

# ONE TABLE

VOLUME XII ISSUE I

WINTER 2011

## LOOK INSIDE FOR

40-Hour FAST	2
Plea for Civility	3
Prayer and Advocacy	5
Women's Ordination	6
Safe Counseling	7
Valentine Preach-In	8
Resources and Events	9-11

## A Pastoral Letter to Governor Cuomo

*The following pastoral letter from CREO's Judicatory Executives was sent to Governor Cuomo the week after his inauguration.*

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As you take on your profound responsibilities, we want you to know that we have been and will continue to pray for you and the decisions you make.

We appreciate your inauguration speech included that as you campaigned, you "saw up close and personal the suffering that our people are facing and the devastating toll that this economy has taken. And it cannot be underestimated." We will pray and encourage our congregations to support the changes necessary that will ultimately relieve the suffering of millions of our sisters and brothers.

Similarly to your assertion that 'we are not Republicans and Democrats, we are New Yorkers,' we write to you as an example that we are more than separate Christian faith traditions; we are all One in Christ. And we will be on our knees in prayer, as well as using our voices to speak truth to those in power who need to be reminded that we all have the right to fulfill our God-given potential. And poverty among us robs us of that potential.

As you know, new Census figures show that the income gap between America's richest and poorest is the widest on record. And we and our ministries and charities are acutely aware that nearly 5.8 million of our more than 19 million residents, including 1.7 million children and 1 million older New Yorkers, live in poverty or just a few paychecks away from it, and are in need of vital government support.\* Thanks to state policies put in place over the past couple years, New York was one of only five states with a statistically significant improvement in the number of families experiencing food hardship. Still, over 17% of New Yorkers experienced difficulty buying the food they or their family needed during the first half of 2010.\*\* Our story continues to be a "Tale of Two Cities."

We believe that we can make it through this current day struggle with everyone on board and no one left by the wayside. We are indeed bound one to another.

The ministries and charities we represent and support foster spiritual growth and respond to fundamental human needs, but can do little to change the fundamental structures of poverty in which many families find themselves trapped. While charity is indeed a virtue, it will not solve the pain and suffering that surrounds us; we cannot approach poverty on a case-by-case basis.

Charity is not the extent of our ethical response to poverty. Our government safety nets are not luxuries but necessities; unemployment and underemployment are not the result of personal failings but of economic forces.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### 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  
Capital 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,  
Upper New York Conference

## 40-Hour FAST for Fire's Centennial Remembrance

Martha Schultz

Communications Coordinator

LABOR-RELIGION COALITION OF NYS

In 2011 the Coalition's 40-Hour FAST will commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Triangle Factory fire and lift up the need by today's workers for health and safety protections.

The Coalition invites New Yorkers to fast from solid food for (up to) 40 hours, which links the importance of this number in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and the 40 hour work week. The FAST is an invitation to sacrifice for others, to pray and reflect and be part of an action that will make a difference for workers who do not share the benefits so many enjoy in our state. During the FAST, the participants are asked to **reflect, pray and act for worker health and safety -- and for ending sweat-shops**, a major focus of the Labor-Religion Coalition since 1997.

Each year the Coalition creates and distributes thousands of brochures about the FAST in English and Spanish. In addition to details about the theme and reasons for fasting, the brochure also lists local Coalitions throughout the state. Often these groups hold prayer services, actions or breaking-the-fast meals related to the FAST theme.

This year planners are joining forces with the American Labor Study Center, the NYS Department of Labor, the NYS AFL-CIO, the State Museum, the NYS Occupational Health Network and others to organize a

**Triangle Fire Centennial Commemoration to be held in Albany from 4-5:30 pm on March 25**, the actual day in 1911 that the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in NYC burst into flames. Doors were locked. The fire escape collapsed. Workers, 146 mostly young immigrant women, died. The tragedy galvanized a movement for worker justice that continues today.

Bishop Howard Hubbard of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany will participate in his role as Co-chair of the Labor-Religion Coalition and the program will conclude with a light, breaking-the FAST meal.

The Coalition will also hold a news conference to announce the opening of the FAST on March 23 at a location appropriate to the theme. Fasting will start later than usual (midnight on Wed. March 23) and end at 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

Please visit [labor-religion.org](http://labor-religion.org) for times, locations and descriptions of events. ■



### The Details...

Deadline for Submission  
*One Table* Spring Edition  
 April/May/June...March 25

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 edition was distributed the week of January 11.**

*One Table* is published quarterly by the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization on recycled paper. Circulation: 450 per hard copy issue, 400 per email, and is archived at [albanypresbytery.org](http://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. ■

## Jesus Christ Spoke Only Love

*Rev. Marian Shearer, regional minister,*  
NY CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Several years ago, Fred Phelps and his intolerant co-believers from the Westboro Baptist Church were outside the convention hall in Kansas City where the United Church of Christ was holding its national meeting. We had been advised not to engage them, so most of us gave them a wide berth. The youth among us, though, decided that conversation was better than hate speech, and went to try to talk to the protestors. All they got for their trouble was yelled at and pushed around. These teenagers were disappointed; no civility was on offer here.

It was equally disturbing when a group of moderate Muslims were building a community center in New York City, and somehow their presence was seen as a hateful insult to those who died in the World Trade Center a few blocks away in 2001. What was in the news for weeks? A misguided pastor from Florida who declared he would burn the Koran if the “mosque” were built. What was not in the news was the conversations that Muslim community had already had with their neighbors, including Jewish members of a community center nearby that they hoped to emulate.

Last week’s shooting of Rep. Gabby Giffords of Arizona is disturbing in as many ways. Perhaps the troubled young man who shot her, and killed six others, was looking for notoriety, not political point-making. Still, such folks feel “permission” to act out their hatred with acts of violence, in part because our public discourse gives legitimacy to such demonization. Our airwaves and web sites are full of the language of “taking out the enemy” and “getting rid of the ungodly.” How can a U.S. Congress member be believed to be an enemy that deserves destroying, not an opponent who deserves debate?

Civility doesn’t make the news. Hate speech does. Longstanding conversations among denominations, including Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims, hardly gain the public’s notice or even that of congregants. And many who dislike President Obama’s policies are not content to debate policy; they have to question his citizenship and even faith, accusing him of being Muslim as though it were a crime or a disqualification.

All these laments and many more make me sad. What makes me glad is that at the tables I’m invited to, CREO delegates and denominational executives meet regularly, Capital Region Theological Center does ministry on behalf of several denominations for the benefit of more than 1,000 learners, the Capital Area Council of Churches, Schenectady Inner City Ministry, Troy Area United Ministries, the FOCUS churches, and many more minister to neighbors. We are not all of one mind in these ecumenical bodies. But we are civil to one another and those we serve.

Surely in our congregations we can model the same civility, generosity, one might even call it hospitality, to listen respectfully to one another. Surely when our neighbors are using hate speech, calling names, casting aspersions, especially on those of other faiths because of their faith, it is our call to speak up. The only reply to hate speech is more, non-hateful, speech.

As I conclude ten years of ministry in the Upstate region, and prepare to travel over to the western region, I am grateful for the respectful way in which we treat each other. I am grateful for the hospitality you all show to one another, and to our Muslim and Jewish and other neighbors. I pray for all of us that when the opportunity comes to speak up for our neighbors, to engage angry people civilly, to add non-hateful speech to the dialogue, that we have the courage to do so, guided by the example of Jesus Christ who spoke only love. ■

## World Inter-faith Harmony Week: First Week of February

In 2010, the United Nations unanimously adopted the idea for a World Interfaith Harmony Week as a UN Observance Event to include people of all beliefs. This week is a call for all religions to unite around the basic principles that people of all beliefs agree upon, and to understand that harmony can only come if we build upon a solid foundation of dialogue that has “love of God and love of the neighbor” at its core principle for engagement. Learn more at [worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com](http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com). ■

## Pastoral Letter to Governor Cont'd...

All politics is moral. Policies are proposed because they are assumed to be right, not wrong. We prayerfully hope that the policies you propose and support uphold the moral principles of empathy, responsibility, and the ethic of excellence. Americans care about each other, and we have a responsibility to act on that empathy: social as well as personal responsibility.

Government has special moral missions: to protect and empower our citizens to have at least the necessities. Protection includes health care, social security, safe food and water, consumer protection, environmental protection, job protection, and the like. Empowerment is what makes a decent life possible – including roads and infrastructure, communication and energy systems, and education. Necessities include adequate food, water, housing, transportation, education, infrastructure (roads and bridges, sewers, public buildings), medical care, care for elders, the disabled, environmental protection, food safety, clean air, and so on. Government serving those moral missions is what makes freedom, fairness, and prosperity possible. Public funds for necessities should never be diverted to private profit. The common good should never be at the mercy of private profit.

We are still in the Season of Christmas, and food banks, pantries, shelters, and congregations across the state are in their busiest times. While people who are homeless are often the public face of poverty, they represent only a tiny fraction of the thousands of our Capital Region neighbors who struggle, invisibly, every day. The lines at our food pantries are filled not only by the recently unemployed but also by people with jobs whose wages are so low that they cannot pay their bills and feed their children.

We are heartened by the news that a huge majority of voters reject the idea that programs that support low-income families and children should be cut, saying instead that Congress should find other ways to reduce the budget deficit.\*\*\* We would dare to project that same

support onto our state's budget deficit.

Jobs that both provide living wages and contribute toward the sustainability of our environment should be a priority. We must prevent more people from falling into poverty by supporting health care reform. We need institutional solutions, such as affordable and excellent child care and improved public education.

Fundamentally, we have to understand that our futures, and those of our children, are directly linked to the future of those who are poor around us. As you well know, implementing all of this in practical terms will take work, and it will be much harder than filling a paper bag with cans.

God bless you and your work these next years. There is much to be done to bring hope, justice, and new opportunities to those who are poor and disenfranchised in New York. We stand ready to do our part as the leaders of several faith communities within the Capital Area. We hope that you will call upon us just as we will call upon you in our common effort to bring about real change in our beloved state so that all New Yorkers can fulfill their God-given potential.

Peace and Grace,  
The Rev. Rick Cowles, Upstate Regional Conference Minister—New York Conference, United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. Harold M. Delhagen, Executive Regional Synod of New York, Reformed Church of America

The Rev. Dr. James A. Fenimore, Albany District Superintendent—Upper New York Conference, The United Methodist Church

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

The Rev. Marie C. Jerge, Bishop Upstate New York Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days: What's Gender Got to Do with It?

*"Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates."* – Proverbs 31

This year's annual advocacy conference will focus on development, security and economic justice issues with a particular focus on those most affected – women, girls and families. In homes and communities, out in fields and marketplaces, along borders and in areas of conflict, violence, poverty and other social evils keep women from attaining their full potential.

Join faith-based advocates from across the U.S. in Washington D.C., March 25-28. Dur-



ing these days filled with worship and dialogue, you will be inspired and equipped to speak boldly on behalf of all God's daughters. Experts will train participants on policy issues and advocacy, culminating on Monday, March 28, with lobby visits on Capitol Hill.

As women and men of faith, we can be a formidable force for change in the treatment of women around the world and, as Proverbs teaches, for the recognition of their vital contributions to social, religious and family life.

If you are in need of a partial scholarship, please send your contact information and the reason for the scholarship to the CREO Coordinator. Visit [advocacydays.org](http://advocacydays.org) for other details. ■

## World Day of Prayer: Informed Prayer Leads to Prayerful Action

World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many faith traditions who gather to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. Throughout the entire day, people collectively pray all over the world, beginning with the first sunrise and ending at the last sunset. Prayers follow the sun path around the globe.

Through World Day of Prayer, women affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have immeasurable influence in the world.

If you have not participated in WDP in the past, you can find resources at [wdpusa.org](http://wdpusa.org). Your worship experience can be enhanced by the many related resources created by the women of Chile. In addition to the 2011 worship bulletin, you can order a leader/planner guide, a children's service, Spanish resources, slides, posters, postcards and music. ■

## Pastoral Letter cont'd...

*(Continued from page 4)*

Field Minister for the Capital Area Baptist Association

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

The Rt. Rev. William H. Love, Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Albany

The Rev. Cass L. Shaw, General Presbyter  
Albany Presbytery, PC(USA)

The Rev. Marian P. Shearer, Regional Conference Minister—New York Conference, United Church of Christ

Rev. Vernon A. Victorson, Dean  
Hudson/Mohawk Conference of the Upstate  
New York Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*Sources:*

\*: Census, 2009 American Community Survey 1 year estimates: Age by Ratio of Income under 200% FPL: [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)

\*\* : Food Research and Action Center, December 2010 report, *Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger*. [frac.org](http://frac.org)

\*\*\*: Half in Ten: The Campaign to Cut Poverty in Half in Ten Years: [halfinten.org](http://halfinten.org) ■

## Ordination of Women Clergy

*Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch, Ecumenical Officer*  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

In response to some of the recent discussion about the ordination of women in the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church, I share some of my perspective as a Protestant clergy and supporter of the ordination of women. Since my years as a theological seminary student in the 1960s I have advocated for equal rights of women in society and in all areas of life.

Over the years, many of my friends and colleagues in ministry have been ordained women. These professional clergy bring many gifts and experiences to the full spectrum of Christian vocations and ministries. It has always been a privilege to work and to know women in all of the roles ordained women serve.

The history of women in ministry in the Christian tradition began in the time of Jesus. As a Jewish rabbi, his treatment of women was revolutionary. Although not among the twelve disciples, many of his closest followers were women. He appeared after his resurrection first to women and this news of the first Easter was reported by the women to the disciples. Women have held prominent positions throughout Christian history as pastors, teachers, theologians and religious.

The orders of ministry in the Western Church were held exclusively by men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. During the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century women were given increased roles. The movement to ordain women to the full ministry of word and sacrament within Protestant churches began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Women were moving out of the home to work in factories, education and social work. In the churches, women were deaconesses, members of religious orders, nurses, teachers, social workers and missionaries.

Antoinette Brown (1825-1921) was the first regularly ordained woman clergy in America, and probably in the world. She was 28 at the time of her ordination in the Congregational Church of South Butler, NY, on Sept 15, 1853. Antoinette was born in Henrietta, NY, and stud-

ied in Ohio at the Theological Department of Oberlin College, graduating in 1851. She married Samuel Blackwell and wrote ten books. In 1902 she delivered the funeral oration of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, at whose home in Seneca Falls, NY, the first Women's Rights Convention had been held.

As a graduate of Oberlin College, I first learned about Antoinette Brown as a student there.

Every two years at the national General Synod meetings of the United Church of Christ the Antoinette Brown Award is given to celebrate women in ordained ministry.

Especially in the past fifty years, many women have been ordained as clergy in the United Church of Christ. Many are serving as pastors or staff members of local churches, colleges and seminaries, and non-profit organizations. These include 23 United Church of Christ women serving in government chaplaincies, including the Air Force, Air National Guard, Army, Army Reserve, Navy, Civil Air Patrol and Department of Veterans Affairs, based on records in 2009.

Congregationalists, the predecessor denomination to the United Church of Christ, first ordained women in 1853 in North America. In the United States, Methodists first ordained women in 1956 and in England in 1974. The Congregationalists of England and Wales ordained women in 1917. By 1960 the Lutheran churches in Germany, Scandinavia and the United States ordained women. The Church of England and several other major Protestant denominations regularly ordain women into ministry.

The practice of ordaining women has increased in many other denominations and across the developing world. Although no tradition has reversed the decision to ordain women, there have been some restrictions placed on their authority or practice of ministry in some situations.

The two largest and oldest traditions of Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox churches, continue to uphold that only men can become ordained clergy.

The World Council of Churches has sought to help churches around the world to set the discus-

*(Continued on page 7)*



## How Safe is Your Couples Counseling?

*Carole Fox, M.A.*

### PROJECT EQUALITY

The nature of conflict in relationships makes deciphering who is doing what to whom difficult and confusing. We hear that women are just as abusive as men. After all, she left that bruise on him when she swung the frying pan. And he is such a quiet guy – wouldn't hurt a fly. Really?

It's true that we are becoming a more violent society. The current action movies, video games, and many programs on TV are perfect examples. Even locally, children (usually boys) have guns and are arrested for shooting each other.

Statistics and research confirm that women can be very abusive. However, many more men are abusive than women and men inflict more serious injuries than women. According to the Federal Bureau of Justice, 85% to 90% of the perpetrators of intimate partner abuse are men who abuse their female partners. Many women who assault their intimate male partners are defending themselves against verbal and emotional abuse. Most abusive men are very charming, generous, and helpful to you and me. Inside their own homes they behave quite differently. Abusers often believe that they are the victim. And women who are abused usually take responsibility for what happens to them.

Do you know the danger signs of intimate partner abuse?

How do you know who is loving and who is abusive?

How do parishioners treat each other in their own homes?

Regardless how beneficial couples counseling can be to the average couple (and it can be very beneficial) the nature of the therapy that is supposed to help resolve conflict may put the abused partner in more danger. More, the counselor may unintentionally collude with the abusive partner.

A new year offers a perfect time to consider a new service that enhances the safety and productivity of the Faith Community's efforts to help families.

**Project Equality** offers an assessment that:

- **clarifies** the dynamic in a couple's relationship,
- **identifies safety issues** and who is doing what to whom,
- uses counselors with **extensive experience** in the mental health and addictions fields, and more than 30 years combined experience working with men and women who perpetrate and/or are

- victimized by intimate partner abuse
- is clearly **creditable** and includes standardized testing,
- results in a **useful report** to you,
- requires only a **phone call** from clergy, and
- requires a phone call from the couple to **set up appointments** – usually within a week of their call.

Call Project Equality at 518-431-0004 or visit [projectequalityonline.com](http://projectequalityonline.com) for more. ■

## Women's Ordination cont'd...

sion of ordination of women in the context of the emerging convergence on the understanding of priesthood and ministry, and within the developments of Christian unity.

Some studies of the World Council of Churches have maintained that the ministry of church needs to show the world the depths of unity possible in the human community, and to make the values and vision of the Kingdom of God credible in a broken and divided world. The WCC provides a context for deepening the understanding of the exegetical, doctrinal and pastoral questions which arise relating to the ordination of women into the Christian ministry.

I hope that various Christian traditions can learn from each other in the further study and development in of providing opportunities for women to serve in ordained ministries. Women constitute 50% of the population; the church needs to welcome and affirm this significant part of our world. The work of the church will benefit from the leadership and participation of women in full equality. ■

## Make Creation Your Valentine

Last February, over 500 congregations across the country participated in Interfaith Power and Light's first annual Preach-In by delivering sermons and/or hosting events on global warming over Valentine's weekend. The theme of the 2010 Preach-In on Global Warming was 'loving our neighbors by loving Creation.' Congregations also asked their senators to love Creation by passing a comprehensive clean energy and climate bill. They did not, due to a \$500 million fossil fuel campaign against it.

To ensure the voice of the faith community is heard in early 2011, Interfaith Power and Light is inviting clergy to join in this year's national Preach-In on Global Warming on the weekend of February 11-13 in honor of Valentine's Day.

If you are a lay person, you can organize an event in your congregation, such as a film screening, to educate your community about global warming and the religious response.

Valentine's Day represents a powerful opportunity to talk about loving our neighbors by protecting Creation.

People of faith love Creation and love our neighbors, including those around the world who are affected by climate change.

You may find all the materials you need, and lots of ideas for different ways to engage your congregants at the Interfaith Power and Light website. Preach-In materials include:

- Outlines for sermons, messages, and devotionals categorized by faith,
- Free DVDs and discussion guides for a film screening, and
- Free bulletin inserts and Valentine's Day postcards for your congregation to send to your senators urging them to love Creation and protect the climate.

Go to [interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://interfaithpowerandlight.org) to register for the Preach-In and find these resources. ■

## Your Community's Children Will Eat Better

In December, President Obama signed The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act into law, accompanied by a commitment to work with Congress to fix the SNAP/Food Stamp Program cut included in that Act.

The law has its roots in the National School Lunch program signed into law by President Truman after World War II and in the Child Nutrition Act passed in 1966. The idea for that act came from the Rev. C.B. Woodrich, who worked with children in Colorado who were going hungry because they couldn't afford to buy lunch. Rev. Woodrich thought that was unconscionable, so he arranged a meeting with President Johnson, arriving at the Oval Office with simply an enormous album filled with the photos of children in need.

The 2010 Act has many important and excellent provisions for child nutrition programs, including many that have immediate implications for members in your congregation, regardless of income.

Hunger, or more accurately inadequate nutri-

tion, is one of the most severe roadblocks to the learning process. Children suffering from hunger and food insecurity are especially at risk of not performing to the best of their God-given potential in school. Hunger also prevents children from maintaining a healthy lifestyle as well—making them more prone to illness and other health issues.

Very few of the children eligible for the benefits of the summer food program actually receive food. The primary reason? Not enough feeding sites. Your congregation can be especially helpful in this category since churches or faith-based facilities are often recognizable locations in a community. By participating in a summer feeding program, you would play a significant role in promoting healthy communities and securing the health of future generations. To learn more about The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act or the Summer Food Service Program visit [nutritionconsortium.org](http://nutritionconsortium.org) or [frac.org](http://frac.org). ■







## Resources and Announcements

### *For your newsletter or bulletin*

#### **What's Your Calling?**

At the end of 2010, PBS premiered a documentary film, *The Calling*, a four-hour behind-the-scenes documentary series that looks at young Americans—Protestant, Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim—as they prepare to become the nation's next generation of religious leaders. What are the pressing justice concerns today's emerging religious leaders face and how do recent events change the game for the next generation of faith leaders? For more, visit [whatsyourcalling.org](http://whatsyourcalling.org). ■

#### **Looking for a Meaningful Gift to Show Your Love?**

Valentine's Day and Mother's Day will be here before you know it! Here are some life-giving ideas:

Plant a tree in someone's name ([arborday.org](http://arborday.org)),

Give a gift of an animal at Heifer International ([heifer.org](http://heifer.org)),

Adopt a Native American elder ([anelder.org](http://anelder.org)),

Purchase a Best Gift or Kit at Church World Services ([churchworldservice.org](http://churchworldservice.org)),

Buy a Bed for Albany's Emergency Overflow Shelter ([capareacc.org](http://capareacc.org))

Support local fair trade businesses ([mangotreeimports.com](http://mangotreeimports.com) and [mayanhands.org](http://mayanhands.org)). ■

#### **Peacemaking in a Culture of Violence**

2011 Congress on Urban Ministry March 1-4, 2011 Chicago, IL

Join the groundswell of Christians uniting to actively create peace and justice. Pastors, students, church and community leaders who care about violence in the city are invited to come to: analyze the culture of violence, assume responsibility for transforming the culture of violence, actualize peace in our families, communities, cities, and in our culture. Visit [CongressOnUrbanMinistry.org](http://CongressOnUrbanMinistry.org)

*Contact CREO for partial scholarships.*

#### **Food Help NY: Connecting Your Members to Nutrition Programs**

Are you seeing more families in need of food assistance than ever before? Is your congregation struggling to find ways to help these families? The Nutrition Consortium of NYS can help you connect children, families, and older adults to nutrition assistance programs. Visit [foodhelpny.org](http://foodhelpny.org) to link up with Nutrition Outreach and Education Coordinators in your area. ■

#### ***Mission Challenge 2011: Where Will Your Mission Take you?***

If you are interested in being part of a mission trip this year, visit [albanypresbytery.org](http://albanypresbytery.org) to get connected with groups inviting ecumenical partners! ■

#### **Girl Up**

This campaign gives girls in the United States the chance to invest in and support United Nations programs for girls in developing countries. A gift of \$5, called a High Five, will buy supplies a girl in a developing country needs to attend school, which will boost her earning power and make her less vulnerable to child marriage and sexual violence. For more information go to [girlup.org](http://girlup.org). ■

† Visit [albanypresbytery.org](http://albanypresbytery.org) to find more ecumenical news, pastoral letters and archived One Table publications on the CREO webpages. ■

## Interns & Sponsors Wanted for Summer Program

*Janet H. Mattis, Community Outreach and Internship Coordinator*

SCHENECTADY INNER CITY MINISTRY (SICM)

“My summer spent with SICM was such a positive experience. I served thousands of lunches, distributed produce, made friends, healed injuries, wiped tears, and laughed incredibly hard. I am so grateful to my church for funding me, and so thankful to SICM for all they do for the community,” said Morgan, a high school summer intern.

Each summer, SICM seeks potential interns and sponsors to support the Summer Internship Program. Interns come from various SICM congregations, and gain valuable experiences working with those in need in our community. Interns also meet with the internship coordinator on a regular basis to reflect on their observations and involvement. These students work at the Food Pantry, Damien Center, the Summer Lunch Program, Edible Playgrounds and other special pro-

jects. Congregations sponsor an intern for \$2,500 for a student to work full-time for an average of 9 weeks in the summer, or \$1,250 for a part-time position. If a congregation does not have an intern prospect, SICM can help identify one from another congregation that may not have the funds for sponsorship. For congregations interested in sponsoring an intern, and for students wishing to apply for an internship, call 374-2683 or email [jmattis@sicm.us](mailto:jmattis@sicm.us). Interns are typically between the ages of 17 and 22, and last year SICM had 15 interns for the summer, including high school and college students.

Congregations which support interns usually receive reports back from them regarding experiences similar to those described above. Information will also be available on our website, [sicm.us](http://sicm.us), later this winter. ■



## Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism

Celebrating its 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, this program of the Capital Area Council of Churches is one of the most visible signs of Christian unity in our area. During 2010, teams of witnesses were present for baptisms in churches of five different denominations. Every year, pastors and witnesses (current as well as those who might be interested in joining the program) gather on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord to share experiences and learn about baptism in one of our traditions.

All are welcome to join this program throughout the year as witnesses or to request witnesses at baptisms in Albany area congregations. If you wish to learn more about this program, or learn how you could start one in your community, please call the Capital Area Council of Churches office at 518-462-5450 or visit [capareacc.org](http://capareacc.org). ■

## Capital Area Council of Churches To Install New Director

The Rev. Dr. George Brennan, D. Min will be installed as the Executive Director of the Capital Area Council of Churches on January 23. A priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, Rev. Brennan has been a resident of the Capital District for the past five years with a particular ministry to those who are homeless. Prior to coming to Albany, Rev. Brennan served as the Director of the La Salette Counseling Center and then of the La Salette Shrine, both in Attleboro, MA. He is a member of the R.C. Commission of Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs, the R. C. Commission on Restorative Justice, and is on the Board of Directors of the Capital Region Theological Center. Rev. Brennan will combine his service to the Council with serving a local parish, Our Lady of Hope Church in Copake Falls. **All are invited to attend the Installation Service on Sunday, January 23, 4pm, First Lutheran Church, 181 Western Ave. in Albany.** The service coincides with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and will be followed by a reception in Wittenberg Hall. Call 462-5450 for more. ■



# GOOD NEWS

Go tell it... EVERYWHERE!

† The Capital Area Council of Churches **Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter** opened on Nov. 1 and averages 14-15 guests per night. Many congregations and individuals have contributed their time, meals, supplies, and monetary gifts. If you would like to volunteer or donate goods or services, please call the Shelter at 518-426-1227. The Thrivent Foundation has offered a **special challenge grant**, matching all funds (up to \$10,000) raised for the Shelter through the end of February. If you've been thinking about making a gift to the Shelter, now's the time! Checks should be made out to "CACC Shelter Account" and sent to 646 State St., Albany, NY 12203.

† Think about your New Year's resolutions with a lasting impact by deepening your spiritual life. Many and varied programs are held at the Dominican Retreat & Conference Center in Niskayuna. For more information, call 518-393-4169, email: [dslcny@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dslcny@nycap.rr.com), or visit [dslcny.org](http://dslcny.org).

† *Upcoming courses of the Capital Region Theological Center. Registration required: (518)462-2470 or [capitalrtc.org](http://capitalrtc.org). Scholarships and group discounts available.*

**"Coin and Kingdom: Would Jesus Toss Us Out Today?"** w/ Rev. Norm Tellier, Certified Financial Planner, Sat, Feb. 26, 9am -3pm, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Albany. For all who manage money in the church. Cost: \$75 by 1/26, \$85 thereafter. Register by: Feb. 10.

**"Connecting with Calvin: Restoring Unity to the Church,"** w/ Dr. Randall Zachman, Sat., Mar. 26, 9am-12m, at Siena College. One of today's leading Calvin scholars, Dr. Randall Zachman sheds light Calvin's on desire for unity rather than the division with which he is often associated.

Free will offering to be taken. Register by Mar. 18.

**"Faith, Power & Perspective: Women in the Old Testament,"** w/ Dr. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Fri., Fri. April 8, 9am-4pm, at Union Presbyterian Church. Stories of faith in response to God that changed history. A course for men and women together! \$85 by Mar. 4; \$95 thereafter. Register by: Mar. 23.

**"Adding Strength, Speed & Balance to Your Congregation,"** w/ C. Jeff Woods, Thurs. & Fri., May 12 & 13, 9am-4pm, Explore components of healthy congregational identity and visioning with this national consultant from Alban. \$85 by April 26; \$95 thereafter. Register by: April 14.

**"A Walk in the Woods: Backpacking Through Creation,"** w/ Rev. Kent Busman, Fri.-Mon., April 29-May 2. Join other pilgrims on this spiritually and physically challenging journey through the Western Adirondack Wilderness. \$250. Register by April 13.

† Plan now for your congregation or group to participate in the region-wide, interfaith, intergenerational effort of the **Capital District CROP Hunger Walks**, scheduled for May 1, 2011. New participating churches are welcome to join with many others to raise both awareness of hunger and money to fight it in our local communities and around the world.

Church World Service and its partner agencies use CROP Walk funds to respond to natural disasters; provide seeds, tools, and training to farmers; dig wells to provide clean drinking water in remote communities; and empower people (especially women) to feed their own families and improve their lives. Visit [churchworldservice.org](http://churchworldservice.org) to find out what CWS is doing around the globe or call 518-462-5450 to find a CROP Walk near you. One quarter of the money raised comes back to area food pantries. ■

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." - *Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

# One Table

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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](mailto: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.”

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” *John 14:27*

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” *Isaiah 40:18-31*

Oh Healer, we lift up all those who have been affected by the senseless shooting in Arizona. For the families and friends of those wounded and killed, we ask for your abundant strength and peace. We offer up to you our feelings of anger, confusion, and deep grief, and ask that you return to us a renewed desire for love and peace in this broken world. Amen.