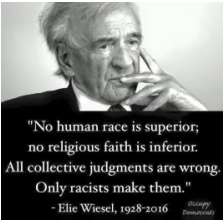


The Connection

The Capital Area Council of Churches

July/August
2016

Kaleidoscope of Grief





LOVE WILL PREVAIL....❤️

Just eight days following the Orlando Vigil, someone set fire to the Pride Flag which was being flown by the First Lutheran Church on Western Avenue to honor Pride month.

Our neighbors, the Damien Center, were heartbroken, frightened and sad that an attack on a way of life was happening in our own backyard. Has there not been enough blood shed in Orlando? For someone living within the confines of the City of Albany, it seemed not. The image of the torched Pride flag was also burned into the memory of many. The Gettysburg Flag Company came to the immediate rescue. They donated a new custom made flag which was dedicated on June 30. A crowd gathered for the dedication and members of the interfaith community, Perry Junjulas of the Damien Center, County Executive Dan McCoy, Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Pastor Gregg Tenerman representing the First Lutheran Church, Rabbi Beverly Magidson from Jewish Federation, Deb Riitano of the CACC as well as other political notables offered words, prayers and hope. **LOVE WILL PREVAIL.**



CACC MUSIC FOR THE SOUL

We are already planning the Capital Area Council of Churches annual Musical scheduled for Sunday, November 6 at Delmar Presbyterian Church at 2:30 p.m... We are grateful to Pastor Karen Pollan for offering her space for an afternoon of sharing music traditions. Again this year, Fr. Gregory Francis of St.

George's Antiochan Church will serve as the coordinator of this spiritual and uplifting event sponsored by the Council. The theme this year "With Voices United," which of course, could have a whole new meaning by then!

CACC CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY!

On September 15, 2016 the Council will celebrate its 75th anniversary! Rabbi Scott Shpeen will be awarded the Rev. Carlyle Adams Ecumenical and Interfaith Award. Derek Healey, SUNYA student and Treasurer of the Interfaith Alliance will receive the Ed Bloch Youth Award.

Rabbi Shpeen has served Beth Emeth since 1985. Rabbi Shpeen presently serves on the HUC-JIR President's Rabbinic Council. Locally, he serves on the Board of the Albany Symphony Orchestra and chairs its Committee on Institutional Advancement. He is on the Advisory Committee of the Capital District Senior Issues Forum Lifetime Achievement Award. Rabbi Shpeen has been an Adjunct Professor at the College of St. Rose in Albany since 1994, teaching a course on the Holocaust. He is also a regular commentator on WMHT Public Television. Rabbi Shpeen was appointed in May, 2006 by Albany Mayor Gerald Jennings to serve on the Albany Human Rights Commission on which he served for three years until May 2009. Rabbi Shpeen is a two term Past President of the Capital District Board of Rabbis (2008-2010; 1990-1992), past President of the Rabbinic Alumni Association of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, past Board of Governors of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion as well as Boards of the United Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York, the Daughters of Sarah Nursing Center, Park Playhouse, The Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King Lecture at Siena College. The Interfaith Advisory Committee of the Bethlehem Central School District, the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Lecture Board of The College of St. Rose.

We are delighted to announce that Judith Bank, the Tanenbaum Center for Religious Understanding, will be the keynote speaker. Ms. Banki is an internationally renowned writer, lecturer and expert in interreligious affairs. Her writings and research reports have largely focused on the image of the "other" in religious education and the sources of prejudice in various teaching and

preaching traditions. She has served as the Associate National Director of Interreligious Affairs for The American Jewish Committee and as editor of the Interreligious Newsletter. In 2001, she received an honorary doctorate from Seton Hall University in recognition of her pioneering work in the area of Jewish-Christian Relations. Judith was at Vatican II with Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and where Dr. Carlyle Adams served as an observer.

LOVE IS LOVE, IS LOVE.....by Deb

On June 12 at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida our country watched in shock and horror the deaths of 49 LGBT individuals who were murdered during an evening of relaxation, friends, and fun. Three days later, the Council with County Executive Dan McCoy's office and the Office of Spiritual Life at The College of Saint Rose, held a prayer vigil for the victims. Hosted by the Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary, an overflowing crowd was on hand. Participating were Bishops Edward Scharfenberger and Howard Hubbard, Rev. Peter Cook of the NYS Council of Churches, Rev. Shannon Vance O'Campo of the Albany Presbytery, Rabbi Debora Gordon, Berith Shalom, Imam Faisal Ahmad as well as representatives of the County Executive's office and the Mayor's office. That evening the Council of Churches apologized to the LGBT community for the times we have marginalized, abandoned or isolated the community. My remarks, abridged, follow:

"It seems to me I have been welcoming our community to these types of memorials for many years now-- 9-11, Newtown, Charleston, and now Orlando.

Why do we keep coming back to this same spot? a memorial -- because someone else's life or city and now lifestyle has been attacked. Our tears were not yet dry from the attack on Tel Aviv when we got Sunday morning's news. It was inconceivable. But here we are again. By Sunday night the Masjid Al Salaam Mosque had called a press conference to condemn this attack on the LGBTQ community. I was there and saw our Muslim brothers and sisters, color drained from their faces, tears in their eyes, saddened that someone had once again abused their sacred text this time during the holiest month of their year Ramadan-- one more thing to add to the growing incidence of Islamaphobia.

To the LGBTQ community the CACC is with you. We mourn with you. We feel your anger. We are here to pray with you and we love you. As an interfaith community we need to say we are sorry because we have failed you. In many

ways we have abandoned you. Each of our faith traditions prohibits murder, hate and any discrimination. And in two weeks when all has quieted down, many will return to what Rabbi Kleinke of blessed memory called “tea and sympathy”. Let us remember the words of Robert Lynch, Roman Catholic Bishop of St. Petersburg Florida “religion often breeds contempt for gays, lesbians and transgender people and this contempt can lead to violence.

We will need to be reminded that the commandment “Thou shall not kill” is irrevocable. It supersedes any cultural, municipal or religious authority to enshrine homophobia in its law, in lives and in hearts.

This murderous act of brutality against the LGBTQ community cannot be forgotten and left behind by our faith traditions. We won’t just see it. But NOW we will know it in subtle actions and words in our community ingrained in our society and accepted where we work, where we play and where we pray. We are sorry for that smoldering hate that lies at the center of our most venerated traditions.

We will not let this divide us. We cannot let this divide us.

The Council of Churches promises tonight to lead the way in our interfaith dialogue to include issues of import of the LGBTQ community with honesty and dignity as we go forward. And I leave you with the moving words of Lin Manuel Miranda of the musical “Hamilton” upon his acceptance of a Tony Award Sunday evening:

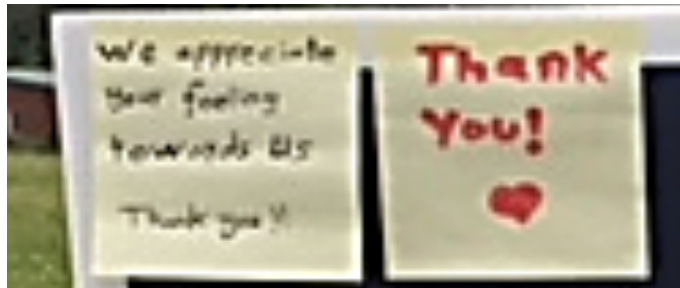
*‘When senseless acts of tragedy remind us
That nothing here is promised, not one day.
This show is proof that history remembers
We lived through times when hate and fear seemed stronger;
We rise and fall and light from dying embers, remembrances that hope
and love last longer
And love, is love, is love, is love, is love, is love, is love, is love. Love cannot be
killed or swept aside.’”*

PEACE WALK 

The fourth Annual North Star Interfaith Peace Walk Sunday Sept 25th 2:00-4:00 starting point at Morris and West Lawrence at RISSE. The Length of walk 1.5 miles. No political signs or banners. It is a Family event. Join other community members to reaffirm our common roots.

RAMADAN

This year, CACC partnered with NYS Council of Churches and sold signs that wished our Muslim neighbors a “Blessed Ramadan.” It seemed like “a nice thing to do.” We were expecting some complaints or possible signs being taken down by those who weren’t feeling the sentiment. I placed one on my lawn. One day we saw folks taking pictures of the sign. I was sure the photos were being sent to someone in charge of telling people what was permitted on their own property. Two days later my sign looked different. Ohhhh dread. Someone had defaced it-or so I thought. Instead this is what I found – it is a little hard to read. (left corner Post-Its thanking me!)



STOP THE HATE PRAYER VIGIL



The annual Stop the Hate Vigil sponsored by Interfaith Alliance is being co-sponsored this year by The Capital Area Council of Churches and The Office of Spiritual Life at The College of Saint Rose. The gathering will take place on the UN International Day of Peace, Sept. 21 at 7:00 p.m.at the Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary. This year’s theme will center on the statement “What I have known of the impact of hatred in my life or the lives of those I care about.”

Participating will be representatives from the LGBTQ community, African-Americans, undocumented immigrants, people who are Muslim and police officers. Included will be a brief ceremony of healing and a commitment to healing our world. Please mark your calendar now so that you can be part of this thoughtful and prayerful evening.

SUMMER LUNCHBOX IS ON THE ROAD



Once again the summer lunchbox is underway. Many of the children, parents and grandparents remember our crew from last summer. Thanks to grants from NYSCOBAs, the Bruderhof Community, and the Community Foundation, as well as smaller contributions from friends of the program, we have already served (as of July 18) 1600 lunches. This effort, co-sponsored by Senior Services of Albany, is a great way to help the West Hill community and to a smaller extent, the South End, meet the challenges of food insecurity that can be found in their neighborhood. Student intern, Renata Cortella is busy coordinating all aspects of the program. We are grateful to Renata and all the interfaith volunteers who are helping to make this program a success again for the second year!



MLK Scholarships

On June 1st at the Delmar Reformed Church we were delighted to award two \$4000 scholarships to our Martin Luther King Jr. scholarship recipients, Jeanne Sinzinkayo and Davina Mayo-Dunham. Both will also be heading to Siena College. Exceptional students going to an exceptional college! This year, ten

students applied for this prestigious scholarship of the Council. All of our applicants were excellent. A devoted committee spent two days interviewing the top choices. It is more than a task. It is a labor of love by this committee headed by Joan Marie Lipscomb. Thank you Joan and the committee and good luck to Davina and Jeanne as you begin the next part of your educational and spiritual journey.



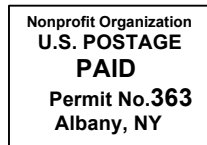
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Current Resident or:

Upcoming Dates of Note

August 15th – Albany County Program on Racism at Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary at College of St. Rose at 10 a.m.

September 15th – Annual CACC Celebration at the Albany County Club

September 21st – Stop the Hate at Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary at College of St. Rose at 7 p.m.

September 25th – Annual Kateria Peace Conference 2-4 p.m.

October 2nd-4th – Rosh Hashanah

October 11th-12th – Yum Kippur

October 20th – Sid Albert Interfaith Lecture Series at Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary at College of St. Rose at 7 p.m.

November 6th – Muscial at Delmar Presbyterian Church 2:30 p.m.

Please join

The Capital Area Council of Churches

As we celebrate 75 Years of

“Serving God by Serving Others”

as we honor

Rabbi Scott Shpeen

with the

Rev. Carlyle Adams Ecumenical and Interfaith Award

and as we honor

Derek Healey

with the

Ed Bloch Interfaith Youth Award

We are pleased to announce our keynote speaker will be

**Judith Banki, Director for Special Programs
Tanenbaum Center For Interreligious Understanding**

\$65 per person

Silent Auction

Good News

The Capital Area Council of Churches is pleased to that Deb has been chosen by Albany County Executive, Dan McCoy, to lead an Interfaith Coalition for the County. This was announced at a press conference on July 21st. This new and unique committee will be of support during times of local and national crisis. Educational programs on current issues will be scheduled.

Committee members are Rabbis Beverly Magidson, Moshe Bomzer and David Eliaberg. Also included are the Reverends Christopher DeGiovine, James Kane, Tony Green, Damone Johnson, Charles Daniel. Also participating are Bala, Monshin Paul Naamon, Imams Djafer Sebkhawui, Abdulkadir Elmi, Abduhl Rahman Yaki.

The County Executive has planned a program on Racism in collaboration with this new Interfaith Coalition, it is scheduled for August 15th. For further questions call Deb at 462-5450.