

ONE TABLE

VOLUME XI ISSUE I

WINTER 2010

LOOK INSIDE FOR

Muslims' Reply	2
Local Investing	3
Community Gardens	4
No Dirty Gold	5
100th Anniversary	6
Antarctic Chaplain	7
Resources and Events	9-11

Judicatory Executives Reach Out to Local Imams

The following is a reprint of the November 13 letter written to area Imams and Muslim leaders after the Nov 5 shooting at the military base in Fort Hood, TX.

As leaders of faith communities in the Capital Region, we write to tell you that we are praying for you and all of the Muslim communities throughout our nation who, like us, are grieved by the tragedy at Fort Hood last week.

Although the military leadership and the media have been careful to note that the alleged actions of the suspect, Dr. Nidal Hasan, are no reflection on the many Muslims who serve faithfully and well in the military, it is clear that there is a possibility of a backlash against Muslims as facts and fictions, rumors and leaks swirl around in the aftermath of the shootings.

We are urging all of our congregations to be in prayer not only for the families of those who died, and for those who were wounded, but also for Dr. Hasan and his family. We are also encouraging our members to pay particular attention to and provide support for all Muslims serving in the military, for whom this must be a particularly difficult time.

Sincerely,
Misha Marvel

On behalf of:

Rev. Dr. James Fenimore, Albany District Superintendent, The United Methodist Church, Troy Conference

Rev. Dr. Harold Delhagen Synod Executive, Reformed Church in America, Regional Synod of Albany

The Most Rev. Howard Hubbard, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

Rev. Jane Lang, Associate Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of New York State, Capital Area Baptist Association

Bishop Susan Hassinger, Albany Area, The United Methodist Church

Rev. Robert Linder, President of Interdenominational Ministers Conference of Albany and Vicinity

Rev. Beth Parker, Dean, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Hudson Mohawk Conference

Rev. Cass L. Shaw, General Presbyter, Albany Presbytery, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

Rev. Marian Shearer, Regional Conference Minister, United Church of Christ, Hudson Mohawk Association

CREO Members

Albany United
Methodist Society

American Baptist Churches,
Capital Area Association

Capital Area
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Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

Episcopal Diocese of Albany

Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America,
Hudson Mohawk Conference

FOCUS Churches of Albany

Interdenominational
Ministers Conference of the
Capitol Region

Presbyterian Church, USA,
Presbytery of Albany

Reformed Church in
America, Classis of Albany

Roman Catholic
Diocese of Albany

Schenectady Inner City
Ministry

Troy Area United Ministries

United Church of Christ,
Hudson Mohawk Association

United Methodist Church,
Troy Conference

Local Muslim Leaders Appreciate Support

CREO received the following letters of appreciation in response to the pastoral letter printed on page 1.

I wanted to let you know that I have received your letter of support to the Muslim community on behalf of the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization. On behalf of the Muslim Community of Troy and the entire Capital District, I thank you for your support and understanding of the unfortunate circumstances that the Muslims in this country and in the world are facing.

It is truly pleasing to know that there are kind people of faith who are there for us during difficult times. We appreciate the level of sensitivity that exists in our area as a whole. I hope these feelings and our appreciation will be conveyed to all respected member organizations.

We pray that peace and justice will spread amongst us all and may love, mercy and under-

standing, instead of violence, permeate all of our relationships and interactions.

Sincerely,
Djafrer Sebkaoui
Imam of Muslim Community of Troy

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of support and prayers for the Muslim community locally and nationwide. We at our mosque highly appreciate this. We are very proud of your support and consider it a privilege and honor to live among the faith groups that are so concerned and supportive of our welfare.

Let us pray to the Almighty to guide us all to the right path and to give us wisdom to serve Him and His children with love, mercy and compassion. Amen.

Many thanks once again.
Best wishes,
Shamshad Ahmad
Masjid As-Salam ■

† Visit www.albanypresbytery.org to find more ecumenical news, pastoral letters and archived One Table publications on the new CREO webpages. ■

The Details...

Deadline for Submission
One Table Spring Edition
April/May/June...March 26

Please help us by updating your contact information. We mail our newsletters Third Class for a first-class reason – to save money. While some newsletters may arrive late, we hope the message will always be timely. **This newsletter was distributed the week of January 17.**

One Table is published quarterly by the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization on recycled paper. Circulation: 450 per hard copy issue, 250 per email, and is archived at www.albanypresbytery.org. *One Table* serves as an ecumenical voice in our region and is supported by CREO members and *One Table* readers. Only motions duly passed at Board meetings reflect the official actions of the entire Capital Region Ecumenical Organization. Opinions expressed by contributing writers are not necessarily those of CREO.

Articles, news items, and announcements are invited. Publication cannot be guaranteed, but all submissions will be reviewed for use. The Coordinator reserves the right to edit material to conform to editorial policy, style and length. Unless otherwise attributed, articles are compiled and/or written by the Coordinator. ■

Where Your Treasure is, There Also will Your Heart Be

Marianne Comfort, Board Member

CAPITAL DISTRICT COMMUNITY LOAN FUND

The Capital District Community Loan Fund provides opportunities for religious institutions and individuals to demonstrate that their hearts are truly with those in need in their local communities.

Over the span of almost 25 years, this non-profit community development financial institution (CDFI), certified by the US Department of Treasury, has used investments of socially concerned residents to make more than \$22 million in loans. These loans have been used to develop more than 690 low- and moderate-income housing units, create or retain more than 850 jobs, and help start up or expand more than 140 small businesses owned by women, minority and low-income entrepreneurs.

Religious institutions and individuals -- motivated by their faith commitment to invest in their communities -- were among the first investors in the Community Loan Fund in 1985. They now make up more than 22% of all investors, and include the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, the Albany Presbytery, the Albany Synod of the Reformed Church in America, religious orders, dozens of congregations and many individual congregation members.

Their investments have made possible more than 490 loans to nonprofit organizations and small businesses. Borrowers over the past year include Capital District Habitat for Humanity, for homeownership opportunities in Albany, and a woman-owned medical practice in an underserved rural area of Albany County. Investors also have helped finance an Albany home-based childcare business for third-shift workers and construction of "green" affordable homes in Schenectady's Hamilton Hill neighborhood. Other commitments include the first affordable housing project of the Adirondack Community Housing Trust in Essex County.



The Capital District Community Loan Fund, through such projects, has helped many religious organizations and their members link their spiritual and social mission to critical efforts that address the persistent problems of poverty, unemployment and homelessness.

Consider supporting this well-established local arm of the growing socially responsible investment movement by:

- Investing some of your congregation's trust and endowment funds, social concern committee funds and/or stewardship funds;
 - Investing individually;
 - Donating to the capital pool, which allows the Community Loan Fund to make higher risk - but higher social impact - loans;
- Donating to help with operating expenses and pay for the important technical assistance and monitoring that helps ensure borrowers' success; and
- Creating a forum for staff and board members to speak to individuals in your congregation about investment opportunities.

The minimum investment is \$1,000, although many organizations and individuals have invested much more, up to \$500,000. The minimum term is one year, but a longer term (five years or more) is most helpful and some organizations and individuals have maintained investments for more than 20 years. Investors select an interest rate of 0 to 2%; the lower the rate, the greater ability the Community Loan Fund has to loan to borrowers at a lower rate.

The Community Loan Fund has a 100% repayment rate to its investors over its 24-year history.

Donations are also welcome, as are inclusions in supporters' wills.

To learn more about investing or donating, or to arrange for a speaker for your congregation, committee or organization, contact Linda Chandler at 436-8586 or Linda@cdclf.org. ■

Healthy Food for People in Need: Opportunities and Choices

Amy Klein, Executive Director

CAPITAL DISTRICT COMMUNITY GARDENS

At Capital District Community Gardens, we like to think that the people we serve are the partners who make our programs work, and that what we provide in the partnership are opportunities and choices.

Though we have expanded our service offerings through a number of programs over the years, the core of our organization has always been our community gardens. We currently own and operate 46 neighborhood food garden locations throughout the

Capital District, each home to multiple garden plots which are made available yearly to thousands of local residents. At a typical cost of about \$20 for the season, a well-tended plot can yield well over one thou-

sand dollars worth of fresh organic produce. In addition to the obvious economic and health benefits this produce represents, the gardens also serve as small community centers where neighborhood residents from various age, racial and income groups come to know one another and form bonds which, in turn, strengthen their communities beyond the garden fence.

The Veggie Mobile, a mobile produce market launched by CDCG in 2007, brings nutritious fruits and vegetables to urban food deserts, senior centers and child care facilities. Selling the produce at cost, *The Veggie Mobile* provides regular, affordable access to fresh produce for people who might otherwise have none...and in the process, like the gardens, brings neighborhood residents together in a welcoming communal atmosphere.

And, as with the gardens, those who patronize *The Veggie Mobile* are making a commitment to their own well-being -- they are making room in their food budgets for the inclusion of healthy food in their diets.



This is, to us, an important element of *The Veggie Mobile* program, because when we first conceived this program, it was met with skepticism from some quarters. The population we planned to serve, we were told, would accept free produce but wouldn't make room for fresh fruits and vegetables in their limited food budgets at the expense of other, less healthful choices. But *The Veggie Mobile's* clientele -- a population that's statistically so vulnerable to nutrition-influenced health problems like obesity, hypertension, diabetes and cancer -- has

proven that they are willing to invest in a healthier diet, and simply need viable choices beyond the offerings of the corner stores and fast food restaurants often found in their communities. This is a message that's important for the business community to hear if we hope to convince

retailers of the viability of these neighborhoods as locations for food markets with more complete offerings.

Does Capital District Community Gardens provide fresh produce at no cost? We do. *Squash Hunger*, a program in which volunteers pick up produce donated by farmers and gardeners at locations throughout the Capital District and deliver it to local shelters and food pantries, has delivered approximately 70,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables since its inception in 2004.

Last year, the demand for community garden plots reached an all-time high. Week in and week out, customers flock to *The Veggie Mobile* to buy healthy foods. We believe that our less fortunate neighbors deserve the opportunity to make the same dietary choices as the rest of us, and we strive to provide them with the options necessary to make those choices.

We welcome all who'd like to join us in our efforts! To learn more about how you can help, please visit our website at www.cdcg.org. ■

Schenectady Damien Center has New Home

Janet Mattis, Community Outreach

SCHENECTADY INNER CITY MINISTRY

Living under someone else's roof, while comforting and reassuring, can make residential independence desirable. After being temporarily located in various parts of the city, the Schenectady Damien Center has achieved this residential autonomy, finally having a place to call home.

A program of Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM), the Damien Center is a drop-in community center for people infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. The Center provides nutritious meals, social and emotional support, recreational outings, holistic therapies, and educational and empowerment programming to those in Schenectady who are infected and affected by the virus.

The Schenectady Damien Center has been located in Hamilton Hill, two different locations in the Stockade, and temporarily at a church in downtown Schenectady. The new

site in North Schenectady offers more square footage, handicapped accessibility, renovated space and, perhaps most importantly, a long-term location. Through the generosity of a bequest made by Jordan Hess, SICM was able to purchase the building at 615 Nott Street last summer. After undergoing some renovations and sprucing up, the Center is now open to guests.

"We are thrilled to have a place of our own. With the new space, we are hoping to increase our hours, to be open five days a week instead of four," said Daniel Butterworth, Program Manager of the Damien Center. "We plan to resume our Reiki and massage offerings, and hope to add services, including HIV testing and one-on-one assistance for guests."

An Open House at the new site is planned for sometime this winter. For more information, please contact Daniel Butterworth, Program Manager, 374-2683, or damiencenter@sicm.us or go to www.sicm.us. ■

The More You Know, The Less Gold Glows

Do you where the gold in your ring came from? It's a dirty secret: while 80% of all gold is used to make jewelry, the production of one gold ring generates 20 tons of mine waste.

Gold mining is one the most destructive businesses in the world: it can displace communities, contaminate drinking water with cyanide and mercury, hurt workers, and destroy pristine environments. Indigenous people disproportionately suffer the negative effects of gold mining.

The No Dirty Gold campaign seeks to educate consumers and the general public about the impacts of irresponsible gold mining, and to enlist their support to pressure the industry to abandon practices that endanger people and ecosystems. It calls upon the mining industry to ensure that their gold was not produced at the expense of communities, workers, and the environment. Currently, retailers and consumers have few alternatives to dirty gold.

Consumers want to feel good about the prod-

ucts they buy, in particular those used as symbols of love, lifelong commitment and emotional

ties (such as wedding rings or class rings). Retailers want to be perceived as acting responsibly, as demonstrated with the Sweat Free school clothing and Fair Trade coffee and chocolate campaigns.

The No Dirty Gold Campaign encourages high school and college students ready to buy class rings to become part of the global movement for responsible gold mining. The Toolkit for students offers insight into the current state of gold mining, suggestions for how it might be managed more responsibly, and opportunities to become involved with the campaign.

To learn more, go to www.nodirtygold.org. ■



Celebrating One Hundred Years of the Ecumenical Movement

Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch, pastor

ZION'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,
SAND LAKE, NEW YORK

Most church historians agree that the ecumenical movement began with the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910. Thus, although we are entering the second decade of the 21st century, this year also marks the one hundredth anniversary of the start of the worldwide ecumenical movement.

For the first 19 centuries of Christianity, most of the major events and trends led to division and schism, with some which fostered and maintained unity and cooperation. With the schism between the Eastern and Western traditions and then the Reformation and counter-Reformation within the Western tradition, the one Church was divided. Not until the end of the 19th century and the entire 20th century did many trends and events lead to greater Christian unity.

Msgr. John Rodano, former staff member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, declares "Now, Christians, though still divided, live with an emerging ecumenical worldview in which they stress more of what they have in common, what they have achieved together as a result of the ecumenical movement. They are encouraged to go further, in seeking visible unity, a goal of unity in diversity in the one apostolic faith, and one sacramental life and a common ministry."

(See his article about a Catholic perspective on ecumenical dialogue in the 21st century (Ecumenical Trends, November 2009.)

The separate international Faith and Order and Life and Work movements came together to form the World Council of Churches in 1948. The Vatican Council II of the Catholic Church in 1962-65 began strong positive documents and actions for Catholics to participate in the ecumenical movement at every level.

The Church Unity Octave, a forerunner of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, was developed by Father Paul Wattson, Society of the

Atonement, at Graymoor in Garrison, New York. It was first observed at Graymoor from January 18-25, 1908. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity now invites the whole Christian community throughout the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one." (John 17:21)

In 1966, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican Secretariat (now Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity began collaborating with a common international text for worldwide usage. Since 1968 these international texts, which are based on themes proposed by ecumenical groups around the world, have been developed, adapted and published for use in the United States by the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute.

The theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2010 is "You Are Witnesses of These Things," from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24, verse 48. This is also the theme which Scottish Christians have chosen to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference this year.

During the past one hundred years there have been many significant conferences, programs, reports and events which have led to closer relations among most Christian groups. These have included developments at the international, national, regional and local levels. They have ranged from bilateral dialogues and multilateral conversations and studies to unions and mergers. Much has happened towards Christian unity in the United States and around the world during the past one hundred years.

My first experiences of Christian unity began within high school, college and seminary ecumenical groups in the 1960's. A few years ago I participated in the Northeast Ecumenical Institute at Graymoor. The institute brought together clergy, laity and religious from seven faith traditions and all of the states of the Northeastern United States and Canada. I encourage each Christian to participate in similar events or conferences when available in this region.

(Continued on page 7)

Stories

Chaplain (Major) Jake Marvel

SUPPORT FORCE ANTARCTICA CHAPLAIN

I believe one of my primary duties as a chaplain is to honor people's stories.

God likes stories. God helps write our stories. Scripture is a story; it preserves and proclaims the story of God's interaction with us. Sometimes in our life stories, God is center stage, sometimes God is silent, and sometimes God is tucked deep into a lost pocket of a discarded backpack. Where I'm working now, I'm hearing lots of stories.

Jonah ran away rather than participate in God's story. I think he'd fit right in here at the bottom of the world. As the chaplain at McMurdo Station, Antarctica now, I'm the visible reminder of the Holy to the 1,000 or so scientists, dishwashers, painters, warehouse managers, computer geeks, truck drivers and all the others who have found their way down here. When I listen and allow these fascinating people to talk, bits of grace – fragments of God's story – break through for us to hear. I wish I could say I have several such conversations every day. I don't.

In a small community like this, anything that makes you stand out carries with it a risk: you are either a hero for being unique, or shunned for being odd. I had lunch the other day with a man whose very unorthodox faith means he's shunned. As we sat, I invited him to tell me his story and he shared his pain honestly. We talked, I listened. He described



“Jonah ran away rather than participate in God's story. I think he'd fit right in here at the bottom of the world.”

to me the scar that covers his wound. I finished my lunch long before he did, he kept talking. All around us people were laughing and joking and then getting on with their day, he kept talking. His faith – which looks quite different from mine on the outside – has brought healing to his wound.

After our lunch, I went down to the chapel for a bit. His story struck close to home and holding it hurt, so I told it again to God. As I prayed, I imagined shards of grace like splintered glass lying on the ground. In the broken pieces of his story, I could see how tragedy had brought him closer to God.

I'm wondering if God can be found in each story I hear. It's becoming a bit of a game to me, trying to find these bits of grace. When I find grace, and when I can name it, we can each see God at work, and believe that we are part of God's story.

Jake is ordained and endorsed for military chaplaincy by the Reformed Church in America. He serves as Wing Chaplain at the 109th Airlift Wing New York Air National Guard in Scotia. All are invited to visit Jake's blog: antarcticantics.blogspot.com. ■

(Continued from page 6)

May all Christians, of every tradition around the world, continue to pray and work to further greater Christian unity and acceptance of diversity of the Church in the years ahead.

For more information, contact Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, a ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, Garrison, NY. P: 845-424-2109 or www.geii.org.

Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch is pastor of Zion's United Church of Christ, Sand Lake, New York. He is the 2009 recipient of the Carlyle Adams Ecumenical/Interfaith Award by the Capital Area Council of Churches. ■

Are We Walking By The Kettle?

Edward Bennett, Vice President

NEW YORK INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT

The Holidays are over and a New Year has begun. A time to reminisce. A time to plan. A time to act?

I ‘rang the bell’ for Salvation Army during the month of December. As I rang, I took the time to view the many perspectives of giving and to try to understand the giving process, both within others and myself.

Over the past few years, I’ve been seemingly playing the part of Don Quixote. You know, trying to “Save the World” when no one seems to be listening. My issue has been the impact of humankind on the warming of our planet and the ultimate impact on the very least among us. There are numerous other issues of equal or greater importance that are also calling us to reminisce, plan and act!

The leaders within our faith communities have for some time been calling on us to hear, understand and lead a response to the global warming issue. My most recent read is entitled “Holy Ground, A Gathering of Voices on Caring for Creation” and highlights this perspective only too well. This book links the calling of our leaders to action. Patriarch, Pope, Reverend, Rabbi, Imam, etc. are all calling on us to give! Pope Benedict made this theme central to his 2010 New Year’s message.

The Bishops of the United Methodist Community recently issued a letter calling our faith community into action. I was excited to think that this most recent celebration of Advent would also become a time of that “Voice Calling” our faith into action to preserve and protect the gift of Creation. However, I sense that one pastor’s response.... “This is just “one more” outrageous request...don’t the Bishops’



know that I have worship planned for six months ahead?” ...was not unusual. I’m sensing that this was the norm, rather than the exception. We were “to busy.” I already had the schedule set!

Are we walking by the Kettle? I noticed that many who gave the most last December did not come by what they had easily. Their hands were callous. Their clothes showed the wear and tear of labor. Those who appeared to have the least were the most likely to give of what they had or those

who knew what it was like to have little or nothing at all were ready to give.

What was most instructive was the elderly lady who first walked by the kettle and commented that she would be back....you know one of those “be backers” that never return. But she did! She then proceeded to share that when she

was a young mother with two children and no hope to give them any semblance of a Christmas, Salvation Army was there and made a difference. She not only returned once, but four times during my ringing this past month.

Perhaps when I and other leaders are calling the faith community into action, we must first begin by making a real difference in the lives of others that surround us. Getting our hands callous, our clothes dirty. Perhaps we also must experience the situation of being without in order to understand what it means to give.

Many of us walk by the kettle thinking that the vast majority of the world’s scientists are wrong and that the changes occurring and projected to occur, aren’t happening and won’t happen. The latest meeting of world leaders at Copenhagen ended without real commitment. Let us pray that 2010 will be the year where Copenhagen will truly become “Hopenhagen.”

Ed is also Co-Chair of the Troy Annual Conference Board of Church and Society. To learn more on the issue of Global Warming and the opportunities for action, visit www.nyipl.org. ■



Resources and Announcements

For your newsletter or bulletin

Hunger Action Network of New York State's Lobby Day

Tuesday, March 9, 2010 - Empire State Economic Security Campaign

Join us in Albany to meet with your elected official and rally for social justice.

Please contact Veda Myers at vmyers@hungeractionnys.org or call 212-741-8192. ■

A Place to Call Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Peoples

March 19 – 22, 2010 Washington D.C.

And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' -Luke 9:58

Jesus had no place to lay his head. Neither do tens of millions of migrants, refugees and displaced persons. Be a part of an action weekend addressing this global injustice. Join hundreds of faith-based advocates in taking action on U.S. legislation that will welcome immigrants, protect refugees, and prevent displacement of millions.

Come worship, study and dialogue with hundreds of people of faith at the annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days. Then join your neighbors on Capitol Hill to advocate for our members of Congress to remedy these global injustices.

We encourage groups from churches, denominations and regional councils of churches to charter buses and bring large groups to this important faith-in-action event. For more information and to register, please visit www.advocacydays.org.

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. -Hebrews 13:1-2 ■

CROP Hunger Walks

Sunday, May 2, 2010

It's not too early to plan to participate in this interfaith community event with a team of walkers. Last year's Albany Walk raised over \$100,000 to combat hunger at home and abroad. One quarter of the funds raised came back to support food pantries and soup kitchens in the Capital District.

For information about a WALK near you, call the CACC office at 462-5450 or visit www.churchworldservice.org and follow the CROP Walk links. ■

Leading Churches in Green Pastures

A conference for church leaders who wish to cultivate creation care in their churches.

May 23-25, Fowler Camp and Retreat Center, Speculator, NY. Sponsored by Camp Fowler and the Regional Synod of Albany (RCA), in cooperation with the Episcopal Church.

Explore how faith informs our stewardship of the earth. Worship and relax in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains. Listen to and learn from both the natural world and other participants. Participate in workshops that will cover topics from gardening to preaching.

Speakers include Steven Bouma-Prediger, professor of religion at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. He has written four books concerning ecology and theology. Michael Schut serves as the economic and environmental affairs officer of the Episcopal Church. He is the author and editor of *Money and Faith: The Search for Enough*; *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread*; and *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*. Cost is \$50-\$150 per person, depending on accommodations. Visit the Retreat section at www.campfowler.org for details. ■

Bowling for Beds

Rev. Sandy Damhof, Chaplain

PROTESTANT CAMPUS MINISTRY AT CHAPEL HOUSE, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

Here's an opportunity for you to help our youth make a difference! **On Saturday, Feb. 6, members of your church can join in a "Bowling for Beds" Bowl-A-Thon to raise money for the Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter in Albany.** The event, open to all, will be held at Sunset Recreation Center in Albany. Children, Youth and Adults from around the region will be working together with a goal of raising over \$8000.

Our region has experienced a significant rise in the number of homeless men, women and children over the last four years. Homelessness and the need for additional shelter beds in Albany County continue to be a focus for the Capital

Area Council of Churches (CACC). All people, regardless of a person's circumstances and behaviors, have a human right to shelter from deadly weather and dangerous street-living.

Since 2000, the CACC as sponsor, First Lutheran Church of Albany as host, and the Evangelical Protestant United Church of Christ as operator, have responded to this local crisis. Their 19 bed Shelter is open seven nights a week, 7pm-7am, through the coldest months of the year and provides hot meals, showers, clean clothing, toiletries, and referrals to appropriate services.

Students from Cornerstone Campus Ministry are helping the planning team host the event. To register your team or donate, please contact Rev. Sandy Damhof, sdamhof@uamail.albany.edu or 518-489-8573 x26. ■

Dr. Tony Campolo to Keynote "Come Alive and Thrive" 2010

Edith Leet, Ecumenical Officer

CAPITAL AREA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Dr. Tony Campolo, nationally acclaimed author and speaker on religion and society, will keynote the "Come Alive and Thrive" Conference in the Capital District on May 21-22. His insights on "Finding Common Ground" will help congregations become relevant, energized, proactive, connective, and intentional about living their faith in an interfaith, ecumenical, diverse world.

On Friday evening, May 21, Dr. Campolo will talk about his current thinking and writings, including his latest book, *Red Letter Christians*. On Saturday, May 22, he will describe how congregations and individuals can bring to life Biblical teachings and the words of Jesus through their actions on behalf of peace and justice in our society. More information about his work is available on his website (www.tonycampolo.org).

"I think that Christianity has two emphases," Tony writes. "One is a social emphasis to impart the values of the kingdom of God in society - to relieve the sufferings of the poor, to stand up for the oppressed, to be a voice for those who have no voice. The other emphasis is to bring people into a personal, transforming relationship with Christ, where they feel the joy and the love of God in their lives ... Fundamentalism has emphasized the latter, mainline churches have emphasized the former. We cannot neglect one for the other."

The conference is open to the public, and registration is through the Capital Region Theological Center. Register online (www.capitalrtc.org), or call (518-462-2470). The cost is \$20 for the Friday evening session and \$50 for Saturday, including lunch. Scholarships are available.

The conference is the fifth in the "Come Alive and Thrive" series. It is being planned by the CRTC, the Capital Area Baptist Association, and the FOCUS Churches of Albany. They are seeking broad ecumenical sponsorship for the event, not only to cover the costs of this conference, but also to ensure the continuation of this series, which brings renowned, inspiring, and highly respected speakers to the greater Capital Region.

Sponsors will receive discounts on registration fees and will have access to two special opportunities for conversations with Tony Campolo. Contact CRTC to learn about sponsorship details. ■

The Capital Region Ecumenical Organization would not be possible without our partnership of supporters. Thank you for gifts of prayers, voices, time, and service.

Please add my name to the people actively supporting the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization through a contribution of: \$ _____

I prefer to receive quarterly editions of One Table:

_____ in the mail: (Update if needed: _____)

_____ via the internet (Email address: _____)

Please send your check made payable to **Capital Region Ecumenical Organization**, to 646 State Street, Albany, NY 12203. Your contribution to CREO is tax deductible, as allowed by law.



Upcoming courses of the Capital Region Theological Center. Registration required: (518)462-2470 or www.capitalrtc.org. Scholarships are available.

† **Biblical Resources for Peacemaking* Monday, Feb. 8. Yahezkel Landau** This seminar in “applied exegesis” will focus on passages in the Book of Genesis that can serve as resources for healing conflict and building peace. The Creation story and episodes in the lives of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs will be examined for practical lessons that can help us wage peace in a culture of violence. Cost: \$165. Register by Jan. 22.

† **The Church and Its Money, Feb. 20, Rev. Norman Tellier, CFPTM**. All those who deal with money in the church, whether it is organizing the annual stewardship campaign, church accounting, filing IRS paperwork, setting up pastor’s annual pay package, or whether you are the pastor who needs to be more informed, this seminar is for you! Cost: \$75. Register by February 5.

† **Family Systems Theory & Practice for Congregations, March 12 & 13, Rev. Dr. Peter Steinke** Don’t miss this opportunity to hear from Dr. Steinke, leading speaker and author on the power of family systems theory as applied to congregational dynamics. Cost: \$95 per day, or \$165 for both days. Register by February 25.

† **Backpacking Retreat** with Rev. Kent Busman, Fowler Camp & Retreat Center, April 30 to May 2.

† **Social Media for Churches: Web 2.0** with Valerie Venezia, May 15.

† **Capital Area Council of Churches’ Peace & Justice Forum**, which meets from 12:15-1:30pm on the second Tuesday of the month at First Lutheran Church in Albany, begins a new series on entitled “Around the World in 60 Days”. In February (Feb. 9) we will visit Botswana, and in March (March 9), travel to the Middle East or Asia. You are asked to use the rear entrance at 646 State St. accessible via Cortland Place off Western Ave., 1 short block west of lake. Bring a bag lunch, beverages provided. Call 462-5450.

† **Earth Day 2010**. Local congregations and individual church members are invited to prepare a display about their programs or ministries to protect and conserve the environment at Zion’s United Church of Christ of Taborton, in Sand Lake, NY. You are invited to reserve a display space for free and/or become a financial sponsor. The exhibitors include public and private, non-profit and business, local, regional and national religious and secular organizations serving the Capital region. Contact Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch at 518-674-8204 or rkloesch@aol.com as soon as possible. The all day (10am-4pm event) begins with a Blessing of Pets and All Animals at 9:30 am. ■

One Table

A PUBLICATION FROM THE
CAPITAL REGION ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION

Winter 2010 VOL. XI NO. I

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Organization
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Misha R. Marvel, MSW
Coordinator

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Office:
102 Arrowwood Place
Malta, NY 12020

Phone: (518) 729-0278

To get One Table electronically,
email: mishamarvel@gmail.com

Capital Region Ecumenical Organization

The Covenant

“Believing ourselves to be under God’s direction through the Holy Spirit, we feel the need for an ongoing regional, ecumenical structure as a vehicle of cooperation for and among those bodies accepting the sole lordship of Christ. We are aware of the richness of our varied religious traditions, we purpose to work together for the good of all people and to strive for reconciliation among all groups and ideologies.”

Prayer for People of Haiti

Gracious God,

Your word of peace stills the storms that rage in our world.
Bring hope to places that know devastation in the calm
after the earthquake.

Bring comfort to those who grieve the loss of loved ones.
Let your love be known through those who work to bring
order in the chaos.

Help us to shoulder the burden of suffering
and make us bearers of the hope that can be found in you
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

*“True peace is not merely the absence of tension:
it is the presence of justice.”*

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.