

ONE TABLE

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AUTUMN 2010

LOOK INSIDE FOR

Military Chaplaincy	2
Interfaith Support	4, 10
Room for All	5
Online Crisis Support	6
Gospel Call Events	7
Fair Trade Holidays	8
Resources and Events	9-11

Are We Ready for the Tech Valley Boom?

Rev. Cass Shaw, General Presbyter

ALBANY PRESBYTERY, PC (USA)

Between new initiatives at RPI and General Electric, the new Chip plant and Global Foundries there will be 1,400 new jobs created in the capital area by 2012, and five times that many in the decade to follow. How are our congregations preparing to welcome and integrate the influx of new people into our communities?

We've all heard bits and pieces about the growth of the tech industry in our area. Yes, most of us have not grasped what potential impact this will have on our ministries. How many of those who will be moving into our area will be seeking faith communities with whom to connect? How many of them have not yet been exposed to the gospel? What services will they be looking for? What gifts and skills do they bring?

Recently, I attended a panel discussion which highlighted the ways in which non-profit organizations will be affected by the growth of Tech valley in our region. Linda Hillman, President of the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce moderated a panel which included Judith Saidel, Associate professor in the Department of Public Administration and Policy at University of Albany, who is well known in tech circles. Her extensive study of the tech-driven boom and post-boom period in Austin, Texas shed a light on the human side of economic development. Also helpful was Eric Burnett, a CEO of a start up technology company in the area, as well as Angela McNerny, the director of Tech Valley Connect, a service that helps "trailing spouses/partners" and their families with their integration into new communities.

It is in the interest of the companies moving in to ensure that the staff they hire and the families they bring along are integrated into their local communities, put down roots, and want to stay. When top talent, PhD level staff are recruited, more often than not the spouse is also highly educated. If that spouse is not hired somewhere as well; if the family is not fully assimilated into the community, the new recruit doesn't stay long, often leaving within two to three years.

Those moving in want to get involved

Churches have a unique vantage point. We offer entire families a place to get to know others in the community, multigenerational programs as well as youth groups, couples groups, and other opportunities for families to feel at home quickly. We also offer one thing that most highly skilled newcomers are looking for – volunteer opportunities.

Whether or not those moving in to our area already have a faith tradition, one characteristic that many of them share is a desire to make a difference....

(Continued on page 3)

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

A Unique Ministry

Chaplain (Major) Jake Marvel
WING CHAPLAIN, 109TH AIRLIFT WING
NEW YORK AIR NATIONAL GUARD

At a recent ecumenical dinner, I was humbled to hear from many local religious leaders of how they had kept me in their prayers when I have deployed as part of my ministry as an Air Force chaplain. Two years ago I was in Germany greeting wounded warriors airlifted out of battle. Less than a year ago, I was chaplain to the thousand or so scientists, pilots and dishwashers (among others) who make McMurdo Station the hub of US research on Antarctica. I've written letters and kept blogs that were read by many of you who read these pages. I thank you for your prayers, support, and kind words.

And I have an appeal to make. I have the opportunity to add another part-time chaplain to our ministry at the airbase in Schenectady. I'm looking for an ordained religious leader whose denomination will endorse them for military service. The military needs religious leaders who can be visible reminders of the Holy to the men and women in uniform, leaders who will foster an ecumenical and interfaith perspective.

There are many reasons to serve – it's good money, it's fun, it's unique, it's rewarding –

but the primary motivation I'm

looking for is someone with a heart for ministry and passion for people. One of the great aspects of serving here in Schenectady is our year-round peace-time mission to support the National Science Foundation's research in our planet's polar regions.

Some of my most effective work in the ministry has been with airmen, soldiers, sailors or marines who claim they'd never darken the door of a church, but who are willing to chat about God in line at the dining hall or who face difficult times and need someone to walk with them.

If you, or someone you know, is willing to explore this opportunity please have them either contact me or call the national recruiting office. Contact information is listed below.

To answer some questions up front, military chaplains:

- ensure the constitutional right of all military members to express and practice their faith

(Continued on page 7)



The Details...

Deadline for Submission
One Table Winter Edition
Jan/Feb/Mar...December 17

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 October 10.**

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 www.albanycreo.blogspot.com and 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. ■

Will Millions of Children's Choices be Lunch OR Dinner?

Making cuts to food stamps to fund child nutrition is unacceptable.

After the elections, the House may vote to pass the Senate's version of child nutrition reauthorization. This legislation is revisited every five years; the current bill includes \$2.2 billion in cuts to future SNAP/food stamp benefits.

Anti-hunger advocates are urging the House to abandon this approach and pass a good child nutrition bill that improves access to healthy food without cutting SNAP/food stamp benefits.

With the Senate's bill, a family of four can

expect their food stamps to drop about \$59 a month starting in April 2013. Since 40% of all food stamp recipients in NYS are children, we may be helping nutrition at the school cafeteria line, but we are hindering nutrition at home.

CREO is one of the 1,600 national, state, and local organizations urging Congress to fund child nutrition programs without cutting other nutrition programs. Visit www.nutritionconsortium.org or www.frac.org to learn more, add your voice and speak up for those who are at risk of hunger. ■

Tech Valley cont'd...

(Continued from page 1)

to be of service to the community in which they relocate. Churches have a significant opportunity – to reach out and invite them to become volunteers within our already established networks, or churches can become bridges by which newcomers create their own volunteer activities through the auspices of churches who are open and welcoming of new ways to serve the wider community. For example, many of those who are coming bring a depth of knowledge in math and science. How might we create opportunities for them to offer their time and experience in after school tutoring?

Those moving in need our help

When people first arrive in the area, their needs are simple and clear. They need to know how to access various services, they need to learn about our culture, they need relationships that will anchor and orient them to the community. Many of those being hired in the Tech Valley boom will be foreign nationals. They don't know details of our culture at all, whether it be how to access the health care system, or the school system. Someone arriving from Taiwan has no idea what a PTA is, let alone how to respond to a note from a second grade teacher asking the family to participate in school fundraisers, spirit days, or field trips! Learning slang, how to write a check, how to negotiate our traffic system.... all these are challenges.

How easy it could be for a congregation to

offer space and volunteers to teach a basic orientation



class to “trailing spouses” that would cover these basics and offer foreign nationals a safe, supportive place in which to ask questions! But it takes preparation and care.

Over the next few years it will become abundantly clear who among us has really thought about and prepared for the nearly 50,000 people who will be moving into the capital region over the next decade. How relevant will our churches be? How effective in reaching out with a warm welcome and opportunities to get involved? We will only be able to make a difference ourselves if we prepare well, and are ready to welcome newcomers on their own terms....seeking ways to meet their needs and offering ways for them to become integrated into the whole community.

Let's work together, let's do our homework, and let's pray.... that those who move in over the next months and years will find faith communities who don't wait for them to darken the doors of our sanctuaries, but rather reach out to them first, offering a variety of ways for them to interact with us and get to know us, and so receive a genuine welcome in the name of Jesus Christ. ■

Christian and Muslim Relationships: A Statement of Support

We are aware that violence is manifested both in action and in language. The current debate over the placement of the Islamic Center that will include a mosque as well as a place of worship for various faiths two city blocks from what has become known as Ground Zero in lower Manhattan has apparently precipitated acts of vandalism in Islamic communities across the United States. Violence has invaded our area with hate messages scrawled on a mosque in Hudson. The threatened violent action of the burning of the Quran by a small non-denominational church in Florida has evoked a strong reaction from religious and secular groups, organizations and leaders of countries around the world.

Nevertheless, we have been fortunate that while among us there are varying views on inclusivity and cultural diversity, for the most part, the conversations have been moderate and thoughtful. We are gratified that most Islamic communities have been treated with respect and concern in these trying times.

We are aware that often at the heart of violent actions are the age-old traditions of "scape-goating" and stereotyping. Too often we blame other people for our problems or economic concerns. In the family circle, a family may pick on one person in order to make the rest feel better. In a church system, a group or individual may be ostracized or declared heretical because the majority does not feel comfortable with the beliefs of the others. In a nation, one nationality or ethnic or religious group may be blamed for all the country's woes giving birth to all kinds of obscenities and half-truths directed at the minority because the nation cannot curse or blame itself.

As Christians and leaders of faith communities we confess that we have been silent at times when we should have confronted violence, abusive language and misunderstandings.

As American citizens we affirm that the United States has strived to stand as a beacon for the best of government and the highest val-

ues of human aspiration, and seeks to differentiate itself from nations that do not allow for the freedom of religious expression.

As Christians and American citizens we affirm that the Constitution of the United States, for which thousands have fought and died, holds a sacred guarantee that a diverse people within our land are free to worship, or not, according to their individual conscience, and these sacred ideals and principles must not be sacrificed in any present moment of short term fear, bigotry, political opportunism or emotional turmoil, THEREFORE,

- We commend all people who are sensitive to the needs and concerns of Islamic communities;
- We commend the citizens of Hudson for stepping up and assisting the local police in identifying those responsible for the desecration of the mosque; we unequivocally condemn the practice of "scape-goating," stereotyping and the desecration of worship centers in all parts of our society;
- We commit ourselves to seek concrete opportunities to support and protect our Muslim neighbors;
- We affirm the right of Park 51 to pursue the establishment of an Islamic Cultural Center in New York City free from intolerance and discrimination;
- We condemn all acts of racism and religious bigotry that diminish the God given humanity and rights of others;
- We encourage open and thoughtful conversation with those who hold divergent views and opinions in our homes, churches, businesses and neighborhoods to the end that we will grow a community in which our children and children's children will thrive and live in peace.

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

The Rev. Jay Ekman, pastor, The Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church, Saratoga, NY

The Rev. Leif Erickson, PC(USA), Ghent, NY

The Rev. James Fenimore, District Superintendent, Upper New York Conference, United Methodist Church

(Continued on page 5)

Faith-based Gay Rights Organization Expands Scope

Marilyn Paarlberg, National Coordinator
ROOM FOR ALL

Room for All is a not-for-profit organization of Reformed Church in America (RCA) clergy and laypeople who support full inclusion of LGBT persons (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) in the life and ministry of the RCA.

Room for All was organized in 2005 in response to disciplinary actions by the highest judicatory body of the RCA against an ordained minister who performed the wedding ceremony of his daughter and her partner.

Since that time, the organization's activities have expanded to include networking like-minded individuals, establishing chapters in five regions of the country, cultivating more than a dozen welcoming and affirming churches, testing the adoption of LGBT-inclusive bylaws in one regional judicatory, and recommending educational and support resources. In 2009 the first national gathering in Grand Rapids, Michigan drew more than 140 people, establishing Room for All as a voice of advocacy in the RCA.

Room for All also cooperates with ecumenical partners, all of whom carry out similar ministries in their respective denominations. A national board of directors oversees the organiza-

tion, which is neither supported nor sanctioned by the Reformed Church in America, a mainline Protestant denomination founded in 1628. Room for All is funded by individual and congregational donations along with private foundation grants.

Room for All has flourished as RCA members have grappled with a faithful, Christ-like response to LGBT persons who want to participate in their local congregation without having to deny their sexual orientation or gender identities. Biblical and biological interpretation surrounding homosexuality varies widely in the RCA, and emphasizes that Room for All sees its mission as support and advocacy alongside respectful dialogue within the context of mutual religious faith and denominational loyalty.

The question of LGBT inclusion isn't going to go away. Our society will continue to probe this issue in civil life. As with all the social justice movements of the past, this is a challenge and an invitation for Christians. We can let the culture define the conversation, or we can earn a seat at the table and help to shape the outcome from a faith perspective.

Ms. Paarlberg is a member of First Church in Albany (RCA) and may be reached at (201) 364-4538 or mpaarlberg@roomforall.com. ■

Support Statement cont'd...

(Continued from page 4)

The Rev. Tom Gregg, pastor, West Charlton Presbyterian Church, West Charlton, NY

Bishop Howard Hubbard, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

The Rev. Earl Johnson, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Johnstown, NY

The Rev. Kate Kotfila PC(USA), Troy, NY

The Rev. Miriam Lawrence Leupold, co-pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY

The Rev. Alexandra Lusak, pastor, First United Presbyterian Church, Troy, NY

The Rev. Mac McDonald, pastor, United Presbyterian Church, Amsterdam, NY

The Rev. David Moore, pastor, West End Presbyterian Church, Albany and First Presbyterian Church of Greenbush, Rensselaer, NY

The Rev. Paul Randall, Parish Associate, Westminster

Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY

The Rev. Cass L. Shaw, General Presbyter, Albany Presbytery

The Rev. Marian Shearer, area minister, United Church of Christ

The Rev. Joe Shook, pastor, Roessleville Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY

The Rev. Don Stake, PC(USA) Schenectady, NY

The Rev. Elle Stanton, pastor, The Presbyterian - New England Congregational Church, Saratoga, NY

The Rev. Jim Thompson, parish associate, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY

To join this group of faith communities challenging intolerance and discrimination in our present day please contact the Rev. John Ekman at PNECC.NY@verizon.net. ■

Online Support for Those in Crisis

Jill Wolski Ordonez, LMSW
Director, United Way 2-1-1 and
CONTACT Lifeline

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF THE
 CAPITAL REGION

United Way 2-1-1/CONTACT Lifeline is offering the region's first online emotional support system for suicide prevention service in the region. Part of the existing United Way 2-1-1/CONTACT Lifeline call center, Crisis Chat or www.crisischat.org is a new program of Family and Children's Service of the Capital Region, and will serve all residents of the 12 county Greater Capital Region.

Area residents who don't want to pick up the phone to call for help are now able to reach out in times of crisis through their computer or handheld device via this confidential chat service.

People are increasingly using online and text-based methods of communication. There are many people who would not think about picking up a phone to ask for help when they are feeling down, depressed or even suicidal. They may be much more comfortable reaching out for help online, via chat. For example, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 18 to 24 year olds. Online help is an important additional way to reach this age group.

Crisis Chat will offer a positive, free, direct service option for people in crisis. Professionally trained volunteer Crisis Chat Specialists will respond to people in distress with compassion and respect and will "listen" to their emotional pain while de-escalating a suicidal crisis. All Specialists are seasoned volunteers who have also worked on the crisis hotline.

The local Crisis Chat service is one of two frontrunners in a national initiative to link crisis

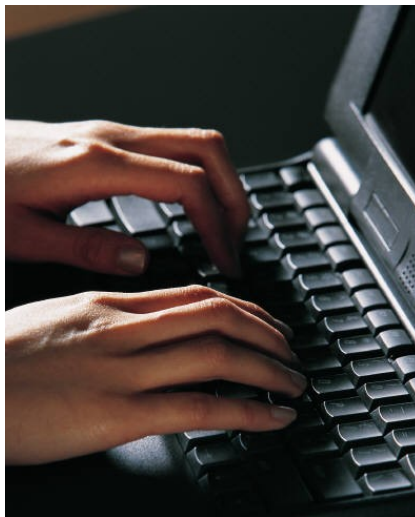
centers around the country via one website platform. The Crisis Chat National Network is a project of CONTACT USA, a network of crisis intervention and telephone helpline centers across the nation that provides standards and accreditation, ensuring consistent, high quality services. CONTACT USA has provided seed funding for the project and is also writing the first standards and guidelines for online emotional support. The Albany branch of Crisis Chat (United Way 2-1-1/CONTACT Lifeline) will play a leading role in the development of the first ever standards and guidelines for online emotional support that CONTACT USA is currently writing.

The local Crisis Chat service is one of the first two crisis hotline centers nationally that will launch from this site, along with one in Austin, Texas. The Crisis Chat National Network will add crisis centers across the country to the portal, until the entire nation is covered, similar to the already existing network of telephone crisis hotlines that are united under the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, or 1-800-273-TALK.

Crisis Chat is currently live via the national web portal at www.CrisisChat.org. CONTACT Lifeline will service the Capital Region from 12–6pm weekdays. The project is poised to expand in hours

and modes of communication (i.e. text, email, social networking, message boards) as additional volunteers and funding are secured. CONTACT Lifeline volunteers also serve as call specialists with United Way 2-1-1 Northeast Region, which provides free, confidential referrals for health and human services questions.

Family and Children's Service of the Capital Region is a 501c (3) organization dedicated to assisting families and individual with their mental health and family support needs. For more information, visit www.fcscapitalregion.org. ■



All Specialists are seasoned volunteers who have worked on the crisis hotline.

Gospel Call - Ecumenical Events

Deacon Ray Sullivan,

MATER CHRISTI PARISH, ALBANY

The First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Albany, Bethany Reformed Church, and Mater Christi Parish are co-sponsoring an exciting ecumenical opportunity called, "Gospel Call--Experiencing Afresh Our Unity in Christ: Together in Worship, Spiritual Growth, and Mission."

The four day event will occur over successive evenings, beginning on Sunday, October 24 and conclude on October 27 with an evening for those engaged in various pastoral ministries in the co-sponsoring congregations.

The mission will be guided by a Roman Catholic and Protestant team of leaders in the Christian unity movement-- Father Tom Ryan, CSP, Director of the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations, and Rev. Dr. Diane Kessler, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Both Fr. Ryan and Rev. Kessler are experienced and respected leaders in this movement to help churches embody Christ's prayer "that they may all be one" (John 17:21).

Very simply, we are coming together to meet each other, to eat together, to worship together, and to explore new ways to be together and to act together in mission.

The leaders will team-preach during an ecumenical worship service each night, rotating among the three churches. In addition, Fr. Ryan and Rev. Kessler will be offering three day-time opportunities for ecumenical re-

newal and spiritual refreshment: a breakfast conversation about

"Integrating your work and your spiritual life," a mid-morning Bible Study, and a luncheon reflection on the spiritual gifts that Christians from different traditions have to share with one another.

The congregations are working together to offer their members this chance to experience afresh their unity in Christ and grow in faith with and through brothers and sisters in neighboring churches of different Christian traditions.

All are invited to participate in the following open and ecumenical Gospel Call events:

Oct 24: Missioners will preach at regular services at both AME and Mater Christi. 7:30pm Evening I: "Called" at Mater Christi, 6:30pm social.

Oct 25: 10am Bible Study, Bethany Reformed. 7:30pm Evening II: "Life in Community," at Bethany Reformed, with social afterward.

Oct 26: 8am breakfast session, "Work as Spiritual Path" at AME and 7:30pm Evening III: "Sent," at AME with social afterward.

Oct 27: 12pm Luncheon session at noon on "Spiritual Gifts to Share" at Mater Christi. 7pm Evening IV: "Together in Mission," at Mater Christi, with social afterward.

For more details, contact Deacon Ray Sullivan at Mater Christi. He can be reached at mal-lansu@nycap.rr.com. ■



Military Ministry cont'd...

- are not missionaries for their own faith group; our role is not to convert
- are endorsed by a faith group recognized by the Department of Defense
- have an M.Div. or equivalent degree and two years of pastoral experience
- meet physical fitness standards
- are 42 years or younger when they join the

military

- serve a minimum of two days a month plus two weeks a year

For information about the 109th AW, go to: www.109aw.ang.af.mil; for recruiting information, go to: www.GoANG.com or call 1-800-524-5070. For general questions, feel free to contact me at Jacob.Marvel@ang.af.mil. ■

Fair Trade Your Holidays

Kim Andersen, Owner
MANGO TREE IMPORTS

For gift-givers looking for faithful ways to express their love for family and friends while also helping to make the world a more just place, there is a new shopping alternative. Three women in the Capital Region have combined their Fair Trade and “positive-impact” business practices to create **Live Well Home Parties**. Fairly traded jewelry, accessories, gifts for kids, home décor, and chocolate can be purchased through hosted at-home parties. Most of the products provided by the three women are fairly traded.

The Fair Trade movement supports producers in the developing world by ensuring fair prices, safe working conditions, gender equality, no child labor, and sustainable business practices. Kim Andersen at Mango Tree Imports supplies a wide variety of art, accessories and jewelry from her store at 12 Washington Street in Ballston Spa. Beth



DeAngelis at Party with Heart offers an international collection of gifts for

children and teens. Her fresh and fun aesthetic is popular among young people and parents alike.

Brenda Rosenbaum at Mayan Hands is proud to market beautiful scarves, textiles and accessories woven by over 200 women in twelve different cooperative groups in Guatemala. Andersen, DeAngelis and Rosenbaum are on a mission to make the world a better place through the simple habit of shopping responsibly and with heart.

Contact any of them for more information about hosting a home party to offer alternative gift giving this holiday season.

Kim Andersen - www.mangotreeimports.com or 518-884-4652

Beth DeAngelis - www.partywithheart.com or 518-368-8098

Brenda Rosenbaum - www.mayanhands.org or 518-438-5636. ■



In Memoriam: The Rev. John U. Miller

The Rev. John U. Miller, 71, died peacefully on Sept. 11, 2010 after a valiant fight against cancer. John faithfully and enthusiastically served with CREO as Ecumenical Officer, President, or Vice President for two decades. He was recognized by the Common Council of the City of Albany this past June for his many years of service to the “least, the lost, and the last” of Albany’s residents.

The following are some comments from friends and colleagues on receiving word of his passing.

“John always has something to give to someone in need.”

“Rev. Miller went in a direction others would not even consider. He gave hope to the hopeless and encouragement to those who felt cast out and mistreated.”

“He was a great man; his devotion to his people, the folks who needed an advocate, the ecumenical community, and the Lord were amazing. I remember a story from when he first came to Albany. It seems the church wanted to provide a parsonage in a better part of the city, but John refused, wanting instead to live among ‘his people.’ That is a committed, credible, and dedicated servant. He will be deeply missed, but the witness of his life shines on BRIGHTLY!”

“Thank goodness we are a resurrection people!” ■



Resources and Announcements

For your newsletter or bulletin

R&R for Military Families

Bring your family together on a 700 acre waterfront on northern Lake George.

Silver Bay: YMCA of the Adirondacks is pleased to offer service men and women a *complimentary* refresh and renew package to reconnect with their families as an expression of appreciation for their service. Military R&R Program guests are welcome to a one-time stay for up to five nights at Silver Bay at no cost to the service member and/or their family. For details and to review the requirements of eligibility for this program please visit the Community Outreach page at www.silverbay.org. ■

Shrinking Footprints

Calculate your congregation's carbon footprint. Make changes close to home by finding out what your congregation's impact is with a carbon footprint calculator, designed just for congregations.

And, you can support congregations that are fighting global warming in developing countries.

Interfaith Power and Light's Carbon Covenant project supports four congregations in developing countries that are combating deforestation and global warming — and they need your help.

100% of your gift goes directly to supporting a congregation's efforts to plant trees, raise awareness about energy conservation and stewardship, and develop economically viable and sustainable ways to support their communities.

Visit these websites for details:

www.coolcongregations.com

www.co2covenant.org ■

Poverty Emergency

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released the nation's poverty numbers. Last year's 43.6 million poor people, including 15.5 million children, comprise the highest number of Americans living in poverty in the past 50 years.

Overall, the number of Americans living in poverty increased by 3.7 million to 14.3 percent.

To set the poverty level, the U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds based on the Consumer Price Index. The income thresholds were originally set using the cost of a minimal diet (based on eating patterns in the 1950's), multiplied by three.

The federal poverty guideline for a family of four was \$21,954 in 2009.

Visit the Coalition on Human Needs (www.chn.org) and the Half in Ten Campaign (www.halfinten.org) for your local data. ■

Seeking God's Grace for the Gulf of Mexico

The National Council of Churches, together with many of its member communions, is seeking ways to bring the moral voice to the oil spill response. By striving to protect communities—both human and nonhuman—we can live out our call to be stewards of God's creation.

Prayer, worship, reflection and action are all part of the long-term recovery that is vital for the Gulf. Visit www.ncccojustice.org/oilspill/seekinggodsgrace.php to get involved. ■

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



Rx for Mother Earth

In the face of a desperately ill Mother Earth that's also sickening life on earth, what's a church to do?

1. Pray for God's creation. Genesis 1, Psalms 8 and 104, Isaiah 24:3-5, 41:18-20, 44:3, 55:12-13, Colossians 1:15-17, Revelation 21:1-5 and 22:1-5 are natural scriptures from which to begin.

2. Start small. Adopt a park, clean up a road-side, nurture a garden, plant flowers and trees that attract wildlife. Small acts of stewardship nurture hope and foster awareness.

3. Go upstream. When considering how to respond to human suffering, look for environmental conditions that precede and exacerbate the impact of natural disasters. Is excess trash part of the equation? Deforestation? Missing estuaries? Polluted waterways? Poor air quality? Climate

change?

4. Partner with others. Follow the path of Christian Nobel Laureate, Dr. Wangari Maathai of Kenya and plant trees as a sign of the resurrection (www.greenbeltmovement.org). Support organizations like Plant with Purpose (www.plantwithpurpose.org) to help restore Haiti's forests.

5. Take a "Mother Earth Mission Trip." When you volunteer through Volunteers in Mission (VIM), turn some of your attention to the natural world around you. Work with locals to restore a forest, clean up a river, or teach stewardship of the creation from the Bible.

Rebekah Simon-Peter is the author of Green Church: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rejoice! She is an elder in the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference and director of Bridge-Works, a ministry that specializes in building bridges of understanding. www.bridgeworkspresents.org. ■

Statement on Islamic Cultural Center, New York City

prepared, endorsed and circulated by the
Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church, Saratoga Springs, New York,
 to ecumenical communities, clergy and friends in the Capital Region
 September 2010

Whereas the United States has always strived to stand as a beacon for the best of government and the highest values of human aspiration and

Whereas the U.S. Constitution, for which thousands have fought and died, holds a sacred guarantee that a diverse people within our land are free to worship, or not, according to their individual conscience and

Whereas the United States seeks to differentiate itself from nations that do not allow for the freedom of religious expression and

Whereas these sacred ideals and principles must not be sacrificed in any present moment of short term fear, bigotry, political opportunism or emotional turmoil,

Therefore, the Governing Board of the Presbyterian - New England Congregational Church, together with church members and friends from the Capital Region of New York, affirms the right to pursue the establishment of an Islamic Cultural Center in New York City free from intolerance and discrimination. We condemn all acts of racism and religious bigotry that diminishes the God given humanity and rights of others. ■

GOOD NEWS

Go tell it ... EVERYWHERE!

† Church Women United World Community Day, Nov 5, Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Albany. Participants are invited to bring a bag lunch. Registration begins at 11:30am. Following lunch, the program "Building the Beloved Community" will begin.

† Capital Area Council of Churches (CACC) Musical Celebration, Nov. 7, 3pm, Trinity United Methodist Church in Albany. Featuring musical groups from different churches, this event is a major fund raiser for the Council as well as a time for fellowship. Free will offering. Refreshments follow the concert.

† Community Thanksgiving Day Service, Nov. 25, 10am, at All Saints Cathedral in Albany. Call CACC at 462-5450.

† Schenectady Inner City Ministry's *Harvest for the Pantry* fundraising dinner, Nov 7, 4-7pm, St. Helen's Church, Schenectady. Proceeds will go towards the [SICM Emergency Food Pantry](#). Tickets are available by calling SICM at 374-2683.

† Dominican Retreat & Conference Center *More than Just Desserts* benefit, Nov 14, 6-8pm, Nis-

kayuna. Please call 393-4169 or visit www.dsleny.org for tickets and details about other programs and events throughout the fall.

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

† **Boundary Awareness** w/ Rev. Dr. David Olsen, Thur., Nov. 4, Loudonville Presbyterian Church. Healthy boundaries in leadership relationships will be addressed. Strongly encouraged for those who work with children, youth, or specialized ministry. Cost \$90. Register by Oct. 19.

† **God made Me Do It: Faith, Violence & Apocalypse** w/ Dr. John Collins, Fri., November 5, 5-7pm, and Saturday, November 6, 9am-3pm at First Reformed Church of Schenectady. Many believe that religion is the leading cause of violence in the world. On Friday night, explore from a Christian perspective over a one-hour lecture followed by *wine, hors d'oeuvres and conversation. On Saturday, Dr. Collins will look at apocalyptic literature from various faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—to see what role faith may play in encouraging violence, ancient and modern. Cost: Fri.- \$20.00 by September 17, \$30 thereafter. Sat.- \$75.00 by September 17, \$85 thereafter. ■

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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.”

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue
but with actions and in truth.

I John 3:18



Dear friends, let us love one another, for love
comes from God. Everyone who loves has been
born of God and knows God.

I John 4:7