

the *Ecumenical Messenger*

Spring 2007

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God's Earth, Our Hands— Faithfully Caring for Creation

On Sunday, April 22, nearly 200 people attended the Earth Day Symposium that was held at Reformation Lutheran Church, presented by the Greater Rochester Community of Churches & Living in Harmony in God's World, an interfaith environmental group founded by Liz Pixley, retired MCC biology professor and Pastor Dave Inglis from Henrietta United Church of Christ.



Rev. Inglis says, *"I find God reminding me that having dominion over creation means responsible stewardship, not mindless exploitation and destruction. I find God showing me how materialism, greed, irresponsibility, and abuse of creation are as corrosive to my soul as they are to creation. God asks me how faithful, moral people can continue on a path that will pass on the consequences of their actions to future generations. And God points out the injustice of lakes and croplands drying up in Africa and coastal villages getting flooded around the world because Americans aren't feeling any need to bother changing their ways."*

A keynote address was given by Scott Cicora, volunteer with **The Climate Project**, a program organized by Al Gore that educates the public about global warming.

Workshops included:

- ☐ Caring for creation in our houses of worship
- ☐ Caring for creation in our homes
- ☐ Caring for creation in our community
- ☐ Caring for creation through worship (especially for clergy)
- ☐ Global Warming 101
- ☐ Youth workshops (grades 6-12)
- ☐ Children's track (grades 1-5)
- ☐ Child care and learning activities for babies and preschoolers

If you are interested in knowing more about this event, and/or having a similar program at your church or in your neighborhood, call the GRCC office at 254-2570, or e-mail godsearthourhands@yahoo.com or call Judy at 381-4508

The relationship between our civilization and the earth has been radically transformed. Global warming is by far the most serious manifestation of the collision—and Mother Nature is making the evidence ever more obvious.

Al Gore Quote

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



Notes from Our Governor's Representative

We were pleased to receive a call from Jennifer Sanfilippo, Governor Spitzer's regional representative for this seven county area of New York. She is listening to area leaders of all sorts, and looked up GRCC. She met with us on March 15. Joining in on the conversation was Rev. Roy Hedman, president of the Baptist Minister's Alliance, Marv Mich, Director of Social Policy at Catholic Family Center, Dr. Peter Mott, community activist and member of the Interfaith Health Care Coalition, and the Rev. Alan Newton, Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches-Rochester Genesee Region. These folks have leadership in GRCC and in our community at-large. Joining me along with this astute group was Marie Gibson, our agency administrator.

Jennifer spent more than an hour with us telling about how she, on behalf of Governor Spitzer, was reaching out to community organizations, seeking our thoughts and wisdom, and building relationships. She asked, "***What can the Governor do for you?***" We told her we were not so interested in what the Governor could do for us, but in sharing with her our perspective on state policy. We have expertise on several areas, and people around the table with knowledge and experience. Here is some of what we shared that will be brought to the governor's attention:

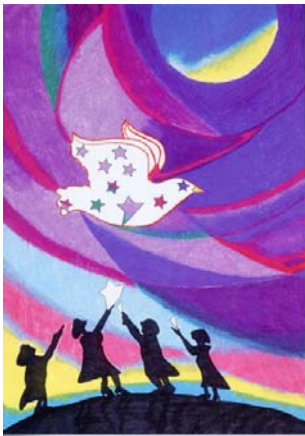
- We advocate universal health insurance through our Interfaith Healthcare Coalition, and press the state to establish a Commission to study the seven options that are available. This can provide basic care for everyone and save billions.
- We updated her on our forums to reduce violence, the Child Abuse Network (CAN), our commitment to lift up the standards the community establishes to create a culture of peace.
- We told her of our involvement with the Children's Zone and the hard work the churches are doing to collaborate with law enforcement.
- We told her that we find a culture of denial at the Department of Human Services, the many roadblocks preventing people from getting help and our work to help the system both to reduce costs and improve service.
- We told her about the restorative justice work through the Finger Lakes Restorative Justice Center and how it repairs relationships, builds communities, reduces recidivism and saves money.
- We commended the governor on not resisting the release of the report on how much money, who has benefited and how many jobs have been created by the Empire Zone programs in New York.

As we move forward with new experiences, new relationships, and renewed energy, together we can make a difference in the lives of so many in Rochester, and New York State.

In Christ's love,

Richard Newell Myers

Feel free to email Dick at revmyers@rochester.rr.com . He wants to hear from you!



“Let Peace Begin With Me”

This year our Faith In Action Celebration will take place on **Tuesday, June 12**, at the Riverside Clarion Hotel, 120 E. Main Street, downtown Rochester, NY. The theme is taken from not only the song that we all know and love, *“Let There Be Peace on Earth,”* (Text & tune by Sy Miller, 1908-1941, Jill Jackson, © 1955, Jan-Lee Music), but also from the letter to the twelve tribes by the apostle, James, chapter 3, verses 13-18. The Words, written in New Revised Standard Version are: *“Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.”*

This year the board has chosen for its **Metropolitan Faith In Action recipients, Gail and Peter Mott** for their years of advocacy in the peace and justice ministries. Gail and Peter, as many of you already know, have been advocating for peace since the 1960's. In his book, **Cancer In the Body Politic**, Peter writes in his forward: *“Key to my task has been to review research on the “historical Jesus” and what are thought by many scholars to be his most authentic words. What has become clear is his dedication to egalitarianism, inclusiveness, equality between women and men, the “blessedness” of the poor, the persecuted, the hungry, and especially the children... he was a non-violent register of the power structure of the day.”*

GRCC wants to celebrate all the volunteers in our religious community and asks that our members and friends choose one person or a couple or “team” of volunteers from their congregation or organization to honor at this year's event. Celebrating the work of these people of faith has been happening for 16 years, with more than 500 individuals receiving certificates of recognition. Your religious leaders will be receiving forms for submitting honorees and reservations this month. These will be sent by email and regular mail. You can obtain them online by going to our website: www.grcc.org or by calling the office at (585) 254-2570.

Won't you help us make this year the best ever! Encourage your congregation leaders to participate in this year's event, or take the lead yourself in bringing a delegation to the award dinner on June 12th.

GRCC's 16th Faith In Action Celebration
“Let Peace Begin With Me”
Tuesday, June 12, 2007
Riverside Clarion Hotel, Downtown Rochester, NY
Reception at 5:30 P.M.
Dinner and Program 6:15 P.M.
Make your reservation through your congregation leader
by calling GRCC at 254-2570
Or Online at www.grcc.org
Email: grcc1@frontiernet.net

*Turn on your heartlight
Let it shine wherever you go
Let it make a happy glow
For all the world to see*

HEARTLIGHT

Written by Neil Diamond, Burt Bacharach and Carole Bayer Sager



Who are the saints among us? Those with a “**heartlight**” that shine wherever they go. Those who are willing to give their lives to God however God chooses to use them; they make a

“happy glow for all the world to see.”

One such friend and saint is Miss Rosa Wims. In 2003 Miss Wims received the Metropolitan Award for Faith In Action for her work with the Faith Community Health Awareness Center, an outreach center that she started on Genesee Street, where she utilized her own skills as a Licensed Practical Nurse and concerned servant of her neighbors and friends in need. Rosa Wims has been an activist in our community since the 1940's. She has many stories to share and wants you to come listen to them.

We are offering you an opportunity to hear these stories and share your own during

“An Evening With Miss Rosa Wims”

September 19th, 5:30 p.m. at the Baptist Temple, 1101 Clover Street. A light supper will be served and free willing offering accepted for GRCC programs.

GRCC hopes to provide other “Evening’s With...” and would like you to tell us with whom you want to share dinner and conversation. Send your comments to: grcc1@frontiernet.net or GRCC, 2 Riverside Street, Rochester, NY 14613

**Clergy Day Mini-Conference
"Care of Congregations in Wartime."**

Thursday, May 31st, 12-2pm,
658 Monroe Ave. (near Oxford Street, off street parking in rear).

You are invited to attend an interfaith dialogue for clergy and religious leaders. Speakers include The Rev. Scott Taylor

(on how to live with divergent views on war and peace in your congregation), Peter Ziarnowski of the Rochester VA **(on caring for vets and their families in the church),** and Afghanistan Veteran Denique Conner **(on conscientious objection and the church).** There will be a nominal registration fee. An informal lunch will be served. **To register,** email wu2004@frontiernet.net Or call: 271-7090

How do we "Raise up the Foundations of Many Generations?"

Isaiah says in chapter 58 verse 12:

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Since our Summit on Violence on November 15 at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, a dedicated team of persons have organized and listened to testimony from our neighbors at 8 forums on violence in churches, in the county jail and at the School Without Walls. All told, more than 500 people have attended these forums. We have gathered a lot of information with hundreds of pages of written records.

We are planning another forum likely at East High School. The steering group has 10 people and will add from 2 to 4 youth to bring their perspective. Our next task is to gather from this testimony the Community Standards that the people are lifting up to which all of the people of Monroe County are called. We know that these standards will require a change at all levels and among all people. We are trusting the wisdom of the community and calling forth the strength of the community.



Rev. Dick Myers, GRCC president, Rev. Roy Hedman, President of the Baptist Minister's Alliance and Bob Smith from WXXI Radio following an hour of conversation on the air with listeners addressing the issues of violence and how we begin to make changes.

Please remember this significant work in your prayers. We expect soon to return to the community and present what we believe the community has been saying for their response and refinement. This work is enriching for us in the variety of persons who have been called together.

We are clear that when Community Standards are finally lifted up and commitment made to live them out, the work is just beginning. All of us on the steering team are on the long journey together. We are enriched by the Spirit of Unity.

You may contact me at the GRCC office: 254-2570 or email me revrmyers@rochester.rr.com.

Richard Myers

"We walk because they walk!" Sunday, May 6th

Hungry people in developing countries typically walk as much as six miles a day to get food, water, and fuel, and to take their goods to market. We walk to be in solidarity with their struggle for existence.

Join a local Crop Walk today.

For additional information, contact www.cropwalk.org
Church World Service in North Syracuse, NY, 1-888-297-2767 (toll-free)



CROP WALKS – Monroe County

Community: **Brockport CROP Walk**
Date: Sunday, May 6
Registration at 1:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church
Contact information: 637-6541

Community: **Fairport - Perinton**
Registration start: 12:30 PM Walk start: 1:00 PM
Location: Fairport Junction, Liftbridge Lane, Fairport
Call for information: United Methodist Church, 223-9560 or JoAnn Price-Yablin, 425-1604

Community: **Greece**
Registration start: 1:00 PM Walk start: 1:30 PM
Location: Bethany Presbyterian Church, 3000 Dewey Ave, Rochester
Call for information: Bethany Church, 663-3000 or Ken Connor, 227-7410

Community: **Rochester: Southwest (Lyell-Otis)**
Registration start: 1:45 PM Walk start: 2:00 PM
Location: Aeon Baptist Church, 175 Genesee St, Rochester
Call for information: Kolleen Morse, 328-8422

Community: **Rochester: Northeast and Irondequoit**
Registration start: 1:00 PM Walk start: 1:30 PM
Location: St Ambrose Church, Culver Rd and Empire Blvd.
Call for information: Bob Kern, 482-0245, or Waring Baptist Church, 467-4388

Community: **Rochester: Southeast**
Registration start: 1:45 PM Walk start: 2:00 PM
Location: Third Presbyterian Church, East Ave at Meigs St, Rochester
Call for information: Third Church, 271-6513

Community: **Rush-Henrietta**
Registration start: 1:00 PM Walk start: 1:15 PM
Location: Southside Church of Christ, 1484 Calkins Rd., across from Tinker Park
Call for information: Dave Meyer, 533-1944, or Jim Remenicky, 334-7369

Community: **Spencerport**
Registration start: 12:30 PM Walk start: 1:00 PM
Location: United Methodist Church, 32 Amity St, Spencerport
Call for information: Parma Baptist Community Church, 352-3344

Community: **Webster**
Registration start: 1:00 PM Walk start: 1:30 PM
Location: Webster Baptist Church, 59 South Ave, Webster
Call for information: Carol Van Atta, 671-7832

News Notes and Up-Coming Events

Mystery and Metaphor: Oil Paintings by Lynette Blake www.LynetteBlake.com

April 29 - July 25, 2007

The Baptist Temple

1101 Clover Street

(at the corner of Highland Avenue)

Open Mondays through Thursdays 9am - 1pm

and by appointment. Call (585) 742-1292.

Opening Reception

Sunday, April 29, 2-4pm

www.LynetteBlake.com

Baptist Temple

Email: baptempl@baptempl.org

Phone: 585-473-3200

Fax: 585-473-5929

EIA Initiative: Insight and Housing in the Rochester area:

A Celebration of **May Friendship Day for** Church Women United

Friday, May 4, 2007 9:30 AM

Gates Presbyterian Church, 1049 Wegman Road

Cost: \$3 at door-Bring bag lunch; beverages & dessert provided.

Details 342-2790 or www.cwurochester.org

END POVERTY NOW!

WILLIE BAPTIST--Kensington Welfare Rights Union

An organization of poor people fighting for the rights of the poor.

Wednesday May 2, 2007 @ 7:00

Baden Street Settlement, 13 Vienna St.

Plus: A display of t-shirts that tell the stories of the effect of violence on local teens.

Children Welcome! · Refreshments provided

For more information contact, SWAA@swaarochester.org, or (585) 395-5562

Co-Sponsored by: The SUNY Brockport Student Social Work Organization, Rochester NOW, House of Mercy, Rochester Poor People's Coalition, Baden Street Settlement and Social Welfare Action Alliance, Poor People United

Visit the GRCC Website calendar for more information at:

<http://www.grcc.org/current.html> or on our HOME PAGE at www.grcc.org at the "Highlights" bar on the left side of your screen.

Send your calendar items to grcc1@frontiernet.net.

