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2022

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who died on December 26, 2021, was a world voice for human rights and reconciliation, for spiritual responsibility and moral awakening. He lives on as a humble giant whose presence we will continue to experience as we all work for universal peace.*

**YOUR ORDINARY ACTS OF HOPE AND LOVE POINT TO THE EXTRAORDINARY PROMISE THAT EVERY HUMAN LIFE HAS INESTIMABLE VALUE.**

**THIS IS A MORAL UNIVERSE WHICH MEANS THAT DESPITE ALL EVIDENCE THAT SEEMS TO BE TO THE CONTRARY, THERE IS NO WAY THAT EVIL AND INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION AND LIES CAN HAVE THE LAST WORD. THAT IS WHAT HAS UPHELD THE MORALE OF OUR PEOPLE, TO KNOW THAT IN THE END GOOD WILL PREVAIL.**



## *WINTER WORDS FROM THE HOUSE OF PEACE*

It is not the first time that the attention of the world has been transfixed by the desperate struggle to save a lost child. One small being - stranded in the wilderness, washed up on a shore, battling deadly illness, trapped in an impossible cage – can become an image of the Universal Child.

So it has been with Rayan. In a remote Moroccan village a five-year-old son plays by his father who is repairing the family well. The unthinkable happens and Rayan falls through the narrow opening, plunging one hundred feet to the bottom, disappearing from his world. The cry goes out. The rescue efforts begin and quickly assume monumental proportions as huge equipment tunnels to this center of tragedy.

And all this time hundreds of friends and neighbors gather around the well moving heaven with their prayers and chants and songs, and moving earth even with their bare hands. The little one's father marvels: "People who love us are sparing no effort to save my child." And the mother Wassima, whose name means "beautiful", weeps among the women and watches and waits. The vigil encompasses the world. A well – ancient symbol of community where prophets encounter pilgrims and promise of living water is given...

This well in Ighrane, now encircled by those who vigil and keep watch and eat bread together, sharing an unspeakable communion of grief and hope.

This marvel in Morocco of mighty Caterpillar bulldozers, used in other war-torn villages to destroy homes and lives, now tunneling day and night to reach one small child, by now a symbol to the world of all small children...

And the pleading call of Rayan, which will never be drowned out: "Lift me up."

On the fourth night this little Moroccan boy is at last lifted up, his lifeless body shielded by sobbing rescuers, his life-filled spirit soaring into the heights.

Around the world quiet murmurs accompany this tragic tableau: What if that were my child? But is it not searingly obvious? This is my child. All the children are ours. We are in catastrophic times when the pandemic of fear and isolation, war and violence plunge them into an unholy well that destroys the very essence of childhood. Who is moving the earth to rescue them from falling into the depths of deprivation? One observer responds: "World conscience must be shaken at this death and the deaths of thousands of children by starvation and bombing."

In a small faraway Moroccan village, brought close by the cosmic connections of childhood, a little boy whose name means "heaven's flower" plunged into the darkness of a well. And we who suffer and ponder this mystery of that well now made holy by the sacrifice of that child can commit to new and selfless ways to answer his call:

*LIFT ME UP*

*Carrie Schuchardt  
February 2022*

## AFGHANISTAN

In the oppressive heat of mid-August, the stunning realities of war's ravages sent shockwaves around the world. "Afghanistan has fallen."...Decades of oppression and occupation, despair and deprivation have toppled this destitute nation... and the military might of countless countries self-described as "defenders" has been crushed.

Thousands of frantic people fled their homes, racing in panic toward Kabul Airport and any flight that would transport them to safety. Masses of traumatized families were herded into overcrowded aircraft, a fragile cargo of the brokenhearted.

Across America military personnel raced to equip Army bases for a flood of these victims of tragedy, many of whom "served America" putting themselves and their loved ones in grave danger, fighting a war that no one has won. Tens of thousands arrived on US soil bereft of their homeland.

Within a few days the House of Peace received the first arrivals in Boston. In partnership with our colleagues of many years at Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigrant Services we began the complex process of welcome and resettlement. So many came to us: shattered, but strong...traumatized but trusting...torn by fear for their families back home, but willing to face the demands of building a new home here. Quietly, they slipped into the enigmatic forms of a new life in this town of Ipswich: single men, a young couple, a small family and one quite large...patiently, graciously, ever so humbly opening themselves to learning the obscure lessons of life in a foreign land, even while unconsciously teaching the still greater lessons of life in a land torn asunder by war.

Church congregations and community groups have organized and serve tirelessly to meet the countless needs. Volunteers work to secure healthcare and housing, food security and clothing, schooling, employment and so much more. Daily the House of Peace feels surrounded by the ever-expanding team that offers support for these newcomers who feel the light of hope for survival and security.

Something very deep is at work here. After forty years of sharing life with people displaced by war, why do I hesitate to call these new friends "refugees"? Of course they have fled persecution and fear for their lives. Undoubtly they have been forced to flee their country because of war and violence and require international protection. But they are truly so much more. Each has come with a name  
"...and I have written their names in my heart and forever will they stay."

Translated, remembered, recited they become a kind of rosary, each name a kind of prayer—  
a deep connection with a soul newly bound to my own:

Prophet...Praiseworthy...Friend...and Believer...

Forbearing...Forgiving...and Alive...

Beautiful Flower...Precious Stone...

Security...Safety...and Peace



But what of the land they left behind? What is the situation now in Afghanistan? The International Rescue Committee describes it this way:

“Yes, it was terrible prior to August. But when the development funding was cut off on August 15 and the sanctions were imposed and the assets frozen, that really took the situation from very bad to an extreme.” (Vicki Aken)

The United Nations urges the world to recognize this “extreme”:

In a population of 39 million people, 23 million are suffering extreme levels of hunger.

Most people in the country do not have enough to eat.

The economy has collapsed and humanitarian relief only trickles in at this time.

Drought persists escalating food shortages.

And the land is dangerously littered with explosive ordinance...bombs, grenades and other life-taking munitions that will kill and maim children and adults.

And the people? What of those people condemned to the starvation of body and soul?

How shall they endure the pain that war and oppression and violence have forced upon them?

Their famous poet Rumi writes:

“When the world pushes you to your knees, you are in the perfect position to pray.”

The people of Afghanistan are a people of prayers. This we know and see every day.

Shall we not then find our own kneeling place beside them...that bent to the ground we may

Seek forgiveness and facing the rising Sun we may freely offer our unbounded love that will ultimately

Create the home in which they and we all must live.

## افغانستان

*If we come to weeping,  
we are His cloud full of raindrops.*

*And if we come to laugh  
we are his lightning in that moment.*

*If we come to anger and battle,  
it is the reflection of His wrath.*

*And if we come to peace and pardon,  
It is the reflection of His love.*

*Who are we in this complicated world?*

*If we come to sleep  
we are His drowsy ones.*

*And if we come to wake  
we are in His hands.*

*Rumi*





**THE HEALTHY SOCIAL LIFE IS FOUND ONLY WHEN IN THE MIRROR OF EACH SOUL THE WHOLE COMMUNITY CAN FIND ITS REFLECTION, AND WHEN IN THE WHOLE COMMUNITY THE VIRTUE OF EACH ONE IS LIVING.**

Health on every level is found and nourished when the rhythms of life take hold and are grounded. In community life, this healthy rhythm depends entirely on the faithful turning of the one to the other, each increasingly conscious of the place of the individual within the whole and the indwelling of the Wholeness within each one. Not an easy task! And yet a wondrous one....

The chaos of Covid can profoundly disrupt such life-sustaining rhythms. We have, like everyone, experienced the consequences of these arrhythmical forces of separation and anti-social distancing; fear and isolation. Activity on every level has been affected. And yet, largely through the gifts of those with whom we share our lives in community, the irrepressible rhythms of communication, service, hard work and inevitable joy prevail.

Summer holds its own magic in strengthening these patterns while holding out ever-new possibilities.

Through a generous grant of the Coburn Charitable Society, a well-established Ipswich foundation serving the needs of older people in the community--we were able to inaugurate an art program.

This found our own elders, joined by other neighbors and led by our gifted and creative new House of Peace resident, Kathe Johnson, gathered weekly for painting sessions and other artistic activities.

Added to this have been weekly sessions of Eurythmy, also led by Kathe, where together we can experience the rhythms of artistic and therapeutic movement. Exquisite music offered by Julia Elliott and Joan Tannheimer accompanies these classes and we feel the beauty and meaning of it all permeate our whole community.

The land we love and serve had special tending throughout the summer months. Neighbor and friend, Cameron Banks, labored in our garden and created a space of beauty and nourishment. Nearby our shimmering swimming pool welcomed children from far and wide, an oasis for them and their parents who gathered for this special kind of summer sharing. Many climbed the ladders to help with the abundant harvest of our fruit trees. Steps away in the shop in our venerable barn, master helpers Joel, David and Antonio took turns mending, repairing and sustaining the tools, appliances and complex systems of this active household. Meanwhile in the office space of this very old house our indispensable administrative assistant—beloved partner and friend for many years, Kate Salandrea—has revolutionized our somewhat inept systems and assumed responsibility in many areas.

All this and so much more flows from the selfless well of generosity embodied in our three special permanent members of the House of Peace. Mary Ellen and Geraldine have been joined since September by Vera whose life in Camphill has fully prepared her for the lively pace in our household. These three women are our core ...“our deep heart’s core”. Their openness, unconditional hospitality, humor, interest in others and positive energy form a shelter for the newly arrived, a true haven and home for all who come. We are blessed!



The work continues embedded in the rhythms of the season that give firm ground in these earth-trembling times. As our Afghan community takes hold and expands in welcome to other new guests in nearby communities, we also prepare to receive more patients, this time from Syria, seeking medical help in Boston through our long-established partnership with the Iraqi Children's Project. Coordination of these and all other efforts is supported by our extraordinary Board of Directors and our Advisors who uphold the mission of the House of Peace and all the layers of work required to fulfill our tasks.

Strong and faithful relationships are at the heart of life's essential rhythms. We are daily grateful for how these manifest in our ongoing work. Continual gatherings of our Anthroposophical groups for study and reflection, planning and sharing of the Festivals of the year are a constant source of strength and clarity for us all. We rely as always on our regular collaboration with our colleagues in Camphill and the North American Council who devote themselves to creating ever more fulfilling lives for communities who include people of varying abilities. In confronting violations to human rights and injustices both near and far from home we turn always to our partners in finding paths to peace.

A special privilege for us was participating in the fall pilgrimage led by the monks and nuns of the New England Peace Pagoda: Listening to the Call of the Great Spirit: Facing 400 Years of Colonization.

In some circles this striving for healing, creative and energizing life in community is called "social therapy." The Principles and Purposes of the House of Peace, drawn up in 1990, refer to a great leader in this field, Dr. Karl Konig, founder of Camphill...the refugee who started a movement.

*We have only to grasp the idea of curative work in a sufficiently comprehensive way to become aware of its true vocation.... Healing community wants to become a worldwide activity and helpfully confront the threat to the individual person. This attitude must express itself in every social service...in the care of souls...in the guidance of orphans and refugees and in aid to the underdeveloped, by a worldwide peace corps and other similar endeavors. It is the only answer we can offer today...inasmuch as we still want to be human beings... to humanity dancing at the abyss.*

Dr. Karl Konig (1902-1966)

## CAIRN

Stones whisper of kindness  
left to echo in the ear of anyone who comes along...  
Cairn offer assurance about the path you are on---your trace  
still aligned. These stones smile and say: "cross here in safety"... (Cameron Miller)

The hillside rises steeply behind this House of Peace. Climbing steadily up the steps laid into the contours of the hill, we always pause at the Thoreau House, our cabin retreat that offers space for both solitude and friendship. Further on at the peak of the climb we approach our vast open field, bordered by ancient stone walls. In the center is a circle of stones, aligned to honor the holy solstices of the year. Here we can turn to the Four Directions and feel the blessings of the elements on our land and all our people. By now we are prepared to walk slowly eastwards to the Cairn, to enter this newly created Hillside Sanctuary—a place for remembrance, reflection, and renewal.

As with many profound discoveries in our lives this one comes from the other side...a gradual discernment that a seemingly unformed pile of stones rising in a grove of hickory trees actually was whispering a message: "A traveler came here—then went on— shared with those who went before and shall come after."

We pondered that voice in the depths of our shared sorrow at the early springtime death of a young friend—one who, like so many others we have met, carried a deep consciousness of the pain of this world and the abyss of suffering it inflicts on so many. Together with John-Paul's family and friends and teachers we gathered in September at this emerging trail shrine, mindful of life's pilgrimage and the signposts we need to find our way. We cleared the area of autumn leaves and shaped the tower of stones, now seen as sacred. Walking the small spiral encircling the tower, we marveled at these rocks pointing upwards—beacon, light, symbol of ageless wisdom connected with the Native peoples to whom this hilltop belongs.

When Advent came round we came together again to dedicate this House of Peace sanctuary. We carried our own stones up the hill, some of them painted a shining gold, each of them gently placed one by one on this rising tower. We sang as we did all this, the wind taking the harp song into the heights, the voice of John-Paul's sister repeating the rune:

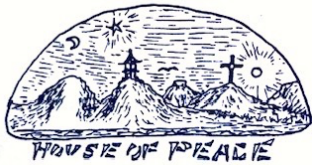
"Beauty all around us/Beauty deep within/The sign of awakening/When all is forgiven."

We placed a bench there, high on that hill, an invitation to all who come this way to add a rock to the Cairn, and then to sit and face the vista looking east. Listen to the whispering stones that ask us to cherish our milestones and trust our guides. Lean back on this bench and let its inscription inspire you:

LOOK UP AT THE SKY.

THERE IS A LIGHT, A BEAUTY UP THERE THAT NO SHADOW CAN TOUCH. (Tolkien)





## IN MEMORIAM

The endless flow of life into death into rebirth washes over us as we navigate the stormy seas of our days and nights. Guides there are along the way...lights upon the water...steady anchors in troubled times. When these precious ones cross over we must find them in new ways, feeling them in the waves that still lap upon the shores of our lives, seeing them in the light of each horizon, hearing them in that quiet voice that no ocean's roar can overcome.

This past year at the House of Peace we have accompanied so many at these threshold moments of death and dying. The sorrow of friends and families left behind are our sorrows and our own tears fall into an ocean of pain. And yet, the nearness of those on the Other Side awakens us to our task: stay close, stay strong, stay true to all that is asked of us by those who would surround our earthly work with "strong power from Spirit-Lands."

On January 26, 2022 Thich Nhat Hanh, venerable Buddhist monk and master of peace building, died. His words have led many to a deep understanding of the force of compassion and nonviolence. His teaching has long inspired our work to welcome others through the door of compassion.

*Don't say I will depart tomorrow---even today I am still arriving.  
Look deeply; every second I am arriving to be a bud on a Spring branch,  
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings learning to sing in my new nest...  
I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, to fear and to hope.  
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive...  
Please call me by my true names so I can wake up,  
and so the door of my heart can be left open, the door of compassion.*

As always, when we review a year past through the crystal lens of winter's cold we marvel at the flow of generous gifts that keep this House of Peace alive. Surely it is serious business to meet the multiple challenges and economic demands laid upon us. We are daily thankful for the contributions of every kind that support our efforts to sustain our responsible stewardship for the House of Peace: its buildings, its land, and above all its ever-growing community.

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*Enclosed is my gift for the House of Peace:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

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House of Peace, Inc. is a therapeutic community serving victims of war, in companionship with adults with disabilities, and offering education for peace and moral awakening, incorporated in Massachusetts in 1990 as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt charitable and educational corporation, supported by voluntary contributions. [www.houseofpeaceinc.org](http://www.houseofpeaceinc.org)