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The Connection

The Capital Area Council of Churches

WINTER 2019

The Gift of the Magi

It's a story of love. But it's not just another love story. And although there are so many ways that we use the word "love", this is an example of a rare and special love. This is the kind of love that is deep and selfless, one that is perhaps even more valuable than gold and frankincense because it exemplifies the gift of self-sacrifice.

Anyone not familiar with this classic O'Henry short story might want to take a little time to enjoy this poignant story of a young husband and wife living in the poorest of conditions who each give up a most treasured possession to buy the other a wonderful gift. The gifts, of course, are useless as a result, but their

bonds of love are stronger than ever.

At this time of year, this time of holiday parties and gift-giving, we can pause and wonder how can we truly give of oneself. It need not be an extreme sacrifice, but one that requires a little more thought and a little more effort on our part. For if everyone did that little bit more, it could affect the needs of so many. Remember,

"If everyone lit just one little candle....."

Join us this year in our many efforts in making a difference. From your friends at the Capital Area Council of Churches. Our warm wishes for a joyful Christmas and a blessed new year!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Memorial Service and Scholarship

As in past years, CACC is planning an Interfaith Celebration of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at **7 pm on Wednesday January 15, 2020**, the actual anniversary of his birth. Our guest speaker is Rev. George William Whitfield, of Fifth Ave. AME Zion Church, Troy, NY. Prayers, music, and recognition of the contributions of Dr. King will be part of the evening's program. Hosting the event this year is the Macedonia Baptist Church located on 26 Wilson Avenue in Colonie. The Rev. Antonio Booth, co-pastor of the Riverview Missionary Baptist Church in Coeymans will be chairing the program. The program is free and open to the community. A goodwill offering will be taken, proceeds to fund the MLK Scholarships.

Part of the annual celebration and memorial service has been to offer a scholarship in the name of Martin Luther King, Jr. to one or more college bound

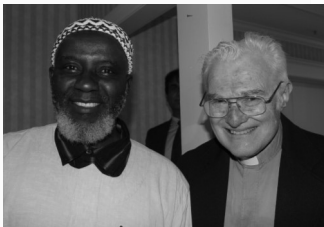
seniors who have need of financial assistance and who demonstrate the ideals of Dr. King in their lives. Andrea Ralph, a retired principal from the Albany Community Charter School, will chair this year's scholarship effort. Details and applications for the scholarship will be announced at the January memorial service. The CACC Board would like to thank Joan M. Arthurton for her many years of service as the MLK Scholarship Committee Chair. Through her efforts, a number of deserving students were able to benefit from the scholarship awards. Job well done, Joan.

Anyone interested in assisting or participating in the evening's program, should call the CACC office at 518-462-5450.

We look forward to a special evening of remembrance.



**“the 78th
anniversary of the
Capital Area
Council of Churches
Annual Awards
Celebration was not
only a night of
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**“Building Bridges” September 18, 2019
Laughter. Applause. And Love**

Designed to acknowledge some of the very special people who help make life better for those of us in the Capital Region, the 78th anniversary of the Capital Area Council of Churches Annual Awards Celebration was not only a night of recognition, it was also an evening of warmth and laughter. Our honorees, as outstanding as they are in their accomplishments, also shared personal insights and anecdotes that induced smiles and often great peals of laughter. *(No, it was not open mike night for Comedy Central).*

However, aside from the friendship and levity, it was a night of gratitude. Gratitude and recognition for individuals who exemplify the mission of “Serving God by serving others.” These individuals are the ones who help set the bar for the rest of us and who offer inspiration as we all work for a better world. We indeed have cause to thank them.

Recipients of the Carlyle Adams Interfaith Award were Deacon Walter Ayres, Humera Khan and Rabbi Beverly Magidson. Deacon Ayres is the Director of the Albany Diocesan Commission on Peace and Justice, which addresses economic and social justice, stewardship of the earth's resources, human rights, and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts. Humera Khan serves on and is Secretary for the Coordinating Council of the Interfaith Community of Schenectady. In addition to her work in interfaith events she is an advocate for bat-

tered women and works with refugees. Rabbi Magidson is the Director of Chaplaincy Services for the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York. She serves on the Albany County Interfaith Coalition to address interfaith and interracial concerns.

Rev. Phillip Grigsby received the Pearl and James Campbell Peace and Justice Award. Rev. Grigsby is Executive Director of Schenectady Community Ministries. SiCM is a partnership of 50 congregations for ministries of social service and social justice that serves thousands of high-need people each year.

The Reverend Joyce Steinkraus Giles Award was given to Rev. Donna Elia, Executive Director of the Troy Area United Ministries. TAUM's mission is to serve those in need, to work for social justice and to build stronger communities.

Again, sincere thanks to our honorees for their exemplary work in the community and for sharing with us an evening of hope, comradery, and faith.



CACC Overflow Shelter ready for another season

The Overflow Shelter opened on **November 1st**, and will be open through April 30th, 2020. Shelter Director Pam Bullock expects that most of the 19 beds will be full for most of the season. This will be the third season the Overflow Shelter is working with Albany County Department of Social Services to accept referrals for housing men who are in need of a place to spend a night or perhaps more during the winter months. As well as other referrals from Travelers Aid, Homeless Action Committee and those who might walk-in.

Over the summer of 2019 Overflow Shelter Committee Chair Dave Stagliano recruited some youth to spruce up the Shelter lounge and bathroom areas. The lounge and bathroom were given a fresh coat of paint as well as a new vinyl tile floor in the lounge. Several new pieces of furniture, a sofa and chair, t.v. stand and side table were added, to replace the old sofa/chair which had met their end of use.

As in the past Volunteers are a big part of the continuing success of the Shelter operation. This year we are again asking for Volunteers from 6-9 pm each night to assist in the setup and serving of meals and some other light housekeeping. Meals are provided by many faith communities for the guests nightly and are mostly accounted for.

**If your group would like to provide a meal for the Shelter guests
contact Pam Bullock at overflow646@yahoo.com
518-426-1227.**

John U. Miller Memorial CROP Hunger Walk Raises \$96,000!

Over 250 walkers and volunteers showed up on a rainy Sunday in May to participate in the John U. Miller Memorial CROP Hunger Walk in Albany. Two of Rev. Miller's daughters and a granddaughter came from the Boston area to walk with us. Rev. Miller served as Executive Director of CACC from 2000-2010 and was proud that the Albany CROP Hunger Walk consistently placed among the top 10 CROP Walks in the nation in terms of the amount of money raised. This year will be no exception, since by June 30 (the end of the walk fiscal year), \$96,022 had been turned in.

One quarter of the money raised has come back to CACC and was distributed among 26 different food programs in our service area. The remainder was used by

Church World Service and its partners for global hunger relief and development, including access to clean water.

Planning has already begun for the May 3, 2020, Walk. Call the CACC office at (518)462-5450 to see how you can be involved. New members to the committee are welcome and needed.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE CAPITAL REGION

By Faith in Action Committee, CACC

The Capital Area – especially its cities - has a serious shortage of housing that is affordable for people with limited income. People with “limited income” who need affordable housing doesn't refer just to the economically poorest, but also people who work in full-time jobs for low wages. While federal guidelines define “affordable” as housing that costs 30% or less of a person's monthly income, in the Capital Region, thousands of people of limited income are paying 50% or more of their income in rent. This heavy rent-burden has become a leading cause of family homelessness.

The good news is that there has been recent progress on the State and local governmental levels in the areas of tenants' rights and affordable housing. However, much more work needs to be done. In partnership with others, the faith communities can play a pivotal role in helping provide decent, affordable housing in our area.

Congregations who are interested in getting involved, might consider:

- Joining affordable housing advocacy organizations, such as the Housing for All Coalition.
- Supporting local housing organizations, such as the Affordable Housing Coalition, Land Trust, Community Loan Fund, Habitat for Humanity, etc., so they can better support existing low-income home owners.
- Supporting local churches that are already doing housing development in their neighborhoods, and/or deciding, as a church, to directly develop affordable housing.

if your congregation is interested in exploring affordable housing initiatives in the Capital Region, contact Dahlia Herring at dmazengia@nycap.rr.com.

“What a Difference a Year Makes”: UAlbany Campus Ministry UpDate

In the fall of 2018, the Protestant Campus Ministry at UAlbany lived into a new message and a new reality. It was a time when we embraced the tag line - “*In A New Land*”. It was a time when the Interfaith Center and the office of the Protestant Campus Ministry was moved to a new location. The move was filled with uncertainty as we faced changes in programming, budget and doing our work in a much smaller space.

Now, one year later, we are proud to say we not only survived the move, but in many ways we thrived. In midst of the stress Cornerstone Campus Ministry continues to be a “good news” story.

We believe we are influencing the lives of countless young people who attend the University at Albany and we're committed to continuing the work in new ways. If you would like to know more about ministry, check out our website at

www.ualbanycornerstone.org





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Please deliver to Current Resident or:

Upcoming Community Activities :

Wednesday January 15, 2020, 7pm - Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Memorial Service at Macedonia Baptist Church, Wilson Ave., Colonie

February 2020 - CACC Annual Meeting - TBA

February 8, 2020 - Bowling For Beds
UAlbany Cornerstone Campus Ministry

Friday April 10, 2020 -

Good Friday Service at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Delaware Ave. , Albany

Saturday May 3, 2020 - Crop Walk

Time for New Blood !

The life blood of any successful non-profit are the volunteers who give their time to help determine the direction and outcomes of the organization. A variety of people, each bringing their own talents, abilities and views, contribute to the overall success. Often, it is not the board, director or staff that makes a non-profit successful. Those giving freely of their time achieve the goals of the organization. The Capital Area Council of Churches is no different. Many people achieve many successes. The more who help, the more successful the Council is.

CACC could use that important volunteer help to expand our various committees. There are openings on a variety of committees such as Finance, Communications and Development. Our Finance Committee needs additional people who have some financial experience, particularly in budgeting and accounting. Those who serve on the Finance Committee of their church would be ideal candidates. The Communications Committee is looking for additional help with our website, social media and other communications to the public. Web development, familiarity with Facebook or Twitter and generating press releases are all skills the Communications Committee could use. Finally, the Development Committee needs volunteers who know about or would like to learn fundraising, developing appeal letters and other activities to further the success of the council. Let us know if you or someone you know is a likely candidate for any of the committees mentioned above. Feel free to suggest your friends, relatives or colleagues. Often, someone doesn't know they would like to help until they are asked. And we will do the asking.

Contact the Council office at edcapareacc@gmail.com or call the office at (518) 462-5450