



The Connection

The Capital Area Council of Churches

Fall 2022

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Candles In the Dark

'Tis that time of year again. The holidays! Gift giving, gift receiving, musical concerts, "The Nutcracker", and, of course, festive gatherings. And then let's not forget the outdoor decorations. Some simple, some grand, some truly awe inspiring. A handcrafted nativity scene lit up in front of a church. A city's "Holiday of Lights." Neighbors in friendly "megawatt" competition. (Sunglasses, please.) And, of course, the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. Over 80 feet high and covered in 50,000 lights, it is a destination for any visitors to New York City. What a sight to see.

But amid all the splendor and grandeur, a simple but most heart-warming sight is that of single candles lit in the windows of homes. Not much fuss. Yet walking or driving down a street at night and seeing these candles is a warm and welcome vision in the darkness of our long, cold and blustery nights.

A simple candle in the darkness. It is what we all need. The light to remind us of the goodness that exists even in the bleakness of night.

It is the goodness of friends and neighbors as well as strangers we have never met. These candles speak to our humanity, our ability to connect with one another in troubled times as well as in happy times. From an old song.

*"It is better to light just one little candle
Than to stumble in the dark.
Better far that you light just one little candle,
All you need is a tiny spark.
If we'd all say a prayer that the world would be free,
A wonderful dawn of a new day we'd see...
And if everyone lit just one little candle,
What a bright world this would be.*

Let's all light a candle. In our windows, at our place of worship, and especially in our hearts and deeds. Let us show that we will work towards a better and brighter world for all to see. Wishing everyone warm and loving holidays and a new year that will be better and brighter.

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Family Promise Looking for Sponsoring Congregations

“Getting to Know You”

It's a unique opportunity to work “up close and personal” with families, families who are temporarily homeless. Family Promise of the Capital Region began their ministry serving homeless families and families on the verge of homelessness in April 2015. To date, Family Promise has provided shelter to 60 families and helped more than 100 families avoid homelessness. I would like to invite you to be part of this very special ministry in service to the poor and homeless that live within our community.

Family Promise's mission is to affirm the humanity and dignity of homeless families and engage our community in helping them achieve sustainable independence. Our mission is carried out through the immense generosity of host congregations and volunteers from those faith communities. This is what makes Family Promise unique: the host congregations are more than partners offering space for homeless families. They are engaged in a ministry to those who are most in need.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Host and Support congregations are the heart of Family Promise. Congregations transform space they use for other purposes such as religious education, meetings and nurseries to provide 1-3 families with a private room for an entire week. Cots and air beds with bedding are set up in advance of the arrival of the guest families which begins on a Sunday evening.

The families are greeted by trained volunteers (congregants/parishioners) who provide and share a home cooked meal. After dinner concludes, the family enjoys visiting with evening volunteers who often play games with the children or perhaps help children with reading or homework. Around 9pm, overnight volunteers arrive and are also provided with private sleeping accommodations. They are available should the families have any unanticipated need. After a very early quick continental style breakfast, the Family Promise van arrives to bring the families to our Day Center in Albany where the children board school buses and the families shower, take care of laundry and most importantly, receive assistance from the staff which leads to securing sustainable housing and independence.

Family Promise is very fortunate to have a rotational network of congregations that host the families one week at a time, four weeks a year and support congregations whose volunteers serve at the host sites. Would you like to learn more how you can be a part of this ministry? Please call or email to learn more. Thank you! 518-650-8895 info@familypromisecr.org.



For more information call: 518-650-8895
Or email: info@familypromisecr.org.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Celebrating 125 Years

Located at 10 North Main Avenue in Albany, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church marks its 125th anniversary. Founded as a Chapel in 1892 by St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Lancaster Street, it moved to its present location in 1897. The primary structure, dedicated in 1931, is its second house of worship and is an example of early-twentieth century Tudor Gothic architecture. The building's cruciform plan, decoration and materials are representative of the style as practiced in the 1920s and 1930s.



St. Andrew's is a congregation of approximately 100 regular worshipers and offers services on Sundays, Tuesday evenings, and Holy Days in addition to special occasions throughout the year. All Sunday services are recorded and posted to the church's YouTube channel. The worship style is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, based on The Book of Common Prayer with traditional music provided by organ and choir as well as music from the African-American tradition. As one of the more liberal parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, St. Andrew's has been at the forefront of the inclusive movement, especially as it relates to the roles of women in the Church and the LGBTQ+ community. The congregation offers a variety of outreach ministries and activities, perhaps most notably "*The Shop*" (a thrift store), a monthly "Love Thy Neighborhood Dinner", a church, school, and medical clinic in Haiti, the CACC Emergency Overflow Shelter, the Albany Damien Center, and the CropWalk. St. Andrew's was an early member of the Capital Area Council of Churches and has actively supported the Council's purposes and programs for many years. Bill Hedberg, a St. Andrew's congregant, was a long time CACC board member and treasurer.

As part of its quasiquicentennial anniversary, the congregation has enjoyed visits by former rectors and clergy throughout the fall to preach and celebrate on Sundays. Artifacts from the parish archive have been on display, and special gifts have been made to mark the milestone occasion, including a peace pole recently dedicated in the parish garden. A bequest program for the next 125 years was initiated and an 1897 Legacy Society was created to recognize members who have included St. Andrew's in their planned giving. A dinner event will be offered for current and former parishioners on St. Andrew's Day, November 30.

Happy Anniversary St. Andrew's Episcopal Church! Here's to many more years of faith and service.



Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church
10 N. Main, Albany, NY 12203
(518) 489-4747
www.saintandrewsalbany.org

Fall Celebration Honors the Best of the Best

On September 28, over 100 people gathered at the Italian American Community Center to honor individuals from the Capital Region community who have been true examples of “loving your neighbor”. The exceptional people highlighted on the next two pages exemplify the work of “unsung heroes”, people making a difference by serving the special needs of the people of our community. As in the past, the Capital Area Council of Churches was proud to shine a light on this select group of people. And, as in the past, this was definitely a “feel-good”, inspirational evening, one well worth attending. We look forward to next year’s event. And, if you have candidates you would like to nominate for the next awards program, please contact Bruce France at the CACC office.

Now take some time and enjoy reading about this year’s great individuals.

Ayah Osman - Ed Bloch Interfaith Youth Award

Ayah is a first-generation Sudanese American storyteller, poet, and student activist born and based in Niskayuna, NY. Ayah got her start as a part of Children at the Well, an interfaith storytelling organization that she has been involved in since, first as a student, then an assistant coach, and finally as a coach, teaching young adults the art of storytelling for over five years. In addition to interfaith work, Ayah’s passion for poetry and activism is a huge part of her life. She is currently a junior at Union College.



Lisa Good - James & Pearl Campbell Peace and Justice Award

Lisa is the founder and coordinator of the community-based project called Urban Grief which works to increase awareness about trauma, and grief/loss, associated with violence exposure. Lisa is active in the fight to eradicate violence, increase awareness about the traumatic impact resulting from exposure to violence and break down the walls of isolation and fear by connecting community members with each other as resources and mutual support



Our congratulations to our awardees this year and a heartfelt thank you for all their outstanding work. May they continue to succeed in their efforts and offer inspiration for others to follow in their footsteps.

More of the Best

Rev. David W. Preisinger
Rev. Joyce Steinkraus Giles Pastoral Award

Pastor Preisinger has lived and worked in the Capital Region for 29 years. During that time, he facilitated the reorganization of the Albany Maritime Ministry, was part of the Capital Region Theological Center from its inception and served on the Board of the Capital Area Council of Churches. As Pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Dave enthusiastically supported the congregation's work in the South Albany neighborhood.



Rabbi Deborah S. Gordon
Rev. Dr. Carlyle Adams Ecumenical & Interfaith Award

Rabbi Gordon has served Congregation Berith Sholom in Troy, NY since her ordination in 1997. She has also taught Judaism at Siena College, sat on the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Interfaith Lectureship Board, helped found the local chapters of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, and sits on the Board of Troy Area United Ministries. Music and text ground "Reb Deb" in Jewish tradition, and a fierce commitment to listening and treating all people with respect make relationship the center of her rabbinate.



Nell Stokes
Evelyn C. Stone Lifetime Achievement Award

Nell advances the greater good for her community as an activist and volunteer. She is a well-known speaker at churches, schools, and community events. Her work with CACC includes leadership of the MLK, Jr. Scholarship Committee and participation in CROP walks. Nell is passionate about voting rights and youth empowerment. As an employee of the Albany YWCA, Nell created the Black American Essay Contest. She wrote and directed uplifting plays, and has performed her poetry at many venues. She recently created a You Tube channel, "80 and Up."



And a Good Time Was Had By All



Shelter Opens for Another Year of Homemade Meals

Once again, the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter has opened for the season. Serving the homeless population from November 1 to April 30 each year, the shelter is operated by the Capital Area Council of Churches and can accommodate up to nineteen men over the age of 18. In a typical year, the shelter will average twelve guests per night over the course of the season. During their overnight stay, guests can relax, shower, wash their clothes, sleep in a warm bed, and get a wonderful homemade meal donated by one of the eighteen churches who provide dinner on a rotating basis.

Preparing dinner for the shelter guests is a meaningful mission for the churches who participate. Recently, three meal coordinators shared their views on providing meals to the shelter. All three agreed that providing meals to the shelter is a great way to be involved in a local ministry. Valerie Shanley of Westminster Presbyterian says that people really put their hearts into the effort. The meals are prepared with love. Karen Pass of First United Methodist Church of Delmar mentioned that people want opportunities to do something for others. Her church has often gone beyond providing meals by supplying other resources for the shelter such as special help at Christmas and locating storage bins for a new storage area. Tina Bottini of Colonie Community Reformed Church points out that her church is very mission oriented, highlighting a different mission opportunity each month.

Each of these churches has an interesting story about how they came to prepare meals for the shelter. FUMC Delmar and Westminster Presbyterian are churches that were involved since the first season. Karen heard about the shelter from Rev. Vernon Victorson of First Lutheran Church of Albany where the shelter is housed. Rev. Victorson was instrumental in helping the shelter get started. Colonie Community Reformed Church's involvement began several years later. Tina heard about the shelter from State Senator Neil Breslin. She attended an open house for the shelter and she and a friend both got involved. Tina's efforts encouraged others in the congregation to become involved.

There are a few openings in the schedule if your church would like to participate. Agreeing to just one meal during the season would be fine. Contact our meal coordinator, Laura Wayman at saintoscarsmom@gmail.com or call Executive Director Bruce France at (518) 441-9584

Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless Collecting Winter Clothes for Homeless Men

The men's shelves are bare and the need is great. AE3C is a New York based 501c3 collecting gently used men's winter clothing to donate to the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless. This much-needed collection is in honor of John W. Romano, who was viciously attacked while working at the center. John is slowly recovering but his passion and dedication to assist the homeless continues despite his devastating injuries.

Outreach from individuals and your congregation will help support this effort. John is the lead person on the clothing outreach, and he has asked that we do what we can. Please spread the word!

To make a donation please email Sralph86@msn.com to arrange pick up.

CROP Walk May 7, 2023

Have you ever noticed how a well nourished individual does? They thrive! They grow! I'm excited to introduce you all to this year's 2023 Capital Region CROP Hunger Walks theme:

Nourish & Grow

There are many of us that have participated in and given to our local CROP Walks over many years. We have watched as our children have participated from their strollers, as "first-time-walking-on-their-own", to walking faster and less winded than the rest of us! How they have grown and changed over the years. Our regional CROP Hunger Walks have grown and changed too. The distances have varied. The routes and locations have changed. We've even gone virtual. We have given consistently and generously in order to help those in need of life's basic necessities- food, shelter, a safe living environment.

When I started as the PR person for the Capital Region CROP Hunger Walks last year I learned that we actually have a total of eight CROP Walks in the Capital Region. Six Walks have chosen to walk in the Spring- mostly the first Sunday in May: **Albany, Coxsackie, Ravena, Troy/Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie** and two have opted to walk in the fall - mostly October: **Castleton and Mayfield.**

A portion of each year's Walk money gets distributed to many area Food Pantries. These food pantries then use that money to distribute food to local members of our community. When an individual or family visits a food pantry they don't just get a meal for a day, they get a minimum of three days to a week's worth of food. While one meal certainly curtails hunger pangs, knowing that you will be able to be sustained for several days brings a level of relief to the anxiety of food insecurity. Some food pantries also offer education and information beyond just meals.

When we offer others the opportunities to be fed, to be housed and to be able to live in a safe environment, we are not just meeting a need, we are nourishing them.

This year we will continue to take steps to help others around the world and in our own communities to *Nourish & Grow*.

Please keep up with us on Facebook: CapareaCROPHungerWalks. Select the "like" and select the "follow" options for the most up to date information throughout the year.

Jeanne Bianchine
PR Coordinator Capital Region CROP Walks
pr.cropwalk.cr@gmail.com



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship 2023

Honoring Dr. King's Legacy

Once again the Capital Area Council of Churches will sponsor the 51th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Scholarship Memorial Celebration on January 15, 2023 at Macedonia Baptist Church in Albany. This Interfaith Celebration aims to remind of us of Dr. King's legacy as well as raise scholarship funds for deserving high school seniors. It will be an evening of prayer, song, and speakers who honor the accomplishments of Martin Luther King with words of wisdom and faith. The celebration will be both in person and also virtual so mark your calendar and join us as we celebrate Dr. King's birthday which is January 15.



The MLK scholarship was established in 1973 by the Capital Area Council of Churches to honor the memory of the life and work of Dr. King and to preserve the legacy of the nonviolent human rights movement as it was expressed in his life and teachings. Awards are given without regard to race, creed or gender. The scholarship is a very positive way of encouraging young people to keep striving for the fulfillment of Dr. King's dream. The MLK scholarship is available to graduating high school seniors who live, worship, or attend school in Albany County or southern Rensselaer County. The award is presented to a student(s) who demonstrates academic merit, financial need and, most importantly, the strength and determined character of the late Martin Luther King Jr. Many former recipients have let us know how the scholarship was an encouragement as they began their educational path.

This year, in celebration of fifty-one years of raising scholarships, we look to raise \$20,000 to support five children with their college education. Therefore, we look for your financial support again. We are asking various churches, temples, mosques, or synagogues to donate a minimum of \$200 towards the scholarship fund. If your religious institution can give more, please do so. If one hundred religious institutions support this cause, we will have reached our goal. Please support this worthy effort.

And make sure to come and join us for Dr. King's birthday celebration. Share the word with friends and family. He was truly a man to be remembered and honored.



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Interfaith Celebration
January 15, 2023
Macedonia Baptist Church

"Heart of Hope" Wellness Campaign

Your church is invited to participate in the faith-based, community-wide "Heart of Hope" wellness campaign.

Following last year's success, the "Heart of Hope" wellness campaign is ramping up for an even more successful campaign in 2023. The goal of this campaign is to increase awareness of the importance of heart and cancer screening, while honoring Warren A. Mackey - coach, educator, athlete, salesman and singer, and who the Times Union named, The Unofficial Mayor of Albany. The campaign is sponsored by the Warren & Denyse Mackey Foundation.

HOW your church can participate in the Heart of Hope wellness campaign:

1. Let us know you are "in" by registering, instructions on the CACC website home page
2. Host an awareness & wellness event any-time from Jan - April 2023
3. Customize a wellness campaign that works for your church:
 - Promote access to Albany Medical Center free cancer screenings (Feb 1 - April 15th) Appointment scheduling thru dedicated phone: 518-285-0717
 - Invite a healthcare professional, to do blood pressure screenings
 - Share about becoming an organ donor
 - Promote wellness & your campaign via social media utilizing social media assets provided

Information available at CACC website
capareacc.org or email
support@wdmackeyfoundation.org
or call 518-376-6567

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's
people who are in need. Practice hospitali-
ty." Romans 56:56 NIV*

WHY should my church participate?

1. It's a new year and an opportunity to start it off healthy!
2. It's good for your members and elevates the importance of organ donation, preventative healthcare, and living a healthy lifestyle to mitigate heart and cancer risks
3. Participating churches will be able to sign up for and receive free cancer screenings for breast, lung, skin, prostate, cervical and colon (with or without medical insurance) at Albany Med.



"Heart of Hope Gospel Concert,"
Mr. Dennis Lee Edney
Metropolitan Baptist Church
February 1, 2023, 6 p.m.

We hope you can join us to celebrate hope, virtually, or in person. (Please note: to support COVID safety protocols masks are required for the in-person experience.)

Why and How CACC Operates

What is CACC?

The Capital Area Council of Churches is an Assembly of churches. Founded in 1941 to bring Protestant Churches together, the role of CACC has always been to facilitate churches coming together for common purposes. The Council exists to do the will of the member churches.

What is the Annual Assembly?

The Annual Assembly is a meeting of member churches clergy and laity. Typically held in February, the Assembly conducts business to assure that CACC continues to function for another year. This includes electing people to the Nominating Committee and Board of Directors, and passing an annual budget. The Assembly and Nominating Committee are the most important ways for member churches to exert their will.

What is the Nominating Committee?

The Nominating Committee is a group of congregants from member churches who have broad connections within a particular denomination and community. Critical to the success of CACC, this committee recruits board members and people to serve on committees. The Nominating Committee is the only committee that is elected by the Assembly. Each year, the Nominating Committee elects a chairperson who serves on the CACC Board of Directors.

What about the Board of Directors?

Recruited by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Annual Assembly, the BOD oversees the operation of CACC via committees and an Executive Director. Having a diverse group of denominations represented on the Board is critical.

Why Committees?

CACC is almost exclusively a volunteer organization. The various programs and partnerships that occur are because of the work of committees.

Why are we telling you all this?

CACC needs to recruit people to our Nominating Committee, to the Board of Directors and to our working committees. Currently, the Board does not have a Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Reformed or Episcopalian. We are looking for people who want to make CACC a strong organization well into the future. Do you know anyone who has the experience and desire to contribute to the Capital Area Council of Churches?

Save the Date
CACC Annual Assembly
Thursday February 9, 2023
St. Sophia Church
Hear and Be Heard
Program Details Being Developed

Volunteer at CACC
Join a Committee
Pick a Single Task
Become a Board Member
Volunteer Information at
capareacc.org



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Upcoming Events

- | | |
|------------|---|
| January 8 | Ecumenical Witness of Baptism Renewal, First Church in Albany at 1:30 pm |
| January 15 | Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Interfaith Celebration, Macedonia Baptist Church at 7 pm |
| February 9 | Annual Assembly |
| March 31 | Deadline for MLK Scholarship Applications |
| May 7 | Albany CROP Hunger Walk |
| May | Spring Assembly, honoring MLK Scholarship Recipients |

Additional information can always be found at www.capareacc.org