



The Prelude East

June 2018 - Number 2

Literacy tutoring was something I always wanted to do. It seems like such a noble endeavor, helping a fellow human being learn to read, and maybe even learn to love reading and books. This desire has resided in the back of my mind for many years, but not brought forward in the busy time of establishing careers, raising a family, serving congregations, and all the other things that make up a life.

But a little while ago when I learned that an English literacy tutor training class was to be held, I had the time, and now, two weeks and 12 classroom-hours later, I have my certificate, and a student assignment is in the works. Early in the course I learned that most students in the program will not be who I've always imagined: English speaking folks who for one reason or another are not proficient in reading and writing. Instead, our future students will probably be non-Native English speakers, who would not only have trouble reading and writing the language, but maybe even speaking English, too. In other words, I might be functioning as an ESL teacher as much as a reading tutor.

I hadn't expected that. But in this week of the U.S., and much of the world, agonizing over the images and sounds of immigrant and asylum-seeking children separated from their parents at our southern border, it seemed right that I should step up in this way [but not in this way alone]. It seems right, this week, to make a friend of someone new to the U. S., and be a helper to someone who wants to make a life here.

The United Methodist church has protested against these separations, and the conditions in which young children are being held. The UMC is considering bringing charges against AG Jeff Sessions [who is a United Methodist] and our Council of Bishops has issued strong statements against this inhumane policy. The Society of Friends, and specifically those of San Antonio have actively protested and reached out to these young immigrants. You, certainly, would be aware of actions taken by your own denominations.

I don't mean to say that my new little volunteer tutoring gig fulfills my responsibility to "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can.

In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can" as prescribed by our beloved John Wesley.

We of the LICC community have a long shared history of working together for unity and social justice, and of concern for our neighbors, especially the most vulnerable among us. Recent events make it clear that our work is as necessary as ever.

May peace be your way in the world, Rev. Lorraine De Armitt

Dear Pastor and Church Leaders,

In light of the upcoming November election and in the interest of holding candidates accountable for campaign promises, would any of the following areas of social need resonate with your experience in serving the People of God in your community and/or parish?

- are people experiencing difficulty getting to work or keeping appointments because of inadequate public transportation in your area?
- is truly affordable work-force housing absent in your community?
- if there are undocumented parents living near you, have you heard or met with parents who are hesitant and afraid of seeking out legitimate and lawful medical assistance for their children?
- for parishioners suffering from the opioid crisis have you heard of failures in the mental health system in regard to excessively inadequate therapy sessions available to the addicted?
- do those suffering from addictions find themselves frustrated by the short-term limits after detox for access to sober houses?

We at the Long Island Council of Churches will take the responsibility to forward your responses to the Candidates requesting their proposed solutions and course of action.

Thanksgiving is Just Around the Corner!!!

Well, not really. But the Eastern Area Steering Committee would like to hold the Community/Migrant Thanksgiving Dinner this coming November 20, despite the Riverhead office having been closed. If we can. If you would like to participate in this wonderful event, please let me know. Some churches help in the planning, some in the meal preparation. Some bring cooked turkeys. You know what you have done in the past. Should we proceed with the event this year? I need to know if you're In or Not. LD

Long Island Council of Churches

Position Statement on Violence

The Long Island Council of Churches takes the following update on its position on gun violence.

WHEREAS the Bible in the Ten Commandments tells us, “Thou shalt not kill”, and the Gospels tell us to “love thy neighbor as thyself” and

WHEREAS In 2016 (the last year for which statistics are available) there were 346 mass shooting events and 66% of all suicides were by guns and

WHEREAS domestic violence events took their toll with easy availability of guns and gangs also made use of the availability of guns to carry out their crimes and

WHEREAS one woman in a domestic violence situation is killed by guns every 16 hours and

WHEREAS there were 38,000 deaths in 2016 by gunfire, 80,000 survivors of gunshot wounds.

WHEREAS deaths by gun violence have climbed to being high on the list of the ten most common causes of death in the USA;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Long Island Council of Churches affirm its opposition to gun violence in the following ways:

1. Support the collection of data by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study gun violence as a public health hazard as they do with other health problems like heart disease or cancer or auto accidents in order to eliminate the cause(s).
2. Support marches, boycotts and other forms of protest by young people and all others against gun violence, as a grass roots mass movement is the best way to get social justice action.
3. Encourage gun-making companies to increase the safety measures on guns with new technology that will make the guns child-proof and useless to thieves.
4. Call upon all individuals and faith-based shareholders in gun companies to put pressure on the gun makers to carry out these measures.
5. Support gun-selling stores like Dicks and Walmart, who a) sell no assault style weapons, b) sell no large capacity ammunition magazines and c) sell only to persons 21 years of age or older and ask all other stores to do the same.
6. Approve an educational program for all schools like the Sandy Hook Promise curriculum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we advocate for government legislation including the following:

- 1 Make licensing of all guns more extensive (like auto licensing) and enforce it.
- 2 Close all loopholes in gun checks of criminal background, especially at gun shows where enforcement is lacking.
- 3 Set the age limit for the sale of a gun to 21.
- 4 Prohibit the sale of assault-style weapons.
- 5 Prohibit the sale of high capacity ammunition magazines.
- 6 Enforce the ban on illegal transfer of guns from outside of New York to the local area for sale.