

Christmas

In the style of 1st Corinthians

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on the real meaning of the holiday, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love does not envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens. *Love* does not yell at the kids to get out of the way. *Love* does not give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't. *Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. *Love* never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, and golf clubs will rust. But giving the gift of love will endure.

Author Unknown

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IDENTITY OF L'ARCHE

We are people, with and without developmental disabilities, sharing life in communities of faith.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our life together. We seek to build a world that recognizes the unique value of every person and our need of one another.

The MISSION OF L'ARCHE is

To make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships;

To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society;

To foster community that is inspired by the core values in our founding story and responds to the changing needs of our members.



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A Sign of Hope in a Broken World

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Longing for Light and Peace

*Sister Maria Zeiman, OSF
Regional Coordinator
Central U.S. Region*

As many of our readers may be aware, 26 members of L'Arche US Zone attended the International General Assembly in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), India in October. This was the first L'Arche International gathering held outside of Europe or North America. It was first L'Arche International gathering held in a country which is not primarily Christian--a big and fruitful step for L'Arche.

One of the priorities of L'Arche International is: understanding and living diversity and unity. We experienced that in many ways during the eight days of the Assembly. Since I was asked to talk about Advent in this article, I would like to share the experience of the Hindu worship service.

The Advent season is about being in darkness and longing for light and the Light. Advent is about expecting, anticipating, waiting and longing for peace and the Prince of Peace. The Hindu worship service had two main



foci: light and peace.

In Christian worship services we often process forward to receive the Bread of Life to be nourished in body and spirit. In the Hindu service we processed toward a lamp held by the worship leader.

Each person held his/her hands over the flame receiving the light, then moved the hands over the forehead asking for enlightenment, moved the hands over the eyes asking for new light to see with divine eyes.

During the procession, a prayer was chanted which included these desires:

Enlighten my light with your light.
Dispel my inner darkness.
Lead me from darkness to light.

In Christian worship services we often extend our hands to one another and ask for peace to be given and received. In the Hindu service we folded our hands over our heart, bowed to each other and prayed "Shanti" their word for peace. The accompanying chant included these words:

May there be peace in the heavens,
May there be peace on the earth,
May there be peace in healing herbs,
May there be peace in the Spirit,
May there be peace in the whole universe and with all.

As we celebrate the Advent season praying for light and peace we can be assured that we will be in communion with our Hindu brothers and sisters. Though diverse we are one body.

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Jack Lindscott, Jr. Memorial Fund

Talley Wells
Fundraising Chairperson

I recently had the privilege of attending a birthday celebration for Jack Lindscott, Jr., even though Jack passed away earlier this year. Over the years, Jack had built a network of so many friends to celebrate his birthday that the group wanted to continue to gather to remember him and celebrate his life.

Jack, who had a developmental disability, was constantly meeting new people and involving them in his life. He also loved to eat. Each year, he invited his friends to join him at the Olive Garden to celebrate his birthday. Last month, I got to be part of the celebration and hear stories about this remarkable man.

A friend of Jack's has started a fund in his honor with Friends of L'Arche Atlanta because he believes that L'Arche is a community that Jack would have wanted to be a part of. The Jack Lindscott, Jr. Memorial Fund's goal is to raise \$50,000 over a five-year period. We will celebrate Jack's life by designating the living room in the first Atlanta home as the "Friendship Room" in Jack's honor. In a coming newsletter, we plan to have an article written by one of Jack's friends explaining the extraordinary impact Jack made on his life and the myriad other people he encountered.

Contribution to the Jack Lindscott, Jr. Memorial Fund:

James & Cheryl White

Turn Promise Into Reality

Talley Wells
Fundraising Chairperson

The United States Supreme Court's Olmstead decision is often referred to as the Brown v. Board decision for people with disabilities in institutions. It was brought by the Atlanta Legal Aid Society and started right here in Metro Atlanta. Even though the decision is about to turn ten, there is much to do to turn its promise into reality.

In Olmstead, the Supreme Court said that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required Georgia to serve individuals with disabilities in the community rather than in institutions, with limited exceptions. The Supreme Court noted that when Congress passed the ADA it stated that people with disabilities were being isolated and segregated in institutions. Olmstead is often compared to the Brown decision because it mandated an end to segregation.

I am an attorney with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, and I have the privilege of working with Sue Jamieson who was the attorney who initiated Olmstead. Sue got to know two women, L.C. and E.W., who both had developmental disabilities and mental health disabilities. They were being locked up in a psychiatric hospital not far from the corner of I-20 and Candler Road in Dekalb County. Sue brought a lawsuit against Georgia arguing that L.C. and E.W. could live much fuller lives in the community.

Sue was right. L.C. and E.W. thrived in their new homes. Sadly, E.W. has now passed away. L.C. is a talented artist, who has had a number of successful art shows at various exhibitions.

Unfortunately, nearly ten years after Olmstead, approximately 3,000 men and women with developmental disabilities still live in state hospitals, institutions, and nursing homes in Georgia. Our vision is that L'Arche in Atlanta will be a small but powerful witness of the promise of Olmstead as we invite men and women who have lived in institutions into family-like homes. We will work together with them to fulfill the mission of L'Arche to:

- Make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.
- Foster an environment in communities that responds to the changing needs of members, while being faithful to the core values of our founding story.
- Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

Host a L'Arche Party!



The fundraising team is looking for folks who would be willing to host a wine and cheese party for L'Arche. These can be small to large gatherings. We can help with invitations, which would include a request for a donation, and provide a speaker. You won't even have to leave your home. If you are interested, please contact Talley Wells at ctwells@alumni.duke.edu or 404-627-6756.

Getting Back to Nature

Judy Miller
Communications Committee

On a sunny but windy Saturday in early August, several members of Friends of L'Arche Atlanta caravanned to Lake Hartwell to enjoy a day of fun and fellowship with participants of Camp Caglewood. Led by FOLA board member, Susanna Miller, the Camp Caglewood group was comprised of six men and women with various developmental disabilities and three other friends of Susanna who helped chaperone the group.

Laura, Talley, Evan and Julia Wells; Susan Koziol; Chuck and Judy Miller and Trey Miller and his friend, Patrick, had a wonderful time mingling with the campers and helping with the various activities. We had a



Susanna Miller, Board member, hangs out with two Caglewood campers.

picnic lunch and then, fortified by our peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, took off for a hike in the woods. We had a list of things to look for and check off upon sighting each item. One item that we had to retrieve and bring back with us was a good-sized pine cone. No one knew why until Susanna

produced more peanut butter and a huge sack of birdseed. We proceeded to roll the pine cones in peanut butter and then in birdseed. We then attached a string and found low enough hanging tree branches on which to hang these tasty treats. If anyone in the Lake Hartwell area came upon some very chubby but chirpy birds that weekend, I think I know how they got that way! We also played a rousing game of toss the bolo. Evan Wells (5 years old) proved to be quite good at this.

All of the attendees had a great time enjoying the great outdoors and each other's company. We thank the Camp Caglewood folks for welcoming those of us from FOLA with enthusiasm and warmth. For more information about the camp and the service it provides for our friends with developmental disabilities, please view their website at www.caglewood.org.

We give thanks to and pray for our recent donors:

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