



Greater  
Rochester  
Community of  
Churches

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## the *Ecumenical Messenger*

January 2007

### The Faithful Center – GRCC'S ANNUAL MEETING – JANUARY 29



We are pleased to welcome the Rev. Dr. Robert Edgar as our featured speaker at this year's Annual Meeting on January 29, 2007. We will gather at noon at The Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street. We will share a meal, elect new officers, hear reports on the work of GRCC, join in worship and be blessed by the message of Dr. Edgar.

Bob Edgar is an ordained elder of the United Methodist Church, served six terms in the United States House of Representatives and has led the National Council of Churches since January 1, 2000. Thirty-five Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, historically African-American and peace communions, to which approximately 45 million congregants belong, work together in the Council to promote unity and to serve churches and people worldwide.

Two members of the Greater Rochester Community of Churches Board, the Rev. Lawrence Hargrave and the Rev. Gordon Webster, serve on the Board of the National Council of Churches.

Dr. Edgar has appeared widely, recently on the CBS's Early Show, to speak of his new book: *Middle Church: Reclaiming the Moral Values of the Faithful Majority from the Religious Right*. Here is what Edgar writes in his introduction:

***It is time for Middle Church -- an umbrella term I use to refer to mainstream people of all faiths -- to stand up to the far religious right and to embrace Christianity no less sincerely. The classic, historical Christianity practiced by Middle Church is far more authentic than the narrow religious expression of most radical right-wing religious leaders. We in Middle Church, Middle Synagogue, and Middle Mosque are not secularists who wish to banish God from the public square. We are people of faith whose traditions lead us to work for peace and care for the poor.***

Come and hear Dr. Edgar and share the koinonia of the faithful. RSVP by January 24th with lunch reservations at \$8 to [grcc1@frontiernet.net](mailto:grcc1@frontiernet.net) or call 254-2570. (Late comers WILL be served!)

*Dr. Edgar will also preach the morning of January 28 at 11:00 a.m. at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, 141 Adams Street (off Ford St.), and also be available for more personal discussion with religious leaders on that afternoon at 4:00 p.m. at the Baptist Temple. Phone: 473-3200*

*Dr. Edgar's book is available for purchase at the CRCDS Library/Bookstore, 1100 S. Goodman Street, phone: 271-1320 x205, and also at the Good Book Store, 935 East Ave. 473-8634.*

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GRCC is an association of churches, ecumenical clusters, religious organizations, individuals and denominations working together in our community – sharing in worship, prayer, interfaith dialogue, and justice ministry.

### Greetings from the President



January 7, Epiphany, was my first Sunday as a "retired" American Baptist pastor after 37 years in ministry. Where to go to church? I have the luxury of walking to four churches in our town of Scottsville, but didn't know the times of worship. I left the house just before ten (When in the last 37 years have I been able to do that?) and checked the Scottsville Presbyterian Church where Susan Hartley is the pastor. Their service didn't start until 11 a.m. Just up the street is Grace Church (Episcopal) with Louise Johnson-Toth as Rector. We enjoyed Christmas Eve worship with them, so I headed west to St. Mary's of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church for their 10:15 mass.

At St. Mary's I joined the congregation for Epiphany worship. It was a fine experience for this Baptist. I met Fr. Bill Endres and was happy to reconnect with the Pastoral Administrator Irene Goodwin. She expressed hope that some of the folks at St. Mary's would get involved in the justice work that happens in the city. Their parish paper had news about GRCC's Community Forums on Violence.

I left worship with a new sense of my call to the ecumenical community during this year. Immanuel Baptist Church of Rochester commissioned me on my last Sunday as their pastor to be a missionary from them to the Greater Rochester Community of Churches. My new work began on Epiphany. ***But, so many churches and so little time!***

**I hope you will do two things:** First, will you invite me to your church by calling the GRCC office, 254-2570? I know that our many voices united can and will be a power for good both in the wide community and in our own congregations.

Second, will you send some digital pictures to me so I can put together a presentation on the scope of all that we in GRCC are? Photos of your church activities would be great, and the sanctuary, too. You can send it to my home e-mail address: [RevRMyers@rochester.rr.com](mailto:RevRMyers@rochester.rr.com)

Epiphany is how God reached across religious, geographical, cultural chasms to tell the Good News that would embrace the world. Follow the star. Bring your gifts. A child has been given to us.

In Christ's love,

*Richard Newell Myers*

Your financial support to GRCC is very important. Won't you take a moment to send your personal contribution to: GRCC, 2 Riverside Street, Rochester, NY 14613. To find out more, call: 585-254-2570 or fax: 254-6551

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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***We are thankful for the support of our members, partners, and individual donors. Is your congregation a member? Have you sent your member dues for the year? Don't wait. We are doing such good work now to address the needs of our most vulnerable... those who count on the faith community to make a difference. Help us to make that difference. Please fill out the form and mail your donation to GRCC, 2 Riverside St, Rochester, NY 14613.***

***And don't forget to visit us on the web at [www.grcc.org](http://www.grcc.org)***

## ***Enough Is Enough!***

### ***Together We Create A Way To End Violence***

GRCC, the Faith Community Alliance and the Baptist Ministers Alliance are engaging the people of our neighborhoods to help create "**Community Standards**" to address violence in our streets. A Summit on Violence was held at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, and nearly 200 people attended from all walks of life, including the District Attorney and representatives of the Rochester Police Department. GRCC Board member, the Rev. Karyn Carter gave an eloquent call for us to be engaged as people of faith together. A distinguished panel discussed many of the multiple causes of violence. City Court Judge Roy King issued a challenge for churches to adopt young people and mentor them. This was just the beginning.

Since then, there have been three community forums where community members interact to seek out community values that can counter the chaos in our neighborhoods. We hear testimonies from those who have been victims of violence, those who have suffered because of it, or those who have lost loved ones to violence. We seek to discover how the community can hold together around strong common values. 270 more people attended the forums at Antioch Baptist Church and Sacred Heart Cathedral. This is the continued drive of people who want to see safer streets.

The Steering Team for the Coalition for Community Standards believes that the root causes of violence must be addressed by all of

the people who live in the greater Rochester area. Our fractured wider community contributes to our fractured neighborhoods. We invite you to participate in any of the forums on violence city-wide. We hope to bring forums to the suburbs and into the schools. While these forums have been held in Christian churches, we invite people of all faiths to attend, as well as people from the secular community. As the Rev. Peter Carman of Lake Avenue Baptist Church said, "We know that violence permeates all of our communities, but we also know that the spirit of peace does as well. We are listening for this spirit as we discover the "community standards" for responding to violence."

Our previous forums have brought our community together on these issues, and we expect the tremendous energy and commitment generated by these gatherings to carry us forward.

#### **Future Forums Schedule:**

Thursday, January 25, 7-9 p.m.

Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs St.

Saturday, February 10, 1-3 p.m.

Genesee Baptist Church, 149 Brooks Ave.

#### **Contact Information:**

The Rev. Roy Hedman

Phone: 317-5849

[royhedman@frontiernet.net](mailto:royhedman@frontiernet.net)

Greater Rochester Community of Churches

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## **"Never again" for People of Darfur**

The Rochester Interfaith Coalition for Darfur, spearheaded by the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Community Federation (JCF), will sponsor a community program and candlelight *Trail of Prayers*.

The coalition was formed last spring and hosted the April Darfur rally at Temple B'rith Kodesh. The Jewish Community Federation is pleased to partner with the George Eastman House in continuing efforts to stop the genocide in Darfur.

Please join us on **Sunday, January 21, at 4:30 PM at Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Avenue**, to officially open *DARFUR/DARFUR*. The program will include prayers to end the genocide, comments from speakers (to be announced), and a message from a Darfur survivor...today a student at MCC. Following the program participants will walk two blocks to the Eastman house in silence, where the program will conclude on the lawn. The exhibit will be open for free to the community that evening. For further information, contact Isobel Goldman, 461-0490.

**(Should you receive this newsletter after the date of this event, please know that you can still visit the exhibit that runs through April 22, 2007, and continue to pray for Darfur.)**





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## GRCC on the Road

We want to spread the word about GRCC. In his retirement from pastoral ministry, GRCC President Rev. Dick Myers wants to visit as many of you as possible during 2007. Beginning in February the *movable feast begins*. Not only will Dick try to interpret for you how important GRCC is, but you will in turn shape our understanding of the richness of spiritual gifts in greater Rochester.

So, invite Dick to preach at your services. Invite him to do a forum for adult education. Let's have lunch. Obviously, we want more churches, religious agencies and clusters to be members of GRCC, and we are persuaded that such membership will strengthen your local witness as well. *We have a good story to tell, and it is your own story.*

Part of that story will be a visual presentation to show you the scope of GRCC. But, since **you** are also GRCC, we want to include images from your faith community. We are developing that script right now, and invite you to send digital photos of the work your congregation or organization is doing. Let us get a flavor of your lives. You may submit your digital photos via email to [grcc1@frontiernet.net](mailto:grcc1@frontiernet.net) or directly to Richard Myers [RevRMyers@rochester.rr.com](mailto:RevRMyers@rochester.rr.com). If you don't have a digital photo, call the office at 254-2570 and we will arrange to come and take photos for you. We want to start this roving event as soon as possible, so get your photos to us ASAP! This power point will change from time to time as we update the many stories that you have to share with each other. Rev. Myers is eager to bring his preaching and photos to your congregation beginning in February. Call the GRCC office to schedule time. 254-2570. **Call Now!**

### *Calendar At-A-Glance:*

Jan. 21 – 4:30 p.m. Trail of Prayers for Darfur (Asbury First UMC – 1050 East Ave.)  
Jan. 25 – 7-9 p.m. Sharing Stories / Stopping Violence (Third Presbyterian Church – 4 Meigs St.)  
Jan. 29 – 12-3 p.m. GRCC Annual Meeting and Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar (Baptist Temple – 1101 Clover)  
Feb. 10 – 1-3 p.m. Sharing Stories / Stopping Violence (Genesee Baptist Church – 149 Brooks Ave.)  
June 5 – 5:30-9:00 p.m. Annual GRCC Faith In Action Celebration Dinner

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