

ONE TABLE

VOLUME XI ISSUE II

SPRING 2010

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Regional Judicatories Seek More Cooperation

The Rev. Marian Shearer, Regional Conference Minister

HUDSON MOHAWK ASSOCIATION, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

“How can we work across denominational lines within villages and towns so we can continue to provide a Christian witness? Where are models of ministry? So asked the agenda item when the denominational executives last met.

Just last month, the Presbyterian church in Gloversville and First Congregational United Church of Christ there worshiped together, as they often had this winter. Gathered in the UCC sanctuary for worship, they received the Rev. Kathleen Chesnuta into their church membership. In the same service, the Presbyterian church welcomed Kathleen as their temporary pastor. So the two churches welcomed the local church membership of a minister into one congregation (required in the UCC for ministerial standing) and welcomed her as pastor of the other. It was a fine and unplanned ecumenical moment.

Are there other ways we can be carrying out our Christian witness together, a witness to transformed lives in Christ *and* cooperation with other churches and other faiths, a witness to worship that sustains and service to others without judgment? There are lots of ecumenical and interfaith agencies where this happens, and we rejoice in them all. We work side by side on Habitat for Humanity houses, take courses together at Capital Region Theological Center, manage food pantries and homeless shelters together.

But what if we also invited each other on our mission trips? What if we invited confirmands from several denominations to the annual confirmation camp week at Camp Fowler? What if we lent each other the resources that one of us has developed? What if we routinely used each other’s resource centers?

After last month’s discussions, all those things are under way or under consideration. The Roman Catholic diocese is planning a trip to Haiti to check out its ministry partners there, and the Presbytery has scholarship money for folks who want to go on such mission trips from their churches. The Lutherans are talking with the Reformed Church about expanding the confirmation camp. The Baptists are asking to borrow the Presbytery’s new resource on how to help a church discern it is time to close. Several of us “executives” are renewing our pattern of sharing interim and part time ministers with one another (as in Gloversville), and not only in the four Formula of Agreement churches. And that’s in addition to our usual neighborhood cooperation in Vacation Bible Schools, Palm Sunday processions and the like!

I don’t think any of us hope there will one day be one big conglomerate church or denomination. All of our faith traditions bring different gifts to the table. But alongside our working together on the issues of justice and society that CREO invites us to, there are more opportunities growing for churches to work together in visible ways. It feels like the Holy Spirit, urging us on toward spring, resurrection, new life. ■

CREO Members

Albany United
Methodist Society

American Baptist Churches,
Capital Area Association

Capital Area
Council of Churches

Catholic Charities,
Diocese of Albany

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

CREO Scholarships Available for Ecumenical Endeavors

Ian Leet, President

CAPITAL REGION ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION

At First Church in Albany, where I worship, there is a Deacon's Fund that has been used continuously since the 1650s. This fund, it could be said, was the first 'bank' in Albany. Funds from it were loaned or granted to members of the Beverwijk (later Fort Orange) colony for a variety of purposes.

The Deacon's Fund exists to this day, fulfilling its mandate to care for the poor and sick. It is also used to support people attending events or studying subjects that will enrich the community at large. A few years ago, the Deacon's Fund was used to support the attendance of a 'First Churcher' to the Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington. As a result of attending that event, her enthusiasm has led First Church into hosting so-called "100-mile dinners," where all the food used comes from our local community or is obtained from free-trade sources, like the coffee and tea served at every church function. Not only has this helped us support local farmers, it has helped heighten awareness of international and local agricultural practices.

Just like the Deacon's Fund, little grants can make big impacts. Some CREO funds are now

available for applicants who would like to attend recognized ecumenical events or who are taking course work related to the ecumenical spirit.

These ecumenical scholarships will not replace grants or scholarships from judicatories or local churches. They are also not intended to cover the entire cost of the event but are to be used as a needed supplement to funds already obtained by the applicant. Scholarships can be used for registrations, travel, and lodging. The funds are limited, and may be granted upon application review by CREO's Executive Committee.

After the event, the participant will prepare a report on it to be included in the next issue of *One Table*, and may be asked to give a report before the CREO Board at its quarterly meeting. We have already given one scholarship and are enthusiastically looking forward to a report about the event.

Please let potential applicants know about our fund. Please publicize the availability of the fund through your various communications systems. Interested parties should contact Misha Marvel, CREO coordinator, at mishamarvel@gmail.com or 518-729-0278. We're looking forward to see where the Holy Spirit takes us as we use this fund to serve the needs of individuals in our unique ecumenical community. It's exciting! ■

The Details...

Deadline for Submission
One Table Summer Edition
July/Aug/Sept...August 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 April 4.**

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. ■

The Mountains are Calling

Rev. Kent Busman, Director

FOWLER CAMP & RETREAT CENTER

Although the spring buds have just started to venture out, for many of us it is time to sign up our kids to go to summer camp. Camp is a wonderful opportunity for children to experience their faith outside of the walls of their church building. In recent years, there have been a number of area camps that have had to close for financial and other reasons. This means fewer opportunities to gather together with children from other towns and cities who come from a variety of backgrounds and faith traditions.

Children are also buffeted on two fronts with:

- Fewer opportunities to “just be kids” and play outdoors and experience creation.
- Decreased chances to engage in faith settings with others who are not part of their own (if they have one) faith tradition.

Camps can be one of those places that can help counteract these trends. Camps that operate successfully and serve those to whom they are called have a remarkable clarity of mission. Their policies and programs demonstrate integrity with that mission. Camp Fowler’s strength and growth can partly be attributed to the fact



that everything about it breathes the mission. There is no lack of clarity about why Fowler exists or what it is here to accomplish in expressing God’s love for the world, through the church.

Camp Fowler is one of those places where the Spirit of God lingers. It is a holy place where the Spirit of God seems near. The Spirit of God moves through children playing at the lake in the summer and among a group of church leaders praying together in a meeting room. It hovers over the staff and volunteers as they care for a myriad of daily routine tasks, and surrounds the leadership as they contemplate decisions. The

common fire which drives the ministry of Fowler is “to glorify God, to foster growth in Jesus Christ as Lord, to experience life in a Christian community, and to encourage people to live as disciples of Christ.”

Fowler lives out its ministry by giving children, youth, and adults experiences of being in community, living simply, and caring for the world. All are welcome to walk together for a week in this amazing journey of faith. If you are looking for a place to come experience these things, then let me say, to quote that old naturalist, John Muir: “The mountains are calling and I must go.” Learn more at www.campfowler.org. ■

Summer Camps Welcome All

Rev. Jane Lang, Associate Executive Field Minister

CAPITAL AREA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Children and youth of all ages and all denominations are invited to attend the summer camping program of the Outdoor Ministries of the American Baptist Churches of NYS. *Listen Up! God’s Calling* is the theme of the camps, which are offered in two locations: Pathfinder Lodge near Cooperstown on Otsego Lake and Camp Vick in Sandusky, southwest of Rochester. The camps seek to help campers deepen their relationship to Jesus and to equip them to grow spiritually and minister to their world.

Camps are geared for specific age groups and special interests. Hikes, campfires, sleep-outs, and swimming are combined with Bible study, arts and crafts, sports, and team-building activities to offer a memorable week of fun and learning. Pathfinder also offers sailing, kayaking, and canoeing.

Weekend Events, ‘The Hall of Fame Special’ the weekend of the Baseball Hall of Fame Inductions, Special Needs Camps, and Family and Group Retreats are also offered. Please contact Outdoor Ministries at 315-492-4236 ext. 11, visit www.abc-nys.org/camps, or email kshevchuk@abc-nys.org. ■

Youth Advocates Speak Out for Exploited Children

Brooke Newell,

Advocacy Ministries Coordinator

PRESBYTERIES OF ALBANY, CAYUGA-SYRACUSE, NORTHERN NY, SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY & UTICA

Over the February Presidents' Day school recess, 17 adults and senior high youth from five upstate Presbyteries traveled to the United Nations to learn how to advocate for exploited children. The group learned that you do not have to be 18 to contact our Congressional Representatives and Senators!

Children are victimized in all parts of the world. Children are used as slave labor on the battlefield, in factories, mines, fields and homes. In New York, the average age of a prostitute is 13, and child prostitutes are treated by the legal system as criminals rather than victims in need of help. Federal and state legislative reforms are needed to create shelters for children who have been forced into prostitution, and rehabilitative services are needed to help these children have a better future. The organization ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) provides many learning resources and sample letters to support meaningful legislation (www.epcatusa.org).

The group also joined the "Red Hand" banner-making project (www.redhandday.org) an ecumenical campaign that has raised awareness of the plight of child soldiers in Africa since 2002. The banners will be used by local Presbyterian congregations and at national Presbyterian gatherings. According to figures from the United Nations, there are more than 250,000 child soldiers worldwide. During wars between adults, these children are abducted from their homes and schools, drugged, and forced into battle. Girls are stolen to be used as sex slaves for the soldiers and are killed if they become pregnant.

The campaign's symbol is a red hand which has been used all over the world by many or-

ganizations in order to say NO to the use of child soldiers. Earlier this year, red hand prints were presented to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in New York. They were given to him by children from four different continents. Mr. Ban Ki Moon promised in front of more than 100 guests – among them UN ambassadors from more than 40 countries: "I will do everything in my power to improve the situation of child soldiers worldwide." The same day, there was also a ceremonial handing over in several countries,

for example in Germany to President Horst Köhler, who received more than 50 boxes with red hand prints. Thus, the Red Hand Campaign had achieved an important goal: to protest in front of most powerful politicians against the use of child soldiers. Learn more at www.child-soldiers.org.

The training gave participants the information and skills to make their voices heard, and to be agents of God's healing work in the world. The Rev. Cass Shaw, General Presbyterian of the Albany Presbytery shared that, "This trip was an eye opener for all of us. It gave us a chance to interact with people who are doing their best to change the world. We were challenged to get involved ourselves, and to understand that we have the power to change the lives of children enslaved by corporations, pimps, and politics."

The students covenanted to continue their advocacy efforts at home, specifically through their church youth groups and at school. If you would like to connect with the five participants from the Capital Region, either to have them speak to your youth group, or to join their work, contact Brooke Newell at brooke@cjgreen.net.

The Presbyterian Church USA maintains an office at the United Nations to articulate the denomination's concerns to decision makers there, to partner with other non-governmental agencies in providing relief and aid around the world, and to equip church members to be effective agents for change. ■



Help for Those Facing Mortgage Hardship

Louise McNeilly, Special Projects

THE HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTER,
AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

If you know someone facing difficulties with their mortgage, the worst thing to do is nothing. Let them know about the HomeSave coalition and our free clinics. HomeSave is a very active coalition of 14 organizations in the Capital Region working to prevent foreclosures by offering education, counseling, lender negotiation and legal help to owners and tenants.

New state and federal policies mean more options for homeowners. In the past year, over 300 families facing foreclosure have sought advisement and many others are receiving legal assistance. HomeSave members include skilled housing counselors and attorneys who answer questions, prepare homeowners for court appearances, and help them negotiate with their lender.

HomeSave offers monthly clinics for homeowners to meet one-on-one with an attorney or knowledgeable housing counselor to review

their situation and suggest next steps. The next clinic is on April 15.

Call an agency serving your community to register for a half-hour session at the clinic.

For Albany and surrounding areas, call: Affordable Housing Partnership Homeownership Center – 434-1730

In Schenectady, Montgomery, Fulton Counties call: Better Neighborhoods Inc. – 372-6469

In Rensselaer County, call: TRIP NeighborWorks Homeownership Center, Troy – 690-0020

In rural Albany, Schoharie, Saratoga, Warren & Washington Counties, call: Albany County Rural Housing Alliance – 235-3002

If you want more information about preventing foreclosure, watch the video at:

www.nysdhcr.gov/Programs/ForeclosurePrevention/CounselListing.htm.

Act now! Homeowners have the best options when they proceed sooner rather than later. Visit www.ahphome.org for more. ■



Keeping Faith in Mind: Ministering to Those with Alzheimer's

Bill Hinrichs, Western Region

Program Manager,

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEASTERN
NEW YORK

The Alzheimer's Association of Northeastern NY has received a grant to design and offer one-day workshops for chaplains, clergy, parish nurses and other religious leaders which provide the tools and resources to help them minister to those affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

The workshop, *Keeping Faith In Mind*, will be offered twice in different locations and will include information on:

- Medical and biological issues that arise for those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
- Spiritual issues that arise for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers.
- Theological perspectives on the challenges

chaplains and clergy face as they deal with those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

In addition to offering the workshop, the Alzheimer's Association will encourage clergy and theological students to participate in the development of a sermon to be entered into a competition. The sermon's content should be geared toward generating more thinking and discussion around Alzheimer's disease and dementia within religious organizations. Sermons will be submitted for review and the winning entry will be awarded a small prize for their work.

The workshops will be offered in the Fall. Anyone interested in more information, please contact Bill at (518) 867-4999 ext. 303 or visit www.alz.org/northeasternny.

“To love someone is to learn the song that is in their heart, and to sing it to them when they have forgotten it.” ■

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

Gradia Melrose Gbarbea, Coordinator,
REFUGEE & IMMIGRATION MINISTRY,
BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES,
TROY ANNUAL CONFERENCE (UMC)

I was privileged and honored to attend the Ecumenical Advocacy Days gathering a few weeks ago in Washington DC. The conference covered several root causes of migration and the biblical mandate, “strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34).

A highlight for me was to join with thousands of others from around the country on the Mall of Washington, rallying for comprehensive immigration reform, with a televised message of support from President Obama.

The conference opened on Friday evening with a worship service which included two personal testimonies of immigrants from Haiti and South Africa. They set the tone for the conference by bringing to bear the realities of the injustices and lack of humaneness in our current broken immigration system.

The Haitian immigrant spoke of the harsh policy of separating families through deportation. He was arrested and scheduled to be deported, January 15th, four days after the earthquake. He has lived here more than 24 years and all of his immediate family members are U.S. citizens. In addition, he has sixteen siblings and other relatives in the U.S. While in detention, he observed what appears to be massive deportation, indicating that over 500,000 persons were deported last year. This happens on a regular basis, separating and destroying families.

The South African immigrant, Kevin Sauls, a United Methodist Minister, who is Asst. Secretary for Congregational Development & Racial



Ethnic Ministry, General Board of Global Ministries, spoke of his experience of immigration and racism/racial profiling, finding himself at the intersection of being black and an immigrant. He has been referred to by a police officer as just a “n---r” with an accent” when he identified himself as a Pastor and that he was from South Africa. He challenged the gathering and the church to complete the unfinished task of the civil rights movement - antiracism.

At the end of the annual conference, many go to speak with their Congressional representatives. This year’s ‘asks’ called on the Administration and the 111th Congress to commit to enact humane and equitable immigration reform:

- * Uphold family unity as a priority of all immigration policies - including religious beliefs regarding family unity and integrity.
- * Create a process for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and eventual citizenship.
- * Protect workers and provide efficient channels of entry for new migrant workers.
- * Facilitate immigrant integration.
- * Restore due process protections and reform detention policies.
- * Align the enforcement of immigration laws with humanitarian values - include religious beliefs and values.
- * Vote for the Jubilee Act (HR-4405) to broaden and deepen debt cancellation for impoverished countries.
- * Support Refugee Funding for FY 2011 - a total of \$987.9 million.

As a Liberian immigrant, I have often wondered about the historically special relationship between Liberia and the United States given the latter’s moral ambiguity of race relations with the former. I was flabbergasted to learn from a [*Sojourner’s*](#)

(Continued on page 7)

CONTACT Lifeline - a Crisis Hotline Service

Jill Wolski Ordoñez, LMSW

DIRECTOR, UNITED WAY 2-1-1 AND CONTACT LIFELINE, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF THE CAPITAL REGION

CONTACT Lifeline, formerly known as the Samaritans Crisis Hotline, is available to anyone who is in crisis or in need of emotional support in the Capital Region. Part of Family and Children's Service of the Capital Region, it can be accessed between the hours of 9am – 10pm daily at 689-4673. For 24/7 crisis hotline support, the community can also call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a number also serviced in this region by the CONTACT Lifeline.

Lifeline staff and trained volunteers are here to serve anyone who calls, whether they are depressed, considering suicide, feeling overwhelmed, or they just need to vent after a stressful day.

The call center also includes United Way 2-1-1, an information and referral hotline for health and human services. 2-1-1 helps those who are navigating the complex pathways of the non-profit and governmental assistance programs. Anyone who needs referrals regarding rent, utilities, food, clothing, furniture, transportation, mental health, health insurance, employment, where to volunteer, or any other health and human service related issue can call 2-1-1.

United Way 2-1-1 can be accessed by simply dialing 2-1-1 between 9am – 5pm weekdays.

Volunteers are always needed for the crisis hotline and for 2-1-1. If you are a caring and compassionate person and have time to give back to your community, please call Rob Broughton, at 694-0466 for volunteer information. Visit www.211neny.org to learn more. ■



The Parish Paper: Ideas and Insights for Active Congregations

The Parish Paper began in 1971, pioneered by Dr. Lyle E. Schaller, often called America's foremost church consultant. During the 1990s, research by The Alban Institute identified *The Parish Paper* as the best-known publication of its type among leaders of American Protestant denominations.

Throughout those decades *The Parish Paper* has had clergy, lay, and middle-judicatory subscribers in more than twenty-eight denominations around the world. It has never

been connected with a single denomination, publishing company or theological viewpoint. Thus, it is ecumenical in the broadest sense of that term.

The Parish Paper relies on information derived from sociological research and on-site congregational consulting. The goal is to assist clergy and lay leaders in their efforts to equip and lead congregations toward greater effectiveness. Mostly a subscription resource, it does offer several dozen complementary online "Church Effectiveness Nuggets." Visit www.theparishpaper.com. ■

(Continued from page 6)

news article that the U.S. and other western nations were considering transplanting displaced Haitians that were victims of the recent earthquake to Africa! The oldest democracies of the black world, and ironically two of the poorest countries, continue to bear the brunt of racism and injustice.

The Conference called attention to the moral dimensions of public policy and recommended reforms that uphold the God-given dignity and rights of every person, each of whom are made in the image of God. The interfaith body is dedicated to immigration reform because we value the basic tenets of family unity, justice, equity, compassion, love and the humane treatment of all persons.

Please encourage your Congressional Representative to support these issues. Visit www.advocacydays.org to learn more.

Ms. Gbarbea received a scholarship from CREO to participate in Ecumenical Advocacy Days. ■

Aftermath of the Copenhagen Climate Conference

Rev. Mark Chaffin,

CAPITAL AREA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The UN-convened Climate Change Conference, held last December in Copenhagen, Denmark was a forum for the community of nations to reach goals on limiting carbon emissions and reducing the effects of global climate change. Some who expected greater accomplishments decried the event as achieving discussionary deadlock rather than real progress, committing wealthy countries to firm reduction goals. Nor did it produce necessary financial support for poorer nations as they seek to reach national targets while achieving the prosperity of the wealthy ones.

At a time when bold action was called for, last minute, backroom negotiations by a handful of countries failed to produce any serious targets for reducing CO2 emissions below 350ppm. Also lacking was an implementation of binding obligations on the part of nations which have yet to commit themselves to necessary target goals. The resulting Copenhagen Accords were seen by many as window dressing that installed loop holes for rich nations and called for voluntary compliance on the part of governments. In light of this, it was hard not to see the result as a setback to a long-negotiated process.

All was not doom and gloom, by any means. Apart from official deliberations, representatives of environmental organizations, faith groups, NGO's, indigenous peoples, youth, and others laid plans for coordinated actions to follow-up. The need and commitment to persist in grassroots education, action and advocacy has not faltered. These were signs of hope.

As people of faith, we recognize deep moral, ethical and religious implications to taking broad collective action to faithfully care for the earth. It is a matter of stewardship and responsibility we owe to the Creator and future generations. We've become more acutely aware that our failure to act in time will spell disaster

for humankind and other fragile species. We must, in the words of the National Council of Churches of Christ declaration: "commit ourselves to action – to changing our habits, our choices, and the way we see the world – to learning and teaching our families, friends, and faiths – to conserving the limited resources of our home, planet Earth, and preserving the climate conditions upon which life depends."

We have also come to understand that the negative effects of climate change will inevitably come down hardest on those who are the poorest and most vulnerable in our world. At some tipping point in the near future, even the most supreme efforts by all humanity will not be able to avert the consequences that the most knowledgeable climatologists are predicting. The divine mandate to arise and attain to the liberation from our addiction to greater corporate profits and consumption, incumbent upon us as God's sons and daughters, is a response to having our ears open to the groans of the creation around us.

With St. Paul we can affirm: we are saved by hope and faith, and action born of both. Because good planets are hard to find, we must preserve and protect this one. As people of faith there is urgent need to move forward: acting locally and globally, ecumenically and collectively, sustainably and persistently, but most of all, prayerfully - to change hearts, minds, priorities, laws and ultimately the global climate. We can not put this off.

Explore the following to learn more about global climate change and eco-justice, as well as connect with groups impacting our response:
Spreading Hope - www.hopenhagen.org/mission
Interfaith declaration – www.350.org/people/faith and www.greenfaith.org
Eco-Justice Ministries of NCCC - ncececojustice.org/climate/climateprinciples.php
NY Interfaith Power & Light - www.nyipl.org

In addition, many church bodies have initiatives and forums for addressing climate change as individuals and congregations. ■

Because good planets are hard to find, we must preserve and protect this one.



Resources and Announcements

For your newsletter or bulletin

RAISE THE ROOF II

THE COMMUNITY HOSPICE AFRICA AIDS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
Presents A Benefit of Gospel, Rhythm & Movement
Saturday, May 15, 2010

Capital District Mass Choir: MUSICAL DIRECTOR: Dennis Lee Edney
Performances by: Macedonia Baptist Church with Sharon Fullard, DivaCello, an African Drum & Dance Ensemble, and many others. MUSICAL DIRECTOR: Maria Riccio Bryce.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Jim Kambrich, WNYT Channel 13 Anchor

THE EGG: Center for the Performing Arts, 6 p.m. Reception; 7pm Show, Tickets: \$25
CONTACT: Karen Hamm at khamm@communityhospice.org or call (518) 724-0222
VIST: the RTR Website at: www.communityhospice.org for ticket information

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. ■

Host a Child This Summer

Fresh Air is a program that gives NYC children a chance to see another way of life. They get to leave the city and become a part of your family. You would be giving a child (ages 6-12 for first time visit) a chance to enjoy the small things we take for granted each day. Many of these children don't get to sit and see the stars, play outside in the yard, swim, bike, or just have a picnic in the park. Please consider hosting a child for a few weeks this summer and experience this truly a rewarding experience.

This program can change a child's life forever. Contact Deb L'Amoureux at 348-1018 or freshair@nycap.rr.com for more information. ■

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

You've Walked... You've Run... Now You can Build!

Capital District Habitat for Humanity invites you to join our 1st annual BUILD-A-THON! This is a unique opportunity to build relationships that will change our community. Much like sponsoring miles in a walk-a-thon, the BUILD-A-THON asks volunteers to engage friends and family to sponsor their Habitat volunteer hours.

Churches, companies, civic groups and schools form Build Teams and volunteer for a day (or more) in April. If you're searching for a way to build morale and foster teamwork amongst your employees or members, join BUILD-A-THON where your group will get to know each other better, discover more effective ways to communicate and learn to work more cooperatively.

By participating, you will receive these benefits: a free Habitat Build-a-Thon t-shirt for each participant; free advertising for your organization and visibility in the community (logo on our website, newsletter and signage at the event); a personalized fundraising webpage (your group can compete against other teams); satisfaction of being a part of our very first Build-a-Thon.

Groups or individuals can register (first come first serve). Shifts are 9am-3pm daily the month of April (excluding Sundays and Mondays).

Visit www.CapitalDistrictHabitat.org and click on the BUILD-A-THON tab. Questions? Call Hannah at (518) 462-2993 or email her at hannah.nolan@CapitalDistrictHabitat.org. ■

“Come Alive and Thrive” with Tony Campolo

Edith Leet, Ecumenical Officer

CAPITAL AREA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The [Rev. Dr. Tony Campolo](#), prolific author, engaging speaker, and Christian activist, will be the presenter at the fifth annual “Come Alive and Thrive” Conference, May 21-22. “Finding Common Ground” is the theme of this ecumenical conference, as Tony speaks about his writing and his theology of putting Jesus’ teachings into action. His latest book, *Red Letter Christians*, urges followers of Christ to take seriously Jesus’ words, printed in red letters in some Bibles, and become advocates for social justice for the poor and marginalized members of our society.

The conference will be held at First Church in Albany, 110 North Pearl St, where ample parking is available. Sessions welcoming the public are Friday, May 21, 7pm-8:30pm and Saturday, May 22, 9am-4pm. Child care is offered on Saturday. Several short opportunities for worship will use a variety of worship styles and music.

Registration is through the Capital Region Theological Center (CRTC) on their website at www.capitalrtc.org; or by phone to 518-462-2470. The cost is \$20 for the Friday session and \$50 for the Saturday session (includes lunch). Three or more people who register together will receive a 10% discount. In addition, partial scholarships are available through CRTC and CREO.

Conference sponsors are invited to an informal conversation with Tony on Friday from 3-5pm. Organizations, churches, and individuals interested in becoming sponsors should contact CRTC. Sponsors as of March 28 are:

Patrons (\$500) - Capital Area Baptist Association (CABA); Capital Region Ecumenical Organization (CREO); Capital Region Theological Center (CRTC); First Church in Albany (Reformed); FOCUS Churches of Albany (FOCUS); and Schenectady Inner City Ministries (SICM).

Sustainers (\$250) - St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Albany

Supporters (\$100) - Capital Area Council of Churches (CACC); Christ Our Light Church, Albany; Emmanuel Baptist Church, Albany; Greenbush Reformed Church; Johnstown Reformed Church; and St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Albany.

CRTC is offering an additional opportunity for informal conversation with Tony. He will be the guest at a fundraiser dinner on Friday night before the 7pm conference session. Tickets for the dinner are \$150 each. ■

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: \$ _____

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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.



† **FOCUS Churches of Albany is sponsoring a “Meal and a Book Study” of Tony Campolo’s latest book, *Red Letter Christians: a Citizen’s Guide to Faith and Politics***, in two locations on April 21 & 28 and May 5 & 12. First Lutheran Church in Albany will host a daytime study beginning with a light lunch at noon. Delmar Reformed Church will offer an evening study with a light supper at 6:30pm. FOCUS clergy will facilitate the discussions and FOCUS is making a few copies of the book available. Call 443-0460 for details.

† **Voices of Hope Concert** to benefit [Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless](#), April 25, 4pm at 1st United Methodist Church, 428 Kenwood Ave., Delmar. Free will offering. Call 439-9976.

† **Earth Day, April 24.** Local congregations and individuals 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. You may reserve a display space for free and/or become a financial sponsor. Exhibitors include public and private, non-profit and business, local, regional and national religious and secular organizations serving the capital region. Call Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch at 518-674-8204. The 10am-4pm event begins with a Blessing of Pets and All Animals at 9:30am.

† **[Upper Hudson Peace Action](#) pot luck dinner**, “Peace through Music,” with Sonny Ochs, Wanda Fisher, and Kim & Reggie Harris, April 25, 5pm, Delmar Reformed Church, 386 Delaware Ave., Delmar. Donation suggested. Call 463-5907.

† **Calling CROP Walkers** to step off on Sunday, May 2, and vote with your feet for a better world. Local food pantries get 25% of all money raised, while 75% goes to programs in more than 80 countries to help provide food and supplies in natural disasters and war; wells for safe, clean water; and seeds, tools, and education to help people grow better food. Call 462-5450 or visit www.churchworldservice.org to find the walk nearest you.

† **Capital District Community Loan Fund Inc.’s Spring Tour** in May, downtown Albany. A walking tour of Sheridan Hollow/Arbor Hill-based projects it has helped to finance will allow investors, neighborhood representatives, public officials and business and religious leaders to see first hand how the money they have loaned or donated has been re-invested to enrich their community. The Community Loan Fund provides an opportunity for socially concerned individuals and organizations to invest in local, positive socio-economic change in their own backyard, while earning an excellent rate of return. Anyone interested in attending can call the Community Loan Fund office at 436-8586 for the exact date and details of the 1½-hour, late-afternoon tour and for more information about [Community Loan Fund](#) services. ■

One Table

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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.”

“There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither slave nor free,
there is no male and female, for
you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
Galatians 3:28