

## The Unspoken Privilege of Being White

by Richard Rohr, OFM

For a long time, I naïvely hoped that racism was a thing of the past. Those of us who are white have a very hard time seeing that we constantly receive special treatment (because of social systems built to prioritize people with white skin). This systemic “white privilege” makes it harder for us to recognize the experiences of people of color as valid and real when they speak of racial profiling, police brutality, discrimination in the workplace, continued segregation in schools, lack of access to housing, and on and on. This is not the experience of most white people, so how can it be true? Now, we are being shown how limited our vision is.

Because we have never been on the other side, we largely do not recognize the structural access we enjoy, the trust we think we deserve, the assumption that we always belong and do not have to earn our belonging. All this we take for granted as normal. Only the outsider can spot these attitudes in us. And we are quick to dismiss what is apparent to our neighbors who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) from their lived experience.

Of course, we all belong. There is no issue of more or less in the eyes of an Infinite God. Yet the ego believes the lie that there isn’t enough to go around and that for me to succeed or win, someone else must lose. And so we’ve greedily supported systems and governments

that work to our own advantage at the expense of others, most often people of color or any highly visible difference. The advancement of the white person was too often at the cost of other people not advancing at all. A minor history course should make that rather clear.

I would have never seen my own white privilege if I had not been forced outside of my dominant white culture by travel, by working in the jail, by hearing stories from counselees, and, frankly, by making a complete fool of myself in so many social settings — most of which I had the freedom to avoid!

Power (and privilege) never surrenders without a fight. If your entire life has been to live unquestioned in your position of power — a power that was culturally given to you, but you think you earned — there is almost no way you will give it up without major failure, suffering, humiliation, or defeat. As long as we

really want to be on top and would take advantage of any privilege or shortcut to get us there, we will never experience true “liberty, equality, fraternity” (revolutionary ideals that endure as mottos for France and Haiti).

If God operates as me, God operates as “thee” too, and the playing field is utterly leveled forever. Like Jesus, Francis, Clare, and many other humble mystics, we then rush down instead of up. In the act of letting go and choosing to become servants, community can at last be possible. The illusory state of privilege just gets in the way of neighboring and basic human friendship.

*Adapted from “Richard Rohr on White Privilege,” an interview with Reverend Romal J. Tune (January 19, 2016). Richard Rohr is a Franciscan friar based in Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

## Affordable Housing Fund restored

by Margaret Gabriel

Following “Honks for Housing,” BUILD’s drive-up rally supporting affordable housing, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council voted to restore \$1.8 million to the Affordable Housing Fund that had been cut from the current budget. The total allocation of \$2 million will be used to leverage millions of dollars in tax credits and other public and private dollars to add over 800 units of affordable housing in Lexington for the coming year.

According to a report in the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Mayor Linda Gorton proposed taking \$30.2 million from various city savings accounts, including \$13.6 million from a \$35.6 million economic contingency fund and

\$9.4 million from an \$11 million reserve fund for payments into the state’s beleaguered pension fund.

The city will temporarily use \$6.4 million from the city’s economic contingency fund for the extended social resource grants, affordable housing programs, and the small business relief program. The city will then replenish those rainy day funds with up to \$25

million in reimbursements from federal stimulus funds for COVID-19 related expenses.

At BUILD’s drive-up rally Father Dan Noll called the budget — any budget — a “moral document,” and the changes that the Urban County Council made to the current city budget reflects the morals of the citizens of Lexington. Well done!



Gun Violence	
<b>In America as of 6-25-20</b>	
<b>2020</b> (year to date)	
Killed	8,324
Suicide	12,012
Wounded	16,137
<b>2019</b> (annual)	
Killed	15,208
Wounded	29,501
Source: <a href="http://www.gunviolencearchive.org">www.gunviolencearchive.org</a>	

# Right versus wrong

This commentary was posted on Facebook.

I went back and forth on whether I wanted to post this or not for quite a while. However, I think it's important to speak up, so here goes. I'm a cop's daughter and I've seen my father's work firsthand. I've gone on countless ride-alongs, been to award ceremonies for him and, hell, I've even watched him help people that even I wouldn't help. He does his part. Do I go to sleep scared that this may be the night we get the phone call that's he's not coming home? Yes. Often. Do I fear for his life? Every. Single. Day.

But here's the thing — he chooses every day to do this job. He wakes up and puts his vest and badge on. In tense situations like the current state of America, he is armed with weapons, a vest, a helmet, and hell, even riot gear, if needed. And guess what? He gets to come home every night and take it off. He can walk outside in his neighborhood and nobody has to know he's a cop. When the hate becomes too much, he can turn his

badge in. He can walk away. That being a choice for them is a PRIVILEGE.

Now, all you blue-backers — imagine that feeling of fear you have for your cop brother/sister/father/mother/son/husband/child going to work, but amplified by 10,000.

Black mothers/fathers/husbands/wives/children have to live in that same fear (X10,000) every single minute of their lives. Can they change the color of their skin? No. They don't get to come home and change their skin tone when being hated becomes too much or too hard. And they shouldn't have to want to. This is not a choice for them. They are feared just for existing. You will never, ever know that feeling.

So, while I go to sleep scared for my father's life, I rest assured knowing that this is what he chooses to do, and wants to do. I truly believe if he died in the line of duty, he would go honorably and proudly.

Black Lives Matter. This is not a race war. This is a right versus wrong war.

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## One World Film Festival

One World Films director Annette Meyer recently circulated an email telling supporters "OWF is still hanging in, but who knows what 2021 will bring?"

The Kentucky Theatre, where OWF screens many of its films, re-opened on June 1, in strict compliance with the guidelines that were established by the state of Kentucky. A message from manager Fred Mills on the theatre's Facebook page says, "Our number one priority is safety for both you, the patron, and our employees," and asks for patience as they navigate reopening.

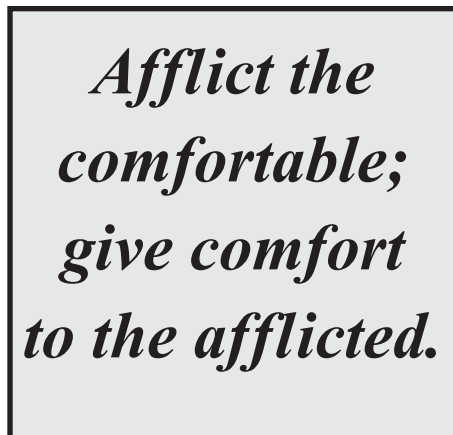
Annette went on to thank patrons for their support of the 2020 series. "So many said it was the best series yet! I have an oversized plastic container with lots of clippings about films that I've been collecting over the past several months," definitely an indication that there will be a 2021 series.

She also asked for patrons to support OWF by using Kroger Community Rewards.

"If you have a Kroger Plus Card, and haven't signed up for their Kroger rewards program to help non-profits, would you please register for One World Films? It doesn't cost you anything, and each time you shop at Kroger OWF will get some funding based on your purchases."

Go to [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com), find One World Films from the list of non-profits and register with the OWF number, QN927. "The next time you check out, you'll see, at the bottom of your check-out receipt, a message telling you Kroger is helping OWF via their community rewards program. And every amount that we receive will help us!" Annette said. "We have almost 1,000 names on our e-mail list, but nowhere near that figure on our rewards program from Kroger."

Annette finished her email saying, "Thanks, ever so much!" We are all in this together. We'll make it even though it is really tough at times. Stay safe!"



## The Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice

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*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 August 2020. Deadline for calendar items is July 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., July 7

**CKCJ health care action committee,** 5-6 p.m. The committee will meet online via Zoom. To receive the needed link to attend the meeting, email Richard Mitchell at [rjmq47@twc.com](mailto:rjmq47@twc.com).

## Tues., July 14

**CKCJ peace action committee,** 4:30-6 p.m. The committee will meet online via Zoom. To receive the needed link to attend the meeting, email Richard Mitchell at [rjmq47@twc.com](mailto:rjmq47@twc.com).

## Mon., July 20

**CKCJ steering committee meeting,** 5 - 6:30 p.m. The committee will meet online via Zoom. To receive the needed link to participate in the meeting, email Richard Mitchell at [rjmq47@twc.com](mailto:rjmq47@twc.com)

## PFLAG Central Kentucky

**PFLAG Central Kentucky,** Second Tuesday 6:30-8:30 p.m., St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2025 Bellefonte Dr., Lexington. Meetings are suspended, but support is available at [info@pflagcentralky.org](mailto:info@pflagcentralky.org) or by phone, 859-338-4393.

## Christian-Muslim Dialogue

**Monthly Meetings** Last Saturday, 10 a.m.-noon. Hunter Presbyterian Church, 109 Rosemont Garden. Meetings have been cancelled until Fall, when the speaker will be Tom Eblen, an independent journalist, writer and photographer based in Lexington. Watch *Peaceways* calendar page for the specific date.

## Rescheduled for September

**BUILD,** Nehemiah Action, Heritage Hall, 430 Vine Street, Lexington.

## Mon., Oct. 5

**Deadline, voter registration for the general election.** At press time there was no information about absentee voting for the general election Nov. 3.

## Fri-Sat., Oct. 23-24

**Plowshares Lexington,** Pursuing Peace, Gun Violence and the Church. Asbury Theological Seminary, 204 North Lexington Avenue, Wilmore. For information about cost and speakers: [pursuingpeace.com](http://pursuingpeace.com).

## So much to learn

*by Margaret Gabriel*

The first time I heard the phrase “Black lives matter,” I thought to myself. “Well, of course they do. All lives matter.” It wasn’t until the current state of unrest and protesting of police brutality in response to the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor that I realized just how myopic that thinking was. Thankfully, I’ve come to a bit of an awaking about that benevolent but blind attitude.

Over the last few weeks I’ve begun to understand that the reason I didn’t understand that phrase is that I grew up in a bubble. I always knew that, of course, but it’s just now, as I’ve reached Medicare age, that I can see the degree to which that bubble stunted my growth. I lived in an all-white neighborhood and went to an all-white school and the only contact I had with Black people was the ladies my mom hired to come and clean once a week. We heard Mom speak respectfully of those ladies and I’m sure her response to the phrase “Black lives matter” would have been the same as mine. Where did I learn that attitude, after all?

She told us they had families like ours and that this was the way they supported their families. She looked disapprovingly at the real estate practices that eventually led to busing in Louisville in 1968, but it didn’t really affect my family because we

attended Catholic schools, as we had when I, the oldest of five, started first grade. I don’t think we would have fled to Oldham County to avoid busing (as many people did), but we didn’t even have to consider it. We were already part of a church and school community that protected us from busing. It wasn’t until years later that I learned about my church’s role in a pattern of institutionalized racism that had been present for generations.

When I met a few — not a lot, but a few — Black people in college and made friends with them it never seemed to be anything out of the ordinary, but opinions I had about the evil of racism, I now realize, were more like “book learning.” I had read and heard about the effects of racism on people of color, and knew without a doubt that racism is wrong, and I honestly can’t ever remember a time when I thought any person was inferior; but I’ve grown to begin to realize in the last few weeks that the anger and outrage of the Black community is fueled because of the way they feel, or are made to feel by society. My attitudes or actions can temper that anger very little because they don’t have any effect on systemic racism.

I think one of the most important things I’ve learned is that the “Black Lives Matter” movement includes individual lives, of course, but also lives of culture,

history and tradition. Acknowledging and celebrating these things are just as important.

After I graduated from college, I had a friend who married a Black man several years after we met. The marriage ended in divorce after several years, but they also had two boys who my friend raised mostly by herself. She notes that when they were growing up, her sons often experienced the same white privilege that was afforded to her because she was their mother. She knows that now, as adults, they rarely have that advantage. She feels a responsibility to speak out about the value of Black lives, and knows that respect and honor for her sons and their children must first come from her.

When we talked just recently, she commented, “Aren’t we happy that Black people are seeking justice and not revenge?”

I heard a homily not long ago that encouraged churchgoers to be a thermostat, not a thermometer. The thermostat in our homes changes the temperature, the thermometer just tells you how hot or cold it is. I would like to challenge myself to change a situation rather than just report on it. Having my eyes opened to how much I have to learn is, at least, a place to start.

# Rest in Peace, Friend

*Long-time member of the CKCPJ steering committee Rabbi Uri Smith died on June 18. Many community members and friends honored Rabbi Smith's life at his funeral on Monday, June 22, 2020, at Lexington Cemetery. This is the eulogy Rabbi Sharon Cohen wrote to honor our friend.*

Throughout his life, Uri worked to uphold the dignity of others. He didn't know a stranger, sharing his warmth and humor with everyone he met. He had a tremendous ability to wade into a hostile situation and calmly find a point of truth with which to bring conflicted parties together. He spent much time writing about ways to bring an end to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Whether it was finding common ground in his interfaith group or helping OZS transition to egalitarianism, Uri had an innate ability to transcend boundaries. As his wife, Hanna, so eloquently shared with me, "Uri had a foot in both camps and it didn't make him slide at all."

For most of us, Rabbi Smith was, put quite simply, a walking encyclopedia. I can't think of a time that he couldn't answer a question! Brilliance. I learned early on in my time as Rabbi at Ohavay Zion, that when Uri shared something at a worship service or a class it wasn't because he was trying to be superior, he just had a depth of knowledge that was unmatched and he wanted to share it with others. I did not always follow his clever puns or some of his theories, but I appreciated the openness with which he shared them. And, he wasn't just knowledgeable about Jewish topics. He was excellent in mathematics and science, too.

He earned a degree in physics and used that learning later in life as he worked in state government in the air quality division of the Environmental Protection Department. How did he make the jump from physics work to being a rabbi? As his brothers pointed out, he had the opportunity to work on first-generation surface-to-air missiles, but he preferred to work on repairing the world rather than creating ways to destroy it.

Besides Hanna, Uri's biggest love was BOOKS. His personal library includes thousands of books: philosophy, math, religion, politics. He could get lost in his books and forget the time to the point that he once got locked in a bookstore after hours because he didn't hear the announcement that the store was closing. His brother Gordon shared that when Uri travelled, he normally arrived with two suitcases. The smaller contained his clothing and toiletries, and the larger one, which could barely be lifted, contained just books, books he was reading, others he might want to read, and a few extras, just in case.

At the same time, Uri enjoyed the world beyond the written word. He had a fun sense of humor and was a master of puns. He loved art, whether modern or medieval, and enjoyed art exhibits and fairs with Hanna. He loved music and singing, although Hanna never could convince him to take singing lessons. He loved concerts and the chamber orchestra. He enjoyed walking with Hanna around the neighborhood and swimming. He was even a really good bowler; however, the sport never held his interest. Uri was multi-talented. He could lay tiles and wallpaper and do plumbing projects. Whatever he worked on, however, he did perfectly. He



Margaret Cahill

was *m'dakdek* — very meticulous and detailed, and strove for perfection.

It is clear that family was important to Uri. He stayed in touch with his brothers Gordon and Danny in England through weekly phone calls and visits whenever he could. It bears noting that Uri died on the *Yahrzeit* of his father, and it was a year ago this month that he traveled to England to be with his brothers to mark that anniversary as well as celebrate the retirement of his brother and baby blessings of extended family.

Of course, Hanna was his love, sharing 56 years of marriage together. They met as students at Leo Baeck College in London. Fittingly, they met because Hanna had a tractate of Talmud she was using that he needed!

They were partners together traveling the United States for further studies at Hebrew Union College and then on to serve in congregations in Ohio, Missouri, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania, with Lexington being their home together for 30-plus years.

Though the light of Rabbi Uri Smith's presence has now faded from our view, we know that the honor, love, and care that he brought to this world as the unique human being he was will never fade from our hearts and our memories. We pray that Hanna, Gordon, Danny, and the extended family, as well as all of us as friends, gain comfort from and remain inspired by the wisdom, respect, love, and dedicated service Rabbi Smith shared with all of us.

*Zikhrono li-V'rakha:* May the memories of Rabbi Uri Smith – ha-RAV URIEL DAVID the son of SH'MUEL HA-KOHAYN and Y'HUDEET - remain with all of us as a source of comfort, blessing and inspiration. Amen.

## My Take on Monuments

by Penny Christian

For some of us the need/desire to have monuments removed is not a new fight. As a child growing up in New Orleans I remember riding down Jefferson Davis Parkway, Robert E. Lee Boulevard, and visiting Jackson Square and Lee Circle.

There was always discussion about who these men were and why they deserved monuments. More than a dozen public schools were named after John McDonough — the most prolific slave owner in Louisiana — and parents of my generation felt "icky" about attending them. Of course, we understood where we lived and what side they were on, but living with constant reminders of a cruel, calculated and strategic campaign to oppress and annihilate a people — MY PEOPLE — was hard.

You see, it was more than about a lack of representation. On the contrary, it was about the realization that not only did we

not have voice, those on the confederate side believed we did not DESERVE one.

So, they put up big, obnoxious totems emblematic of their "Southern pride." Monstrosities to compensate for their inadequacies and military castrations because you can no longer deal in human currency. So as you get all up in your feelings about no longer being able to bow at the feet of your Confederate gods, know this: As a fellow Southerner, my pride was never wrapped up in a traitorous icon on a pedestal. It stems from the blood spilled by those who came before me, those you choose to forget. Because no matter what you say, those symbols are not reminders of history; they are for a longing of a time you wish never ended.

Penny is a member of the CKCPJ newsletter committee.

# A timely review, revisited

by Jim Trammel

As I write, prominent among the top 15 best-sellers in *The New York Times* are books on race relations, many of them explaining white privilege, white supremacy, and white fragility to white people seeking to understand people of color more sympathetically.

Reading up on the subject in solitude is a better first step than grabbing your black acquaintance (especially if you have only one), a bar buddy, or, God forbid, a stranger innocently going about his or her life, and demanding an explanation of and forgiveness for your biases, protesting all the while you're not really like those other biased white people in the red baseball caps. This will cause your victim pain, if you don't educate yourself sufficiently first.

In your research you will see some less-than-cordial titles: *So You Want To Talk About Race* (could have been subtitled *...But You Don't Know How, And Besides, What Took You So Long?*); *You Can't Touch My Hair*; and even one that enlists higher authority: *Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*, which seems a tall order even for The Almighty.

I don't want to go into such works in this space, because I'm not a qualified guide, and I don't want to encourage well-meaning but obtuse colleagues to seek out dialogues that can only tire and discourage the other party.

On the topic "What do black people want?" the words that rang truest to me came from author James Baldwin in the early 1960s, unchanged in significance 60 years later: "I do not know many Negroes who are eager to be 'accepted' by white people, still less to be loved by them; they, the blacks, simply don't wish to be beaten over the head by the whites every instant of our brief passage on this planet."

One of the books enjoying this resurgence is the real-life demonstration of why an overhaul of our thinking is necessary: *Just Mercy*, the unthinkable case of Walter McMillian that happened in Monroeville, Alabama. That town's claim to fame is, ironically, novelist Harper Lee, who wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the eloquent testimonial to

the unity of all humankind. *Just Mercy* was made into a film a few months ago (one of the last films my wife and I saw in the theaters before the lockdown). From my earlier review:

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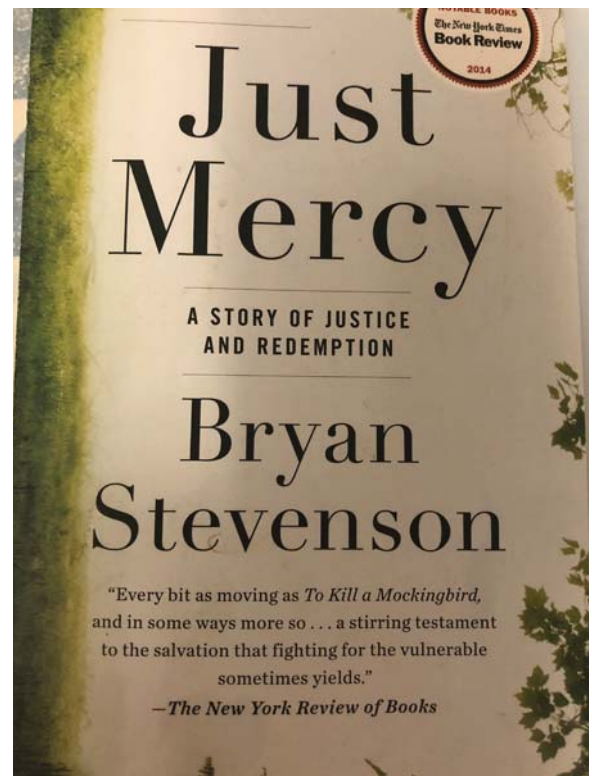
Like Lee's Tom Robinson, Walter was known locally as a gentle guy. A business owner, he had a measure of respect not accorded others of his race. But he struck up a relationship with a white woman, which was remembered when the law, pressured to solve another woman's murder, conveniently believed an unhinged jailbird's lies about Walter.

Enter the author, Bryan Stevenson, at this point no more than a confused and rudderless law school graduate, impressed by the defendant's sincere pleas of innocence.

There's a Kentucky connection to Stevenson's early career: He was mentored by Stephen B. Bright, farm kid from Danville, leading light for decades fighting for life in the Death Belt. Here Bright is an early shelter-giver for newbie attorney Stevenson, who takes a miserably paying, incredibly challenging task as traveling defender of those on Southern Death Rows, a job that didn't even pay enough for an apartment.

Racist deputies, willfully blind judges and jailers, lying witnesses, and winked-at circumventions of legal safeguards — they're all here. The stink of corrupt Southern justice is pungent; legal efforts flawlessly played by Stevenson and his assistants see every motion denied, every maneuver foiled, every hope dashed, until it inescapably looks as if "Yellow Mama," Alabama's electric chair, will seat yet another. (Alabama executes by injection now, but what's the difference?)

This, and his other Death Row cliffhangers from Stevenson's lengthy career with the Equal Justice Initiative, proves what he declaimed before the Alabama Court of Appeals: "We have serious problems and important work that must be done in this state."



\* \* \*

And, although the senseless deaths tallied since the movie was released last December show we have slipped backward from the ideal, perhaps the work those events inspired may yet yield a net positive for our society.

As McMillin would have told us, justice in America is too often a crap game. (He can't tell us that now, because he died in 2013 from a dementia likely brought on by the stresses of his imprisonment.)

To my white friends who want to progress toward a more perfect union: The change begins at home. Wanting to talk it out is a noble idea, for which you get one point; but, just as you shouldn't barge in to a discussion of science, law, or literature without having qualified yourself through preparation, reading a selection of thoughtful material on the subject, out of respect for your fellow participants, is necessary before thrusting yourself into a discussion.

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*Reviewer Jim Trammel will publish his years of monthly Peaceways book columns in a single volume. Someday. If he hears any slight indication of anyone's interest.*

# 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 that 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.

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

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### Check with website for times when meetings are resumed

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



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*The greatest evil of American slavery was not involuntary servitude, but rather the narrative of racial differences we created to legitimize slavery. Because we never dealt with that evil, I don't think slavery ended in 1865, it just evolved.*  
— Bryan Stevenson

# Group encouraged to pray, listen

by Margaret Gabriel

An interracial healing prayer service at St. Peter Claver Church in Lexington, planned and organized by the Fayette Deanery of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, started on June 4 with a moment of silence in memory of George Floyd, the African American man who died after Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, knelt on his neck for over eight minutes.

Following a welcome from St. Peter Claver Parish Priest Father Norman Fisher and Parish Life Director Deacon James Weathers, Bishop John Stowe addressed the group of over 200 people, diverse in age and race, masked and socially distanced (with 2,500 more watching on Facebook Live), saying, "It's a scourge on Catholic history that African Americans

were not always welcomed in our churches. But they have not responded in kind."

In this apocalyptic time, Bishop Stowe said, "Something is being revealed. People are coming together to march, and 'Black Lives Matter' is not just a slogan."

St. Peter Claver business manager Christine Weathers said the Floyd killing has opened old wounds, and she told the congregation of the fear she feels as an African American mother. "You pray that your child will return home safely and will not be stopped by a police officer using bad judgment." There is an overall lack of trust, she said, and "healing must take place before trust returns."

Christine Weathers closed the prayer portion of her comments saying, "May the spirit of God unite us in love and heal a broken society."

Following powerful words about the sin of racism by Father Dan Noll, pastor of Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary Church in Lexington, the congregation heard from Niya Gates, a graduating senior from Lafayette High School and a member of St. Peter Claver. "I have mixed emotions," Gates said. She described the sadness of missing her graduation ceremony and senior prom. The events of the last week, though, have left her "Broken-hearted, outraged and sad, but not discouraged."

Pointing to the church behind her, Gates said, "This building taught me the power of forgiveness. Young adults are ready to find a better way.

"Black lives matter," she said. "Jesus died for us, too."

Throughout the service, speakers were greeted with applause and shouts of approval. Leading the service, Father Fisher often punctuated his remarks with "Amen?" and received responses of "Amen!"

University of Kentucky women's basketball coach Matthew Mitchell, with a voice choked with emotion, spoke of his discomfort in facing the reality of racism in the world of his players and assistant coaches. "We need to listen," Mitchell said. "This is not political, this is moral."

As a gentle rain began to fall, Father Richard Watson, pastor of St. Paul Church, Lexington, offered a closing prayer and Father Charles Howell, pastor of Good Shepherd Church in Frankfort, led the congregation in singing "Soon and Very Soon."



Shan Olson

The participants at the interracial prayer rally on June 4 at St. Peter Claver on Jefferson Street in Lexington were masked and distanced.



Carl Tennant

Hundreds of people gathered in downtown Lexington every night for nearly three weeks to protest the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and to call for accountability and transparency in the Lexington Police Department.