

CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CONNECTION December 2013

New Executive Director Named

The Board of Directors of the Capital Area Council of Churches is pleased to announce that Ms. Deborah Riitano will serve as the Council's next Executive Director, effective January 1.

Ms. Riitano is known to many in the Capital Region's ecumenical and interfaith community. A long-time member of the Parish of St. Vincent de Paul, she serves as coordinator of the Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NNORC), a project of Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York. She has been a board member of the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Interfaith Lecture Series at the College of Saint Rose and has served as the President of CACC Board of Directors since 2011.

Ms. Riitano's appointment follows a year-long discernment and search process. "This is a part-time position," said Rev. Konrad Raup, CACC Board member and Chair of the Personnel Committee. "We cast our net wide, were very pleased with the response, and are fully behind the Board's unanimous choice."

"I'm thrilled to serve the Council in this new role," said Ms. Riitano. "As Board President I have become intimately familiar with the Council's mission and ministries, and I'm grateful for the Board's confidence in me to provide more direct leadership for the Council's daily operations."

An installation service is being planned for January.

Pledge Reminder

The Council of Churches, like many nonprofits, is impacted by the current economic downturn. Our annual appeal letters have been mailed. If you made a pledge for 2013, please make every effort to complete it. Year end gifts over and above your pledge are welcome. If you prefer to use a credit card, we have a Paypal button at our web site. Thanks for your support!

A Farewell Message from the Interim Director

It is indeed official: this will be my last article for the CONNECTION as your Interim Executive Director. As you already may be aware, the Board of Directors of the Capital Area Council of Churches has appointed Deb Riitano to serve as the next Executive Director and she will begin her tenure on January 1, 2014. I have had the honor to serve as your Interim Executive Director for 15 months, perhaps a little longer than any of us anticipated. And, believe it or not, while I covet my retirement I have enjoyed working with you at CACC.

I have been blessed to be a part of the ministries and programs of the CACC for a lot longer than you might realize. I was first involved back in the early seventies when I was serving at Trinity Lutheran in Castleton-on-Hudson. When I returned to the area in 2000, I

became even more involved, especially with the development of the Overflow Shelter. Over the years what I have learned about the CACC is that it is not a static institution but rather a living organic entity which continues to evolve as the world around us changes and we become aware of new and increasing needs in our community.

As Christian congregations bound together in this confederation to do that which we cannot do alone, the Capital Area Council of Churches continues the ecumenical spirit which brought us together 72 years ago and now leads us in interfaith directions we once would have never thought possible. There are ever new pathways for us to follow and we do so confidently led by the hand and the light of God.

As we move into the New Year with a new Executive Director, I would urge you to pray vigorously for the Capital Area Council of Churches and for Deb Riitano because if you do that, all the rest-- your support, your participation and your dedication --will naturally follow.

I pray that God will continue to bless the Capital Area Council of Churches which will then use those blessings to bring God's love in Christ to others.

--Rev. Vernon A. Victorson

World AIDS Day Event-Dec. 4

9am-5pm, Empire State Plaza Convention Center. Information booths, free health screenings, panel discussions, viewing of panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Free and open to the public. Visit www.health.ny.gov/WAD.

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Advent Lessons & Carols-12/8, 4pm @ Christ the King Church in Westmere, sponsored by the Guilderland Interfaith Council. Free will offering to benefit the GIC Food Pantry.

Christmas Through the Ages-12/15 2:30pm, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 125 Eagle St., Albany. Festival Celebration Ecumenical Choir Christmas Concert includes music spanning various time periods.

Tickets: \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students.

"A Winter's Eve" Concert-12/16, Tim Janis & Ensemble, 7pm @ St. Joseph's Provincial House, 385 Watervliet-Shaker Rd., Latham, 12110.

Free will offering

Albany Area Senior Orchestra Concert-12/17 2pm @ First Lutheran Church, 646 State St., Albany, 12203. Free.

Help for the Homeless Concert-12/19 featuring Rosanne Cash, 7:30pm, Troy Savings Bank Music Hall. A benefit for CARES, Inc. and the Capital Region Coalition to End Homelessness. Our Shelter will receive a share of the proceeds. Visit www.troymusichall.org or call our office. We have several \$30 tickets available.

Capital Region Theological Center

CRTC provides ecumenical theological education, support for clergy, training for ministry, and resourcing services for congregations.

Upcoming:

“Forming Christians: Baptism & Beyond”, Paul E. Hoffman. Thu. & Fri, 1/23 & 1/24, 9am-4pm each day @ First Church in Albany, 110 No. Pearl St. Cost \$150 by 12/27, \$165 thereafter. Register by 1/7. *“City of God: Faith in the Streets”*, Sara Miles, Sat. Feb.1, 9am-3pm @ Delmar Reformed Church. Cost \$75 by 1/3, \$90 thereafter. Register by 1/16. Gift certificates & group discounts available. Call 462-2470 or visit www.crtc.org. to register.

This and That

The Interfaith Story Circle will meet on **12/5** from 7-9pm @ First Unitarian Society, 1221 Wendell Ave. in Schenectady. Theme: “Things That Remind Me of You”...A new book about Abba House has been published, “Abba House and Me: Prayer Changes Everything”. Author Anne Samson will be at the Book House, Stuyvesant Plaza at 7pm on **12/6** for a book signing...Albany Maritime Ministry Open House at the Port of Albany from Noon-2pm on **12/8**. Bring those Christmas at Sea boxes!...A Newtown Memorial service is being planned for **12/14**. Local gun violence deaths will also be remembered. Call us for details...The South End Community Outreach Center needs gift cards from area merchants for holiday gifts. Please send to the Center at 82 Clinton St., Albany 12202, or call Leslie (518)258-3861 for pickup....Rev. Jeff Matthews of Trinity UMC will be leading an 11-day trip to Greece in October on “The Travels of Paul”. Base cost: \$3,596. If interested, call 463-1293 or e-mail jmdiv83@hotmail.com.

Congratulations to the Rev. Keith Scott on the 55th anniversary of his ordination, and to Holy Spirit Parish in East Greenbush, celebrating its 90th anniversary!

This may be your last CACC Newsletter...

Due to changing mail requirements, it costs more money and time to prepare each issue. Therefore, at the end of this month we will be trimming our mailing list. Congregations and faith communities as well as partner agencies will continue to receive the newsletter, as will individuals who are actively involved with the Council and its programs or who are designated as their congregation’s delegates.

Anyone who has asked to receive the newsletter electronically will continue to do so; if you wish to be added to that list, please send an e-mail to capareacc@aol.com. The newsletter can also be accessed at our web site, (www.capareacc.org). However, unless you have specifically asked us to keep you on our mailing list, we will remove the names of people we have not seen or heard from in the past two years.

Upcoming in January, 2014

Jan. 12: Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism Annual Gathering

Established in 1995, this unique CACC program provides a visible way to celebrate Christian unity through witnessing baptisms in each other’s churches. The program currently has 28 participants, who during the past year have witnessed 28 baptisms in churches of seven different denominations. Our 19^h annual gathering will be held at 2pm on Sunday, **January 12**, at the Altamont Reformed Church, located at 129 Lincoln Ave. in Altamont, 12009. Want to learn more about the program? Would you like to have ecumenical witnesses present at your

church's baptisms? Do you know someone who might like to serve as a witness? Come to the gathering or contact Dave and Jean Kaercher, program coordinators. Send an e-mail to parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org, or call Jean at work (465-7545) or at home (785-6333).

Jan.15: Martin Luther King, Jr., Interfaith Memorial Service, 7pm @ St. Vincent de Paul Church, 900 Madison Ave., Albany 12208 Guest speaker: Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard, Ph.D., Superintendent of the Albany City School District. Free will offering for the MLK Scholarship fund.

Jan. 18-25: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity A half-hour Prayer Service for Christian Unity sponsored by the Capital Region Ecumenical Organization (CREO) will begin at **noon** on Wed., **Jan. 22** at the Roman Catholic Pastoral Center, 40 No. Main Ave., Albany. All are welcome to attend.

PLAN AHEAD: The CACC Annual Meeting/Winter Assembly will be held early in February. Clergy & lay delegates from member congregations and other interested persons are welcome to attend. Agenda will include a vote on revised by-laws and the 2014 budget, election and installation of new officers and directors, and the presentation of the Joyce Steinkraus Giles Pastoral Service Award. Details next month.

Shelter News

The Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter opened on Nov. 15 and has already been very busy. In addition to the many congregations and individuals who have contributed their time, meals, supplies, and monetary gifts, we are grateful to the following for their support:

- the Church of St. Clare in Colonie for a \$1,000 grant
- the Frederick McDonald Trust for a \$7,500 grant
- the Picotte Family Foundation for a \$4,000 grant.
- the Berkshire Bank Foundation for a \$1,000 grant.

Thanks to all who supported the Community Shopping Day at the Ten Thousand Villages store on Nov. 17. A total of \$522 was raised for the Shelter by this event. It costs approximately \$10,000 a month to run the Shelter, so additional funds are needed to ensure that we can remain open for the entire season. Checks should be made out to "CACC Shelter Account" and sent to 646 State St., Albany, NY 12203.

Plans are being made for a **Memorial Service for Homeless Persons** who have died during the past year. It has been scheduled for **5:30pm** on **12/19** @ First Lutheran Church, 646 State St., Albany. Call 462-5450 for details.

Don't forget the "**Bowling for Beds**" **Bowl-a-Thon**, scheduled for the afternoon of **Feb. 8, 2014**, at the Sunset Recreation Center. If your group would like to form a team, contact Rev. Sandy Damhof at UAlbany and she'll send you a pledge packet. Send an e-mail to sdamhof@albany.edu or call her @489-8573 x26. Space is limited so don't delay!

Items currently needed: Coffee, powdered creamer; winter hats, gloves, gently used jackets; heavy duty trash bags, sturdy paper/foam bowls, plates, and hot cups; sturdy plastic eating utensils.

If you would like to donate items, please call the CACC office to arrange a time. Please do not drop things off without calling.

If you would like to volunteer, call the Shelter phone @426-1227 and leave a message for Pamela.

Want to be more involved with CACC?

The CACC Nominating Committee is seeking individuals to serve on CACC's Board of Directors and its various committees and commissions, as well as volunteers to help with mailings and office work. In particular, we need folks with financial know-how to serve on the Finance and Development Committee. Call our office @ 462-5450 for more information.

Church World Service/CROP Walk News

Last year's Albany CROP Hunger Walk raised \$93,795, placing us as #8 in the nation (out of some 1,500 local walks) in terms of the amount of money raised. Plan now to participate in the 2014 CROP Hunger Walk, which will be held on Sunday, May 4. Volunteers needed to serve on the Walk/Rally Planning Committee, which will be meeting on Dec. 11 @4:45pm.

Church World Service and its partner agencies use CROP Walk funds to respond to natural disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan and the recent tornadoes in the US; 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 www.cwsglobal.org to find out what CWS is doing. You can also find information about how to get involved in hands-on support through the Blankets + Campaign; assembling Hygiene Kits, School Kits, Baby Care Kits, and Cleanup Buckets; and purchasing items from the Best Gift catalog.

Nominations for Giles Pastoral Service Award

Each year the Council presents an award named for the late Rev. Joyce Steinkraus Giles, who was the CACC Executive Director from 1977-1986. To be eligible, a pastor must actively participate in the Council or one of its programs; have done outstanding pastoral ministry; and exemplify racial, gender, and denominational inclusiveness. Recent recipients include the Revs. Robert Zittel, Peggy Funderburke, and John Knarvik. To nominate a pastor, send a letter to our office by **January 6**, telling why you think this pastor deserves the award. Be sure to include the name and phone number of his/her church.

December, 2013

- *1 World AIDS Day; Advent begins
- *8 Guilderland Int. Council Advent Service, 4pm @ Christ the King
- 10 Shelter Oversight Com., 4pm
- *11 Albany CROP Com., 4:45pm
- 12 BOARD OF DIRECTORS, Noon (holiday potluck)
- *14 Newtown Memorial Service
- 18 Action & Program Com., 4pm
- *19 Homeless Memorial Service, 5:30
- 25 Christmas Day (office closed)

January, 2014

- 1 New Year's Day (office closed)
- 8 Albany CROP Com., 4:45pm
- 9 BOARD of DIRECTORS, Noon
- *12 **Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism** annual gathering, 2pm
- 14 Shelter Oversight Com., 4pm
- * 15 **MLK Interfaith Service**, 7pm @ St. Vincent de Paul Church
- *18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 20 MLK Holiday (office closed)
- * 22 Christian Unity Service, Noon; Action & Program Com., 4pm

[*denotes more information to be found elsewhere in this issue]

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