't make the authorities take action.

Macy's narrative jumps around; a one-day story here, a long-form piece there, a trial in another city, a public meeting in another part of the state (mostly around Roanoke, Virginia, just over the ridge from eastern Kentucky). The threads connect

and re-connect, sometimes confusingly, and profile pieces and pharmaceutical discussions sometimes wander, but don't let those keep you from the distraught faces, the shattered families, the penitent prisoners, and such silently screaming details as a tombstone bearing a high school football player's jersey number.

Try to forget, if you can, the danger hovering over a baby left unattended while his drugged, incapable mother can't pay sufficient attention.

And save some tears for late in the book, when Macy gets more involved than perhaps a journalist strictly should with the case of Tess Henry, former straight-A student and basketball star turned runaway, thief and prostitute. Her story is a microcosm, dire and bleak, of the social currents discussed before. It is so extensively and richly detailed that it gives the reader hope that maybe Macy is taking this biography so far to arrive at a rescue, a closure, a happy ending. That's certainly one of the ways it could have turned out.

Macy is a national award-winning reporter who taps the power of a writer who goes where the story is and sticks around for the long haul. (Thanks to the Roanoke Times for giving her the leeway.) Her in-depth personal involvement is a gold standard for reporters who think they ought to stand far back. Linked up to a powerful and important ongoing juggernaut such as this, the impact is meteoric.

Read this book and you will be moved to call your Congressman and ask why he thinks he has taken even one percent of the action this crisis demands. He hasn't.

•  
*Reviewer Jim Trammel may never again take a pain reliever that he can't pronounce.*



*Sister Beth Davies, CND, receives the 2015 Ketteler Award for Social Justice, given by the Sisters of Divine Providence.*

# Submissions to Peaceways

Articles submitted to *Peaceways* should show an awareness of and sensitivity to the CKCPJ's mission and concerns.

Feature articles should be no longer than 500 words, unless you are willing to have the piece cut to fit one page of *Peaceways* text. Pieces will be edited for clarity.

Please include references in the text for all quotations, statistics, and unusual facts. End-notes or footnotes are not used.

Please query submissions to [peacewayseditor@gmail.com](mailto:peacewayseditor@gmail.com) before writing a feature article intended solely for *Peaceways*.

For all submissions, the author's name, address, and phone number should appear on the body of the submitted text.

If you submit material that has been published or which you are also submitting to other publishers, be sure to indicate this. Also include information about your relationship to any organization or issue mentioned in the article for inclusion in a biographical reference at the end of the story.

Submissions should be made in Word format *via* email. Book reviews are usually solicited by the editor, but we welcome inquiries from potential reviewers.

Submission deadline is the 10th of each month. *Peaceways* is published monthly except January.

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your Kroger Plus card  
to #16439 at  
[krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com)

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**CKCPJ Steering Committee Meetings**, third Monday, 5 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave. More info: (859) 488-1448 or [peaceandjusticecky@gmail.com](mailto:peaceandjusticecky@gmail.com). All are welcome.

**Interfaith Prayer Vigil for Peace**, every Thursday, 5:30 - 6 p.m. at Triangle Park (corner of Broadway and Main Street) in downtown Lexington. Contact Richard Mitchell, (859) 327-6277.

**Migrant Network Coalition**, first Monday, noon - 1:15 p.m., GLOBAL LEX, 1306 Versailles Road, Lexington. Contact Lindsay Mattingly, [lmatingly@lexpublib.org](mailto:lmatingly@lexpublib.org), (859) 231-5514.

**PFLAG Central Kentucky**, second Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. LGBTQ individuals of all ages, family members, friends and allies are welcome. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. Visit [info@pflagcentralky.org](http://info@pflagcentralky.org) or (859) 338-4393. Speakers followed by confidential support group meeting.

**Bluegrass Fairness of Central Kentucky**, second Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Lexington Public Central Library, 140 E. Main St., Lexington. Contact Craig Cammack, chair, (859) 951-8565 or [info@lexfair.org](mailto:info@lexfair.org).

**Wednesday Night GLSO "Heart to Heart" discussion group**, 7 p.m., Pride Center, 389 Waller Ave., Lexington. GLSO operates Kentucky's only Pride Center, where they have quietly provided services to the GLBTQQA community for decades. More info, Pride Center hours, and other links at [www.glsso.org](http://www.glsso.org).

**Humanist Forum of Central Kentucky**, first Thursday, 7 p.m., Great Hall of the Unitarian Universalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Rd., Lexington. The Forum is a Chapter of the American Humanist Association. Meetings are open to people of all beliefs willing to express their opinions in a civil manner. Child care is provided. Contact President Staci Maney, [staci@olliegee.com](mailto:staci@olliegee.com) or (859) 797-2662.

**Kentuckians for the Commonwealth**, third Thursday, 7 p.m., Episcopal Diocese Mission House at Fourth St. and MLK Blvd, Lexington. Contact Beth Howard, (859) 276-0563.

**NAMI Lexington Support Groups**, every Sunday, 2:30 - 4 p.m. Participation Station, 869 Sparta Ct., Lexington. Call (859) 272-7891 or visit [www.namilex.org](http://www.namilex.org).

**Christian-Muslim Dialogue Program**, fourth Saturday, 10 a.m. - noon. All are welcome. Locations vary, call (859) 277-5126. The Christian-Muslim dialogue promotes understanding and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. By exploring moral, cultural and political factors shaping the current context, the program promotes personal and collective responsibility to build a more just and peaceful world.

**Dance Jam**, every Tuesday, 5:30 - 7 p.m., Quaker Meeting House, 649 Price Ave. Move to the extent you are able. Sponsored by Motion Matters, \$7 per session to cover space rental. Contact Pamela, [info@motionmatters.org](mailto:info@motionmatters.org), (859) 351-3142.

**Movies with Spirit**, second Friday of every month. Unitarian Universalist Church, 3564 Clays Mill Road, Lexington. Potluck at 6 p.m., film at 7.

**National Action Network**, third Thursday each month, 7 - 8:30 p.m. at the Central Library, Lexington.

**Showing Up for Racial Justice**, second Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Wild Fig Coffee and Books, 726 N. Limestone, Lexington.

To include a regular meeting of your organization in this space, contact Margaret Gabriel, [peacewayseditor@gmail.com](mailto:peacewayseditor@gmail.com).

# 'Right to life' includes dignity for every person

by Bishop John Stowe

Reprinted from the [Lexington] Herald-Leader

A perennial complaint from participants in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., is that the secular news media largely ignore this massive protest of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision. In light of the viral news story of last weekend, of a group of Catholic high school students from Kentucky in a confrontation with a Native American elder after this year's march, that claim no longer holds.

As the leader of the Catholic Church in the 50 counties of Central and Eastern Kentucky, I join the Diocese of Covington and other Catholic leaders in apologizing in the wake of this incident.

I am ashamed that the actions of Kentucky Catholic high school students have become a contradiction of the very reverence for human life that the march is supposed to manifest. As such, I believe that U.S. Catholics must take a look at how our support of the fundamental right to life has become separated from the even more basic truth of the dignity of each human person.

Without engaging the discussion about the context of the viral video or placing the blame entirely on these adolescents, it astonishes me that any students participating in a pro-life activity on behalf of their school and their Catholic faith could be wearing apparel sporting the slogans of a president who denigrates the lives of immigrants, refugees and people from countries that he describes with indecent words and haphazardly endangers with life-threatening policies.

We cannot uncritically ally ourselves with someone with whom

we share the policy goal of ending abortion.

I doubt that it is only these students who are not aware that the pro-life movement got its start among peace activists who saw their opposition to abortion as a natural extension of opposition to all forms of violence.

Similarly, at one time, priests and

sins of national policies that deprived Native Americans of their lands and livelihood. The pastoral letter describes racism as a "life" issue; that perspective needs to become part of our educational curriculum. Students must grapple with this history and ask themselves how they are going to live differently.

Here also the bishops' letter helps point the way: "Our individual efforts to encounter, grow, and witness, to change our hearts about racism must also find their way into our families. We urge each person to consider the dignity of others in the face of jokes, conversations, and complaints motivated by racial prejudice. We can provide experiences for children that expose them to different cultures and peoples."

These experiences can be found in the church's dialogue with other religious traditions and the fact that our own congregations span across categories of race, nationality and immigration status. The church's service to migrants and refugees can also help form these values in the next generation.

The pro-life movement claims that it wants more than the policy change of making abortion illegal, but aims to make it unthinkable. That would require deep changes in society and policies that would support those who find it difficult to afford children. The association of our young people with racist acts and a politics of hate must also become unthinkable.

John Stowe, OFM, is the bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington.

*U.S. Catholics must take a look at how our support of the fundamental right to life has become separated from the even more basic truth of the dignity of each human person.*

nuns stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Dr. King and marched for civil rights. Bishops advocated for world peace and economic inclusion.

Respect for the sanctity of human life included the promotion of all that is necessary for all humanity to flourish. While the church's opposition to abortion has been steadfast, it has become a stand-alone issue for many and has become disconnected to other issues of human dignity.

This past November, the U.S. Catholic bishops issued their first pastoral letter on racism since 1979.

This letter speaks of the structural kind of racism that has worked itself into the fabric of our nation. It describes the unspeakable sins from the slave trade in which the Church was itself complicit as well as the

# PEACEWAYS



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for Peace and Justice  
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*The moral arc of the universe  
bends at the elbow of justice.*

*~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Christmas Store provides an atmosphere of inclusion

*by Margaret Gabriel, Peaceways Editor*

The Faith and Community Christmas Store had its most successful year ever in 2018 (according to Catholic Action Center director Ginny Ramsey, but she says that every year!). As you're reading this in late January or early February, December 18, 19 and 20 probably seems like a long time ago, but it's not too late to let you know about something I found astonishing this year.

If you're not familiar with the store, let me give you a little description. If you are familiar, skip ahead. On the first day of the store, volunteers begin to distribute tickets. The tickets are marked with a date and a time that will admit one person to the store, where they can "shop" for gifts for their children and select items they will receive at no cost. Each person can shop for a maximum of four children and for each of them they can select two gifts and one stuffed animal. The shopper can select a game, puzzle or movie for the family. Some years we have stocking stuffers, and we always have a large supply of books for both adults and children and people are often encouraged to take all they want.

For 23 years, the Faith and Community Christmas Store has asked the people of Lexington to donate gently used (sometimes called "pre-loved") toys that are distributed to people who would otherwise not be able to give their children Christmas presents. There is no pre-registration required and people are not asked to provide verification of any kind. For this reason, non-custodial grandparents are able to get gifts for their grandchildren; there have been people who come to "shop" for foster children who might live with a friend. We have enabled people to obtain gifts after losing a job right before Christmas.

It is humbling to see the number of people who stand in line for hours and hours in what is sometimes the most miserable weather of the season in order to receive used toys. It is humbling to

see the number of people who volunteer to make the Christmas store possible. We have three shifts for three 12-hour days and each shift requires 120 people, meaning that the Christmas store requires the participation of over 1,000 volunteers. Sometimes we have people for the first time, but for many people working at the Christmas store is as much a part of their celebration as opening presents, having a traditional meal or going to church on Christmas Eve.

For each time that is assigned, 30 "shoppers" receive about 15 minutes to come into the store and find the gifts they're looking for. Because of that short amount of time, each ticketed person is accompanied by a volunteer who helps with selections.

For all of the 20-plus years I've volunteered at the Christmas Store, we have had Spanish-speakers come to shop. People who work in Hispanic ministries in local churches, students Fayette County schools Spanish-immersion programs enable us to match Hispanic shoppers to volunteers who speak in their native language. In 2018, though, we also hosted shoppers who spoke French, Arabic, Swahili, Chinese and American Sign Language. It wasn't easy, but we managed to accommodate all of those people. Hurray!

I later learned that people who speak 175 languages call Lexington home, so the Christmas store might need to step up its language game next year. Overall, though, it made me proud to know that people felt comfortable coming to the Christmas store and knew it was a place where they could reach

out for help. It shines a warm, lovely light on the store, as well as Lexington in general, as a place that will take in a strangers and work to make them friends. We can take pride in many things in Lexington and Central Kentucky, but I think this might be one of the things that can make us the most proud.



*The 2018 Faith and Community Christmas Store, was dedicated to the memory of Justin Mallory who passed away in mid-December. Justin was a gentle soul, with a bright smile and shining personality. His mother, Billie, suggests memorials to Fresh Approach, a job training program where Justin worked. His spirit of joy was evident throughout the days of the Christmas Store.*