Peace Moment. March 6, 2022

My friend, Oretha, was a refugee from the Liberian Civil War when she arrived in Des Moines, Ia, in 2008. I met her through her children who arrived in 2007. Oretha never asked for anything. Her joy of being reunited with her children brought a permanent smile to her face and laughter to her lips. I will always remember the day in May when we met. Soon after, Oretha had a job at the Adventureland casino. She worked as a cleaning person on the night shift for many years. But I continued to pick her up on Sunday mornings because she said that she needed to go to church so she could praise God instead of going straight to bed when she got off work. Through the years Oretha has accomplished many things. She got her driver’s license and a car. She worked hard and learned to read and write and was able to get her US citizenship. Being at her ceremony was so much fun. She got to see her 3 children graduate from High School and 1 has gone on to complete his bachelor’s degree. She joined Community of Christ the first Sunday that other baptisms were accepted. She was confirmed 10 years ago this month. But her greatest accomplishment was getting her own home. Oretha enrolled in the Habitat for Humanity program and spent many hours working towards this goal. She took classes on how to take care of her new home and helped with building homes for other families. At the key presentation, it was great to welcome her into her own place. What a difference this made for her family. Her children and grandchildren are always able to find refuge with her home. It has become a sanctuary for them. Habitat for Humanity is an organization that works to give families their own shelter. It provided life changing shelter and space for this family. Everyone needs shelter. Let’s work together to abolish poverty and end suffering.

Meditation Questions

What makes my house feel like home?

What can I do to help refugees learn “the game” of living in Iowa?

What can I share with refugees to help them feel settled?

Prayer for Peace

Loving God,

As the numbers of unsettled people who are fleeing poverty, disasters, and war increases all over the world, we pray for each one. We pray for your protection, guidance, comfort, and strength to be a blessing as each family, person, and child finds their way. We pray for peace in the refugee camps and for enough food and medicine to be available. We pray that their experiences without knowing the language and being surrounded by strangers will be peaceful.

We pray that when we encounter them personally, that we will know what to do and say and share to make them feel welcome, and that soon, we can count them as “us”.

Hear our prayer O God.

Amen