

minneapolis catholic worker

"Community cannot take root in a divided life. Long before community assumes external shape and form, it must be present as a seed in the undivided self: only as we are in communion with ourselves can we find community with others." —Parker Palmer

Community News

BY KATIE YANIKE

We bought a house! A second house, that is. The Minneapolis Catholic Worker community is now officially a two-house community. The new house sits directly across the street from the Rye House and is where Molly and Zach have moved, along with their 60 pound black lab, Birdie. We are already enjoying the easy flow of people back and forth between the two houses.

As this year ends, we look forward to the new beginnings this house purchase signifies. Molly and Zach are closer than ever to the bustle of the Rye House, and we are anticipating the changes in our daily rhythms that this close proximity will bring. With all of our community members and houses so close, we are also beginning the work of imagining how our collective work will look in and between the two spaces. We are open to hearing the lessons learned from other multi-house communities!

In the midst of the house-buying excitement, we also said a bittersweet goodbye to Mahmoud, who moved to St. Louis to begin a business venture there. Mahmoud lived at the Rye House for almost three years and his lighthearted and generous presence is missed.

As we continue to reflect on our community's work this year--primarily the Faith and Resistance Retreat and subsequent trial organizing, along with other collaborative activism in the Twin Cities, as well as solidarity with the water protectors in North Dakota--we have begun to reimagine our community's vision and mission. The MCW is inspired by the work that we see other intentional communities and local activists doing and are



Type to enter text Left to right, back row: Zach, Joe, Cina, Molly, middle row: Jie, Jared, front row: Katie (Ted the dog), Nikki

committed to continuing to doing the same. The re-visioning/reworking of our community's mission statement and vision will hopefully reflect this commitment, as well as the new configuration of the Minneapolis Catholic Worker. We will continue to grow and preserve food, offer hospitality in three of our rooms at Rye House and in one additional room at the new house, as well as deepen our engagement with other activities and organizations outside of the Catholic Worker.

One of the things we'll be doing in the coming year that falls in line with these goals is a community project with local activists, artists, historians and social service workers around alternatives to policing. This is a somewhat underground project that will be launching in February/March, so stay tuned!

We also will be teaming up with SURJ Minneapolis to facilitate a series of educating discussions with other white people about the history of policing, criminalization of black and brown people, and visioning what alternatives to police would look like within social services and our wider community as a whole.

And, finally, Joe and Erica did not take plea deals for the Twins Opener action and WON THEIR CASE! Their hope was to use their trial to put pressure on Ramsey County prosecutors to drop charges on Louis Hunter, Philando Castile's cousin, who was profiled and unjustly charged with felonies last July. Both of their testimonies were heartfelt and pointed, drawing the jury's attention to the systemic nature of racist police brutality. Nikki's trial was resolved in a joint plea deal on her two cases that enables her to continue organizing and Jeffrey, with whom she went to court, continued to trial and was found guilty. He also had an emotionally powerful testimony and trial experience which led the jury members to express their sympathy with his argument, although they still found him guilty.

The court proceedings of the past few weeks have been full of loving and friendly faces who have come out to support Erica, Joe, Nikki, and Jeff. Their powerful presence in the courtroom has made such a profound impact on those going through trial. We are deeply grateful for that support. We are also deeply grateful for the emotional and financial support we have received from so many of you this year (and every year), and for the inspiration we find in being in greater community with all of you. As we look to the new year, and to a Trump presidency, we lean on those connections and continue to move forward.

The Perfect Pie

BY MOLLY PACH JOHNSON

The holiday season has come and gone but, fear not, it is always time for pie. My favorite dessert is, and always has been, apple pie (some of you may be pumpkin or key lime fans, but it is a proven fact that apple is the best type of pie, adored by all). It's easy, aesthetically pleasing, and for all of you organized shoppers out there, it can be made days ahead of your event. It also pairs perfectly with the second proven favorite dessert among everyone anywhere, vanilla bean ice cream. (No biases have interfered with the writing of this recipe recommendation whatsoever.)

My mother taught me to bake by starting me with her specialty: sugar molasses cookies. We never ventured a lesson in pie because she always insisted that a usable, homemade crust is the most difficult thing to make. I taught myself to make pie in college because my theatre department often had potluck occasions and since I

was broke and apples were an affordable and likeable source of fiber, I always had them on hand. I learned pie crust has four ingredients and it became my go-to item to contribute.

Two things to remember when making pastries of any kind are: 1) the butter and water must be cold, and 2) you cannot substitute the flour for almond, coconut or gluten free. I have recently decided to go off the gluten myself, which will limit my opportunities to indulge, but I have found that all-purpose is the only flour that provides the elasticity you need to make a pie crust. Ready? Here we go . . .

To make the Perfect Pie Crust you will need:

1 1/4 C all-purpose flour, plus 1/2 C for rolling out dough

1 tsp salt

1/2 C (one stick) butter, lard, or ghee

1/4 C cold water (You may find you will need more depending on the consistency)

Mix flour and salt in a large mixing bowl. Take butter from fridge and grate it into the bowl. (You can also cut it into small cubes, but grating works best for even distribution.) Mix together and slowly add the water. The dough should be mixed well and slightly sticky. Lay out a sheet of parchment paper or plastic wrap and sprinkle with flour. Scoop dough out of bowl and form a ball, using flour to unstick the dough. Place on paper and wrap it up (like a present!) Put it in the fridge if you are making the pie in a few days, or the freezer if you'd like to make it within the hour.

The Perfect Apple Pie Filling

3-4 apples, depending on the size. Braeburn or Pink Lady are my favorites. Any kind will do, it's all about your taste. Keep in mind, the sweeter the apple, the less sugar you will need to add.

2 Tbsp cinnamon

1 Tbsp ground ginger

1/4 C brown sugar

1 tsp ground cloves

2 Tbsp lemon juice

1 Tbsp butter or ghee

Peel and thinly slice apples. Place in bowl and add lemon juice. Toss apples until coated. Add cinnamon, ginger, sugar, and cloves and mix. Melt butter in skillet and add apple-spice-sugar mixture. Cook apples until tender. If consistency is too runny, add a few tablespoons of flour. Let mixture cool.

Take dough out of fridge or freezer and slice in half. Sprinkle counter and rolling pin with flour and roll dough until it is 1/4 inch thick. Butter and flour your pie dish and gently place dough on top. Press to the bottom and sides of dish, leave extra dough hanging over the sides. Add cooled apple mixture. Roll out the other half of dough and place on top. Pinch the dough to the edges of the plate and using knife, cut excess dough from the sides. Brush melted butter on top.

Using a knife, cut four slits in the center. If you're feeling fancy (which I always am when making pie), roll out the extra dough and cut fancy shapes to add on the top crust of the pie. This will allow the heat to escape without causing the filling to bubble over. Bake for one hour at 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Enjoy on its own or a la mode!

The Trials of Trial

BY NIKKI FLECK

I have been stuck in courtrooms a lot this year, a trip or two every other week for the past six months. I'm summoned there to support friends, other activists, or for my own cases. Windowless rooms, robotic interactions, eyes that make contact but never connect. I recall laying out on the carpeted floor, November 9th, red eyed and weary. I felt hungover and nostalgic for everything that was my life before the election. I remember the hugs from strangers in the courtroom elevator. I overheard my prosecutor complaining about the election results. Something about recalls and still, "being with her." Shaking my head at the irony, I extended out on the carpeted floor waiting for who-knows-which hearing. I had faith my attorney would find me. A legal worker walked by and said, "I wouldn't lay there, there's always mice running around in here."

I honestly think she just didn't want me sleeping on the floor but I didn't take any chances. I sat in the nearest pleather, backless chair and began to scroll through Twitter without really reading anything. I wanted desperately to find an out. To go home. But that's something about court, you HAVE to be there. Or else: a warrant out for your arrest. (Ok I know some of you are not convinced.)

For me, court is an absolute drain without giving much back. Every time I exit our government center I feel like I have been starved of oxygen. I always gasp as I exit the building, even welcoming in the Minneapolis -10 degree air, escaping a toxic frigidness inside. Courtrooms are not built to make people feel good. It's a glorified jail with a shitty cafeteria.

As our courtroom has become a frequent stop for me, it's made me ponder why the hell I'm there so much. I've been a Catholic Worker for seven years. I know what you're thinking: "I was born into the movement!" or "That's how long I spent in jail for my last round of convictions!" But for an introvert who has never been head-over-heels for Peter Maurin, it's a long-ass time. From the beginning of my Catholic Worker time, I've understood that going to court is what you're supposed to do after an action. It's an extension of direct action. Other options never really crossed my mind.

I've had the opportunity to be in a very small handful of my own trials. All with big groups. I felt fairly lighthearted; it was even fun at times. I didn't feel much anxiety around what could happen to me; I felt invincible, to say the least, and my privilege was a big part of that. During that time I wouldn't say that I was an activist or an organizer. It turns out it's fairly easy to show up to actions other people spent years planning.

Now that I feel more connected to racial and economic justice work in my city I question the ideal of always going to trial. First off, I hope we're in a place where we support what an individual chooses to do after any action. Or before an action, for that matter. There are roles for each of us. Even in a movement that is lacking racial diversity we need to recognize and support the diverseness of people in the Catholic Worker movement. Some of us experience mental illness, others chronic illness. Some people have full time jobs. Perhaps your

CW house isn't fully funded. Maybe the idea of speaking in front of other people gives you nightmares and terrible anxiety. Maybe you have a partner and you are a huge jerk to them the week before a trial because you're so stressed out. (Example from a friend not my own personal experience.) It's important to take into account how much you can give. Moving into a fascist regime I believe it will be more important than ever to FOLLOW THROUGH with what you commit to. We are going to be relying on one another in bigger ways. Many of us will be 'risking' more. You have to decide what is best for you. My hope is that in that process your community not only supports you, but uplifts you. If we are not being affirmed and held in this work we will surely burn out or get lost in bitterness or depression. Are we making room for joy in our many trials?

I admire and respect the perspective that many workers have in the movement, "courtroom witness." Many feel convicted to testify "why" they did something, even if that testimony is only heard by a judge or a small jury. Others simply refuse to ever say they are guilty (because they are not right!) These beliefs are beautiful to me. I am humbled by people that take their convictions all the way through court. It has undeniable effects whether seen or unseen. I am so proud of my community- mates Erica and Joe who went to court last week and won their case. I felt hopeful when a jury member came up to our friend Jeffrey in tears to tell him how much she appreciated his actions and admired the work he was doing in dismantling white supremacy. I celebrate these wins! But I'm asking myself and others if we can do this every few months? Is it sustainable? Should everyone go to court? Are the courts going to be coming down harder on activists in the next few years? Should we maybe be more strategic about sharing the work within the many layers and nuances. Assata Shakur states, "No movement can survive unless it is growing and changing with the times. If it isn't growing, if it's stagnant, and without the support of the people, no movement for liberation can exist, no matter how correct its analysis of the situation is."

I'm in no way saying that I don't think it's applicable to go to court. But is it for everyone? Should it be something we put our bodies through every few months? The terrain is shifting. I don't know what it's going to be like to organize under a fascist regime but I don't imagine that my organizing 'workload' is going to get any lighter. My personal goals currently are to push my cases up until court hoping to get the best 'deal' possible, knowing that sometimes I will feel called to trial depending on a myriad of practical and spiritual reasons.

Basically, I believe it's important to take into account how much you can give. Moving into a fascist regime I believe it will be more important than ever to FOLLOW THROUGH with what you commit to. We are going to be relying on one another in bigger ways. Many of us will be 'risking' more. You have to decide what is best for you. My hope is that in that process your community not only supports you, but uplifts you. If we are not being affirmed and held in this work we will surely burn out or get lost in bitterness or depression. Are we making room for joy in our many trials?

landscapes

BY ERICA SHERWOOD

My community and I are inheriting a fragmented landscape. A landscape of money that is scattered haphazardly ... over here in the earth's depths ... over there in clean water ... across fields of monocrops and pesticides ... to the south in pointless border walls ... bombs are dropping east and west ... glaciers are melting north and south. I cannot rely on any of the many lakes near me to be clean anymore. The white man's culture in the United States is one of taking and taking and taking, and never returning. It is a culture disconnected

from body, spirit, heart and earth. It leaves us in fragmented, unknown territory. And I am aware of the real fears and anxieties showing up in my body with Trump as president: my buzzing brain, my knotted shoulders, my vagina's crawl inward from her increased vulnerability, my heart's quick beat. It is like a constant practice of non-attachment to the world, the earth, my loves, me.

But I have been finding some ground this January. And I feel certain in this one thing: I can choose freedom daily. In small ways. Rebellious ways. Beautiful, simple ways. Philosopher Albert Camus has this quote: "The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion." I wonder what that means some days. Yet simultaneously, my body feels the freedom -- in spite of all the fear and anxiety -- that Camus talks about, and I find it comes from connecting with sacred, with roots, with ancient practices of life and truth.

It can be found in growing food. Cooking with tomatoes, corn and cinnamon from my ancestors. Embracing my queerness. Not just welcoming, but adoring people in their wholeness. Making space for wholeness. Loving people openly, honestly and fully. Taking care of my body. Connecting with my body. Listening to my body. Moving from that space. Rooting in the truths I know. Making commitments to loves. Keeping those commitments. Practicing ritual. Reimagining life around me. Living in those imagined places. Talking to my grandparents. Laughing with my grandparents. Knowing the stories of the strong matriarchs in my bloodline. Living in community. Learning how to live in community! Healing my body and my family's body. Speaking Spanish. Speaking Nahuatl. Listening to plants. Living for people not money.

I am very aware that none of this is new thought, but as this month shifts the world, my body tells me my greatest resistance are these things. It is living fully, strongly, largely in my own space. It is returning to my family. It is studying ancient. It is choosing freedom.

somedays / freedom / takes form / in the / mixing of / milk and honey.

its that moment / when you bear witness / to plant growth / between concrete cracks

or

that night / when you watched your black family / be whole / in voices of rageful tears / 'we gonna be alright' beats / 'whose streets, our streets' strength / love / undeniable defining street style / and full black femme natural hair beauty / on a highway / that was once a black neighborhood / that was once Dakota land / that was once grasses, roots, swaying trees / home to birds flying free

its that same night / when you watched your blood people, / brown & carrying the motherland, / dressed in shades of Mexican feathers / jingling ayotes around their legs / in red and white dress / barefoot and with drums / calling to the four directions / come beside / by / quite literally / jumping a fence / at sunset / to bring / ceremony, earth, music, dance / and more sacred / together.

its that same night / when the fence / was broken to the ground / and you felt that power / move all the way up your spine / into the above / and you felt your feet touch / the earth and grasses / still standing / beside asphalt / and you were surrounded / by people you love

and your heart / swooned / gathered in your hands / breathing lifeblood / with strong, dangling roots / like those of a tomato plant / full and beating / fluttering / scared / but / nourished / by ancestors and reclamation / and ready for sky

and you felt your wings / rigid from before / loosen on your back / embracing the / fiery suns / of those july days / grab hold of your heart / thanking your roots / and lifting / rising up / to / what could be / what was

what was coming

good reads

From Nikki:

The Argonauts by Maggie Nelson

I hate when people ask me what my favorite book is. Nobody can answer that...except after they read The Argonauts.

All About Love by bell hooks

Learning about how love cannot exist without communication. Essentially this is the perfect book for anyone trying to live in community. Or trying to be a human.

From Katie:

Killing Rage by bell hooks

A compilation of essays on racism, sexism, classism and revolutionary action. This book inspires me to be more precise in my language and to use the term that hooks often uses: "white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy" when describing patriarchy, capitalism or white supremacy.

From Joe:

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America by Nancy Isenberg

Just as racism has played an integral role in the origins of the social, economic, and political landscape of the United States, so too is classism solidly grafted into (so-called) America's roots. Nancy Isenberg explains that while economic oppression disproportionately affects people of color, since the "origins" of the US a white underclass has been ever-present. Relegated to forced labor in the colonies, the convicts and indentured servants who would comprise the majority of America's initial white trash underclass were a product of a class hierarchy imported to the US from the streets of London. Isenberg shows the reader how this British-based class system is still with us today, rendering the American Dream a myth, even for many members of our country's most privileged racial group. While Isenberg periodically, and somewhat carelessly, makes direct comparisons to types of oppression experienced across racial lines (which, given the intersectional nature of social oppression, is irresponsible), her book reminds me that class has to inform my political ideology, my activism, and how I interact with my community and friends. It has challenged me to see that while I may share the same skin pigmentation with a working-class white person, my class-comfortable upbringing has conferred to me a complex network of social privileges inaccessible to many white people. A well researched and impeccably written book, Isenberg's work tragically demonstrates that throughout American history classism has rendered a culture within which groups of human beings are perceived to be trash.

support us

Our ongoing financial needs are

Ongoing financial support in paying the mortgages of our two houses!

Ways to give

Tax deductible: Make checks out to Spirit of St. Stephen's Catholic Community (SoSSCC) with 'Rye House' in the memo line. These donations will be used to help pay for rent. Send them to: 2201 1st Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

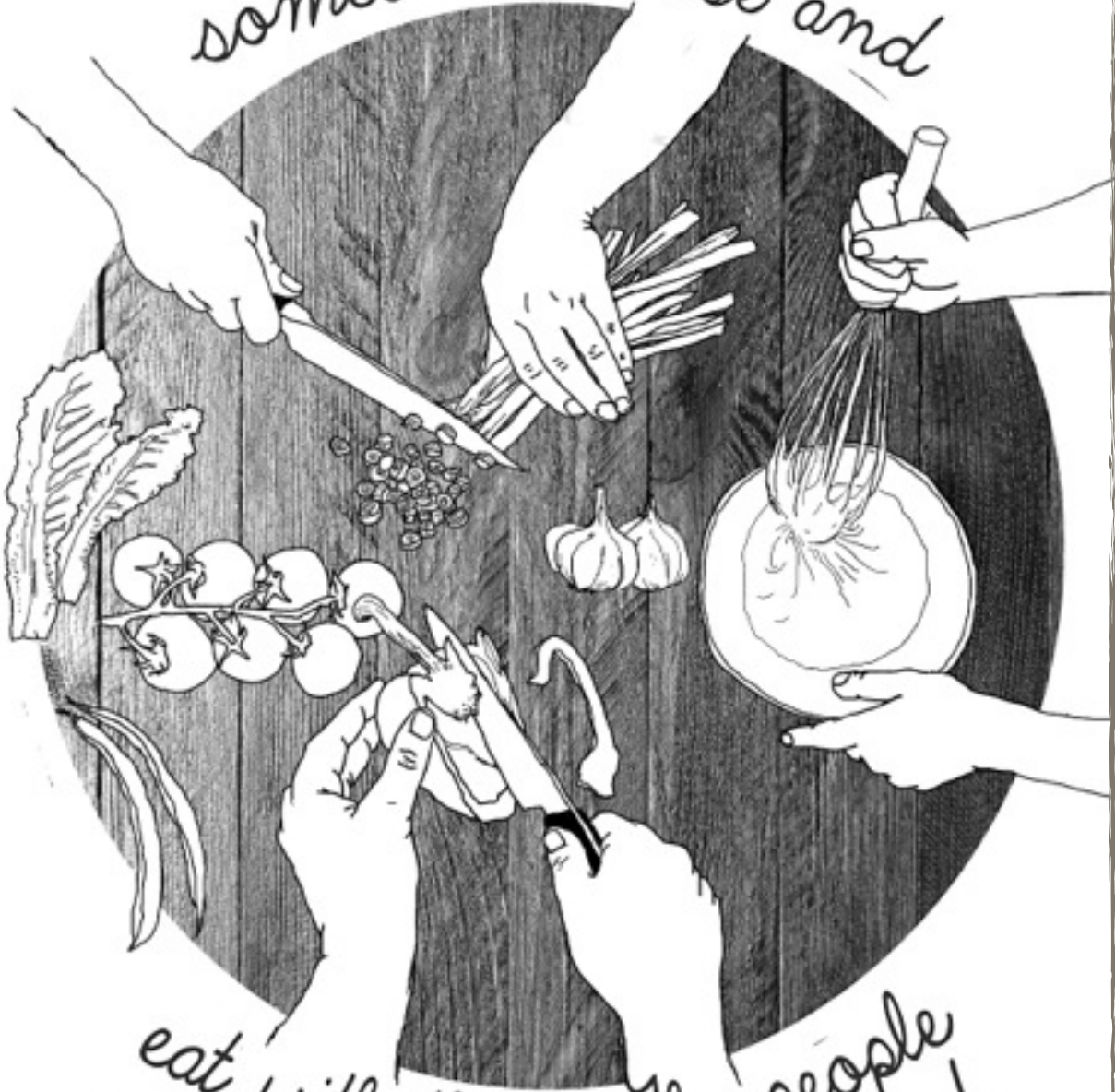
Non-tax deductible: Make checks out to Rye House and mail them to the Rye House. These checks will be used for our projects, utilities and house payments at both houses.

Other needs

- Toilet paper
- Dish soap (preferably eco-friendly)
- Gift certificate to Welna Ace Hardware
- Good gardening gloves
- Hand trowels
- Scuffle stirrup hoe (2)
- Small pruning shears/scissors (hand-held)
- Metal snow shovels (2)
- Push broom (2)
- Garden hose (2)

The Rye House
2204 10th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55404

If you really want to
make a friend,
go to
someone's house and



eat with them. The people
who give you their food,
give you their heart.
-Cesar Chavez