Sympathies are extended to: Andrea Roth (Hillel) on the death of her stepmother.

Back by popular demand, Shoot, Costume Contest, Splash Dogs, Cuddle in Friendship Circle, and the Chaplain’s Corner annual Hike with Haiti as we walk along the Black Water Creek Trail. For a list of our regularly scheduled meetings during the academic year, go to the Spiritual Organizations on Campus. To bring their dogs to campus, you can view previous and current issues of our newsletter or e-mail, with permission. You can find more on the Spiritual Life webpage—www.lynhburg.edu/spirituallife.

Do a Hopeful Thing

A recent post on Facebook from a high school friend decried all the bad news happening around the world. She wondered what folks were doing in the face of so much seemingly hopeless tragedies such as ISIS, Ebola, the death of college co-eds, etc. As I thought about her question, I was reminded of a quote by a priest and peace activist, Daniel Berrigan. When asked how he was able to remain a person of hope in the midst of so much violence and war, he answered simply, “I stay hopeful by doing hopeful things.” Emotions take energy. Always feeling overwhelmed and even paralyzed by bad news both near and far can be draining, exhausting, and ultimately even numbing. Choosing to channel that energy into hopefulness by doing hopeful things can be energizing and life-giving. Recently I’ve been very fortunate to have many opportunities to practice hopeful things. I cannot stop wars raging around the world but I’ve been able to befriend students from Afghanistan and other countries whose lives have been turned upside down by violent upheaval. Friendships with people who have known such suffering up close and personal help ground me as I learn from them courage and resilience. I cannot stop multi-national corporations from taking over small businesses all over the world. But I can listen to the success stories of small communities who have banded together. In places like Nicaragua, communities have created their own cooperatives and fair trade factories as they work together to improve the lives of their village. A woman from such an organization, Julia Vallejos, shared her story at LC this week. Go to this link to read more about her organization. I cannot wave a magic wand and improve the conditions of people living in Haiti, one of the poorest countries of the world. However, I can contribute to the efforts of those who live each day on that island as they work tirelessly to better themselves through education, agriculture, and other positive development. One way to share in this hopeful venture is through the 14th annual Hike with Haiti as we walk along the Black Water Creek Trail. We reflect on the miles walked by our Haitian brothers and sisters as they traverse great distances to get water at the spring, to buy charcoal at the market, and hopefully to go to school for the fortunate few who have access to education.

In my visits to Haiti over the years, I never cease to be amazed by the creative energy of the people from Matenwa whose community learning center we support. This past summer I participated in a local summer camp where children learned everything from basic science, to playing guitar, to weaving purses from recycled gum wrappers, to building stools, to growing vegetables. Lacking certain basic skills myself, I simply offered to play games with the campers using cards, dice, puzzles, and balls that didn’t require a shared spoken language. We spoke laughter instead (see photo at left). Those interested in “doing a hopeful thing” for and with Haiti are invited to walk with us on Sunday afternoon. Hikers are asked to contribute $10 to support the community learning center as well as “House of Love,” an orphanage founded by Ancito Etienne, an LC sophomore from Haiti. If you can’t join us on Sunday, you can still be a person of hope by sending a contribution through campus mail to the Chaplain’s Office. Checks can be made payable to the Chaplain’s Office. Checks can be made payable to House of Love, an orphanage founded by Ancito Etienne, an LC sophomore from Haiti. If you can’t join us on Sunday, you can still be a person of hope by sending a contribution through campus mail to the Chaplain’s Office.

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