

# Network News

## Network of Religious Communities

1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496 • Phone 882-4793 • Fax 882-3797 • www.ReligiousNet.org • ReligiousNet@aol.com

*Facilitating interreligious, ecumenical, and interracial cooperation among  
judicatories, congregations, and religious organizations in Western New York and the Niagara Peninsula*

February/March 2002

## A Religion That Matters

—The Reverend Dr. Stanford G. Bratton  
Co-Executive Director, Network of Religious Communities

**K**arl Marx called religion “the opiate of the people” and Sigmund Freud wrote an article on religion entitled “*The History of an Illusion*.” In the minds of both men religion is little more than an indulgent distraction which diverts our attention away from the things that really matter. Although the world has significantly changed since the time Marx and Freud lived, the question elicited by them remains, “What is a religion that matters?”

My house was dark and very cold. The power had gone out the previous morning, along with the telephone service, and Niagara Mohawk was noncommittal about when electric power might be restored. I was afraid the water in my heating system would freeze and concerned about using the gas oven to raise the temperature in the freezing house. I felt very vulnerable and isolated. The broader concerns that occupy so much of my life seemed to vanish; immediate survival needs preoccupied my consciousness.

This would not surprise Abraham Maslow, the noted psychologist who coined the phrase “hierarchy of needs.” Maslow identified five

ascending levels of human needs: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and finally, self actualization or fulfilling one’s potential. To move to the higher level, Maslow contends, we have to have our lower needs taken care of, at least to a considerable extent. Thus when we are hungry or feel unsafe we can’t fully devote ourselves to love or fulfilling our potential.

Under stressful conditions or when survival is threatened, Maslow points out, we can “regress” to a lower need level. When the power goes out, keeping warm preoccupies us. When you lose your job, you suddenly can’t think of anything except money. When someone you love up and leaves you, or someone close to you dies, it seems that love and belonging is again all you ever wanted.

What is true of individuals is also true of society. When society suddenly flounders, people start clamoring for a strong leader to take over and make things right. When the bombs start falling, they look for safety. When the food stops coming into the stores or the power goes out, their needs become even more basic.

*Continued on page 4—Religion That Matters*

## A Joyful Celebration of Christian Unity in Lackawanna

—The Reverend Peter Drilling  
Professor of Theology, Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, & Pastor, St. Anthony’s RC Church, Lackawanna

**O**n Sunday, January 20, the members of several Christian churches in Lackawanna gathered for a prayerful and spirited Ecumenical Service in Celebration of the New Year. It was truly a magnificent worship event. The Service took place at St. Anthony Roman Catholic Church. Other participating congregations were Bethel AME, Mt. Olive Baptist, New Life Fellowship, St. Hyacinth Roman Catholic, Our Lady of Victory Basilica, Bethel Presbyterian, and Second Baptist Church, all located in Lackawanna.

The Service included lively celebratory songs by St. Anthony’s Young Christian Choir, a multi-cultural and multi-religious youth choir. The combined choirs of Mt. Olive Baptist Church and New Life Fellowship offered a stirring rendition of the Dr. Watts’ Hymn. This was followed by young Terrence Brooks’ proclamation of selections from Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech, “I have a dream.”

Also included in the program was a skit by The Parable Players under the direction of Fr. Ted Jost of Our Lady of Victory Basilica. The skit invited the congregation to reflect on their readiness to take up their cross and follow after Jesus. Pastor William Cobb of Bethel AME Church preached on John 17: 1-11.

The entire congregation was caught up in the strong sense of religious and human unity witnessed by the Scriptures that were proclaimed and by the presentations of praise on the part of the various groups. One couldn’t help but feel that the kingdom of God is near at hand. The strong sense of fellowship continued during the reception after the Service.

## 3rd Annual Faith & Hunger Conference March 16



The Food For All Public Policy Committee will cosponsor a one-day joint conference with Bread For the World (BFW) and the Hunger Action Network of New York State (HANNYS) on Saturday, March 16, 9:00 a.m.-1:45 p.m. at St. Joseph's University Church, 3269 Main Street (near Winspear). The theme of the conference is *Putting "FAIR" Back Into Welfare*.

This year, BFW's Offering of Letters campaign, *Working From Poverty to Promise*, and the HANNYS's campaign will focus on the reauthorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). In 2002, Congress must renew and revise the TANF program—commonly referred to as welfare. TANF, in effect since 1996, requires welfare recipients to move quickly from welfare to work, and severely limits the assistance they may receive while making the transition. A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington think tank, found that many former welfare families are experiencing significant hardship even when a family

member works full-time. Congress must renew TANF by September 30, 2002. This "reauthorization" provides an excellent opportunity to make changes in TANF to ensure it meets the needs of America's hard working families.

At the March 16 conference, participants will learn how to take action to improve TANF and materials will be available for planning an offering of letters.

Representatives from BFW and Hunger Action will speak and there will be two workshops: (1) Advocacy 101, and (2) Engaging Youth to End Hunger. There will also be time for spiritual reflection.

To register, complete the form below and return with payment by March 9. Registration is \$7.50 and includes lunch and materials. Preregistration is required. For additional information, call Maureen Gensler at 716-681-2246 or e-mail [mggensler@aol.com](mailto:mggensler@aol.com).

### 3rd Annual Faith & Hunger Conference *Putting "FAIR" Back Into Welfare*

#### Pre-Registration Required

**Please Print Clearly:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Cost \$7.50 Per Person

Includes Lunch & Materials

\_\_\_\_\_ Number Attending

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed

# \_\_\_\_\_ Choice of Workshop

**Make Checks Payable to Food For All and Return by March 9 to:**

Food For All Faith & Hunger Conference, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo NY 14209-2496

For additional information, please call Maureen Gensler 716-681-2246 or e-mail [<mggensler@aol.com>](mailto:mggensler@aol.com)

## A Season of Nonviolence January 30-April 4

*"We must be the change we wish to see."*

These words of wisdom from Mahatma Gandhi apply as much today as when they were spoken over 50 years ago. To honor the legacy and contribution to humanity of two great peacemakers, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Arun Gandhi, the fifth grandson of the Mahatma, inaugurated an international grass movement in 1997 honoring the essence of nonviolence and the lives of these two great men. Unlike most memorials, this movement is an active memorial called "A Season For Nonviolence" which runs from January 30<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, through April 4<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King. The "season" of 64 days calls each one of us to practice nonviolence in our daily lives in

very practical and meaningful ways. We may not be able to change the behavior of others, but we do have control over how we act and react to the events of our lives. We can choose to create a more peaceful world by becoming mindful of our thoughts, words, and actions.

To assist the spiritual community, a series of daily action steps and short meditations has been compiled. These short readings could easily be enclosed in a weekly bulletin. For more information about the Season For Nonviolence and a copy of these action steps, please contact the Reverend Claudia C. Stachowski at 716-741-2814 or [RevCCStach@aol.com](mailto:RevCCStach@aol.com).

## World Day of Prayer to be Celebrated Locally

World Day of Prayer will be celebrated worldwide on March 1, 2002, and at congregations throughout Western New York. The local services are planned annually by Church Women United. World Day of Prayer is observed in more than 145 countries around the world and in more than 20,000 communities in the United States. The services begin on the Tonga Islands west of the dateline and continue throughout the day, encircling the globe until the last service is held on the St. Lawrence Island off the coast of Alaska. For additional information, please call the Church Women United office at 716-882-4793. World Day of Prayer Celebrations will be held at the following locations on March 1:

Alden Presbyterian Church  
All Saints RC Church, Buffalo  
Annunciation RC Church, Buffalo  
Christ the King RC Church, Snyder  
Churchill Memorial United Methodist Church, Boston  
Deerhurst Presbyterian Church, Kenmore  
Eden United Methodist Church  
Epiphany United Church of Christ, Buffalo

First Presbyterian Church, East Aurora  
First United Methodist Church, Akron  
Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Buffalo  
Maryvale Drive Presbyterian Church, Ckga.  
Nativity of Our Lord RC Church, Orchard Park  
St. Anthony's RC Church, Lackawanna  
St. John Lutheran Church, Angola/Evans/Brant  
Trinity Episcopal Church, Hamburg

Trinity Episcopal Church, Lancaster  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Silver Creek  
Trinity United Methodist Church, Amherst  
Trinity United Methodist Church, Grand Island  
Union Presbyterian Church, Blasdell  
Walls Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Buffalo  
Williamsville United Methodist Church

## Churches Uniting in Christ

—Rev. Stephen J.S. Smith

*Canon for Congregational Life, St. Paul's Cathedral & Ecumenical Officer, Episcopal Diocese of Western New York*

For nearly forty years delegates from nine protestant denominations have sought ways to make full communion possible. The formal title of this ecumenical dialogue is the Consultation on Church Union (COCU).

Member churches of COCU are: African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ and United Methodist Church.

This long-term dialogue has reached a successful conclusion and on the first Sunday in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 20, 2002, a special service was held in Memphis, Tennessee, to celebrate COCU's conclusion and to inaugurate a new ecumenical body known as Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC).

Participating member churches in CUIC covenant together to worship God, grow in faith, proclaim the gospel, combat racism, be church and pursue wholeness together.

*Continued on page 6*



## “Conversations in Christ & Culture” 2002 Lecture Schedule Announced

*Conversations in Christ and Culture* is an ongoing lecture, workshop and conference series within the Buffalo/Niagara Region. It is designed to foster conversations about important issues involving the relationship between Christianity and culture. It will promote cooperation and understanding across religious, gender and ethnic lines. The first event, *Surviving “Bombingham” Alabama in the 1960's*, took place on February 13 and featured the Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Pastor, Greater Light Baptist Church, Cincinnati.

All lectures are free and open to the public. Please bring a nonperishable food item for food pantry donation. For information call Dr. Timothy Wadkins at 716-888-2824 or e-mail wadkins@canisius.edu.

**Saturday, February 23, 7:30 p.m.**  
*Racism and the American Church*  
Dr. James H. Cone, Union Theological Seminary  
Montante Cultural Center, Canisius College

**Monday, April 29, 2:30 p.m.**  
*Spirituality: Dwelling & Seeking*  
Dr. Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University  
Regis Room North, Canisius College

**Thursday, September 26, 7:30 p.m.**  
*Islam and the Modern World*  
Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, George Washington Univ.  
Montante Cultural Center, Canisius College

## Announcing the 2002 Riefler Ministry Enablement Awards

Amount	Ministry	Sponsoring Organization
\$1,000	Grief Support Group	Blessed Sacrament/St. Barnabas Parish
2,700	Effective Enhancement of Skills for Prison Volunteers	Jesus the Liberator Seminary
3,000	Gerard Place Transitional Housing at St. Gerard's RC Church	Gerard Place Housing Development Fund
2,000	Teaching and Restoring Youth (TRY) Program	FLARE (Fillmore Leroy Area Residents) & St. Mary of Sorrows RC Church
3,000	Prime Time Arts	First Presbyterian Church, Buffalo
3,000	Kidspace	Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church
1,700	Youth Ministry	Good Shepherd Church
5,500	The Hungry at Our Door	Network of Religious Communities Food Pantry
2,000	Love Inc. of Springville, NY	Love Inc. of Springville, NY
1,500	VOICE Buffalo Youth Congress	VOICE Buffalo, Inc.
1,200	Churches for Community Empowerment	VOICE, Lockport
1,500	Pastoral Counseling at Concerned Ecumenical Ministry	Samaritan Pastoral Counseling Center with CEM
2,000	Feed My Sheep Food Pantry Expansion	Southtowns Christian Center
1,700	Pastoral Care for Persons Affected by HIV/AIDS	AIDS Family Services
1,500	Teen Lifestyle Program	First Calvary Baptist Church
2,500	After School Program at The Bridge	The Bridge to Building Community, Inc.
2,500	Parish Nursing—A Healing Ministry	InterChurch Parish Nurse Programs, Inc.
3,000	The Newburg Coalition Food Pantry	The Newburg Coalition and Epiphany United Church of Christ
<b>\$41,300</b>	<b>Total</b>	

Applications for 2003 Riefler Enablement Ministry Funds will be available this summer. Call the Network office 716-882-4793 **after June 1.**



### Network Food Pantry Needs Your Help

During the year 2001, the Network of Religious Communities Food Pantry served 17,000 people, an increase of 5,000 over the previous year!

Please consider organizing a collection of non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations in your congregation. Food donations may be delivered to 1272 Delaware Avenue any weekday between 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. or you may call 716-882-4793 to make other arrangements.

#### Continued from page 1—Religion That Matters

Within Maslow's framework we can easily understand our response to the events of September 11, 2001. Afraid, we preoccupied ourselves with securing our borders, increasing airline security, and preparing for a war against terrorism. At the same time the support for the president increased dramatically, patriotism experienced a rebirth, and talk of how to use the national budget surplus evaporated.

In times of personal and national crisis people have traditionally turned to religion for comfort and support. It is not surprising that church attendance surged in the weeks following September 11th; that the President and other governmental officials often used religious language and reached out to religious leaders; and that the lines between religion and patriotism began to blur. All this is perfectly understandable according to Maslow's "hierarchy of needs."

But what of the critique of religion by Marx and Freud? Is the role of religion simply to support and comfort us and finally distract us from the things that matter?

It is my conviction that a true religion does matter and has a vital role to play in our lives and in the life of our society, especially in times of crisis. Seen from the perspective of Maslow's "hierarchy of needs," a religion that matters calls us to a higher level even when our circum-

stances are calling us to regress. A religion that matters calls us to be concerned with the hunger of others even when we are hungry ourselves. A religion that matters calls us to be concerned about the safety of Afghanistan civilians even when we are preoccupied with a war on terrorism. A religion that matters calls us to concern ourselves with the rights and protections of persons who practice a religion different than our own even when we feel the need to strengthen our bonds with those of our own religion. A religion that matters calls us to concern ourselves with the dignity and self esteem of other persons and nations even when we are struggling with our own low esteem. A religion that matters calls us to concern ourselves with the opportunities for self-fulfillment available to others, particularly the most vulnerable, even when our own needs are great.

The following evening the electric power was restored to my house and my life has returned to normal. However, the consequences of September 11th for our lives and the life of our nation are more enduring. In this post September 11th era there is a tremendous need for religions that matter. There is a need for religions that dare to call us through our preoccupation with our personal and national needs to a concern for the needs of others, especially the most vulnerable in our community, our nation, and our world. A religion that calls us beyond our own needs is a religion that matters.

## “Thanks to Pat” Reception Planned

Patricia Griffin has served as Director of Food For All for the past sixteen years, beginning in 1986. Prior to 1986, she was a Food For All volunteer. Pat left Food For All in January of this year and has begun her new position at FISH of East Aurora where she will share her expertise and her commitment to ending hunger with people in need in East Aurora and surrounding rural communities.

During her sixteen years as Director of Food For All, Pat received numerous awards and served on many Boards and Committees, including the Coalition For the Homeless, the Coalition For Economic Justice, the Food Bank of Western New York, and the Hunger Action Network of New York State. Her passion for ending hunger has taken her to the offices of federal, state, and local legislators, speaking on behalf of people living in poverty, and she has encouraged and enabled others to do the same. She has shared her commitment with the members of Wayside Presbyterian Church where she is an active member. Recently, she was appointed to the position of Hunger Action Enabler for the Presbytery of Western New York.

In an effort to recognize her faithful service to the community of Western New York and beyond, a “Thanks to Pat” reception will be held on Friday, February 22, 3:30–5:30 p.m., at the Network of Religious Communities, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo. There will be a brief presentation at 5:00 p.m. Parking is available behind the building.

Everyone who has worked with Pat is encouraged to attend the reception and to express personal appreciation. Those who would like to attend the reception but are not available that day are invited to send a letter or other expression of appreciation to the Food For All office at 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496. All letters will be forwarded to Pat.

We congratulate Pat and wish her well in her new position at FISH of East Aurora.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

## Have You Considered Sponsoring a Summer Food Program for Children?

**The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) allows children 18 years or younger to continue to receive a free nutritious meal when school is not in session. Eligible site areas are those which have 50% of the children coming from households with incomes at or below 185% of the poverty line. These are the same children receiving free or reduced meals during the school year. If you would like more information on becoming a sponsor for summer meals this summer, please call Kelly Ann Kowalski of Food For All at 716-882-7705 or e-mail KellyAnnNOEP@AOL.com.**

## Thank You for Food Pantry Donations

The Network of Religious Communities Food Pantry is grateful to the following individuals, congregations, and organizations for their donations of food to help the hungry in our community from September 2001–January 2002.

Alley, Linda  
Alpha Delta Kappa-Lambda  
Amherst Community  
Bardak, Leslie  
Bethlehem 634  
Bethlehem Chapter O.E.S.  
Blakely, Anne  
Blessed Sacrament RC, Buffalo  
Bush, Darlene  
Boy Scout Troop 102, Pilgrim-St. Luke's  
Bumbar, Ellen  
Central Park United Methodist, Buffalo  
Central Presbyterian, Buffalo  
Christ United Church of Christ, Buffalo  
Christ United Methodist, Snyder

Cleveland Heights Christian, Cktg.  
Concerned Ecumenical Ministries, Buffalo  
Durham Memorial AME Zion, Buffalo  
Eggertsville United Church of Christ  
Evangelical Covenant, Buffalo  
First United Methodist, Buffalo  
Food Shuttle of WNY  
Gullen, Connie  
HolyTrinity Lutheran, Buffalo  
Kaczor, Audrey  
Kenmore Baptist  
Kenmore United Church of Christ  
Kenmore United Methodist  
Lafayette Presbyterian, Buffalo

Loaves & Fishes Dining Hall, Buffalo  
Manning, Audrey  
Neighbors Foundation, Grand Island  
Pilgrim St. Luke's UCC, Buffalo  
Plymouth United Church of Christ, Buffalo  
Russ, Beth  
St. Paul's United Church of Christ, W. Seneca  
St. Paul's Lutheran, Williamsville  
Trinity United Church of Christ, Cktg.  
Trinity United Methodist, Amherst  
Trinity United Methodist, Grand Island  
Unity Church, Buffalo  
University United Methodist Church  
Westminster Presbyterian, Buffalo



## Radio Station Cancels *Celebrate* and *Sunday Worship*

*"I am handicapped and cannot always make our local Sunday church services...the WBEN-AM Sunday services have been an inspiration to me...it is devastating to me to know that Sunday Worship can be removed..."*

*—Excerpt from a letter received from a listener*

The Network of Religious Communities was informed by WBEN-AM 930 on January 2, 2002, that two of its radio programs had been permanently canceled in December due to "economic decisions." *Celebrate* and *Sunday Worship*, on the air for many years, reached thousands of listeners each week with messages of hope and inspiration.

*Celebrate*, an on-air contemporary worship service, aired every Sunday morning on WBEN-AM from 7:05-7:30 and featured regular weekly hosts—Rev. Ken Neal, Rev. KEG Derushia, Rev. Charles Wheeler, Deborah Poole, and Rev. Michael Welch. *Celebrate* has been on the air for the past 25 years.

*Sunday Worship*, another "mini" worship service, was on the air from 8:05-8:30 a.m. each Sunday and was hosted by area clergy. Each year, more than 50 local pastors had the opportunity to share their message with thousands of listeners. The show varied in style and sometimes featured live music by congregational musicians.

The Network of Religious Communities considers these cuts a loss for the community of Western New York and will request that the station reconsider its decision. However, local congregations and regular listeners have a more powerful voice and a greater impact on programming.

If you are a listener or someone who supports this ministry, please contact WBEN-AM to express your disappointment. You may also wish to include an announcement in your newsletter or weekly bulletin asking members of your congregation to write. Letters may be sent to Mr. Tim Wengert, Operations manager, WBEN-AM, 500 Corporate Parkway, Suite 200, Buffalo, NY 14226, or you may call him at 716-843-0611.

Please send copies of your letters to Maureen Gensler, Network of Religious Communities, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496.

## Forum Planned to Observe International Women's Day

The Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Women's Rights is planning an outstanding event for International Women's Day. The event, "Women of Afghanistan: A Community Forum," will be held at the YWCA, Buffalo, from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on March 8.

The forum will feature three women whose work is focused on assisting the women of Afghanistan:

Nafissa Mahmood Ghowrwal (Maryland)  
Susan Safi-Rafiq (California)  
Farhat Bohkari (New York City)

LaVonne Ansari will provide perspectives from our own Buffalo Muslim community. For information please call 716-645-2533.

### Continued From Page 3—Churches Uniting

**Worshipping God together:** may include inviting representatives from neighboring CUIC congregations to participate in baptisms, ordinations installations, and celebrations of the Eucharist.

**Growing in faith together:** including nearby CUIC congregations by name in weekly intercessions, making their joys and sufferings our own; organizing shared youth retreats; teaching about our sister churches in education programs.

**Proclaiming the gospel together:** undertaking mission projects with CUIC partners on a regular basis.

**Combating racism together:** entering into ongoing dialogue with sister churches where the majority of members belong to ethnic groups other than our own; and developing projects aimed at overcoming racism.

**Being church together:** inviting other CUIC congregations to participate in social events, asking members of a sister church to serve

on the vestry or a parish committee and adding the words "Member of Churches Uniting in Christ" to our church signboard.

**Pursuing wholeness together:** All of the above! The challenge to all churches participating in CUIC is are we prepared to make the effort to pursue wholeness together and to see each other with something other than benign neglect.

It is important to recognize that CUIC is not about structural uniformity but about celebrating unity and diversity. This past year the Episcopal Church has been able to pursue this latter goal as a result of the covenant already established with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Called to Common Mission. Last August the ELCA voted at its national assembly to become a "partner in mission" with CUIC. We now have the wonderful opportunity to continue the ministry and mission already underway with our Lutheran partners within the context of CUIC.

For more information contact me at St. Paul's Cathedral (716-855-0900) and visit the CUIC website at [www.cuicinfo.org](http://www.cuicinfo.org).

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Appreciation Dinner to Be Held Thursday, April 18

Please plan to join us at the Hearthstone Manor, 333 Dick Road, Depew, at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Appreciation Dinner, sponsored by the Network of Religious Communities. The dinner honors members of congregations who have given significant service to their religious organization and/or local communities. The speaker for this occasion will be Dr. Wilson Greatbatch, Inventor of the Implantable Pacemaker.

Tickets are \$25 per person. The cost per honoree is \$40 and includes dinner and a personalized plaque. Please complete the Ticket Order Form and return with payment to the Network of Religious Communities by April 5, 2002.

We invite your congregation to choose an honoree(s) and return the completed form below on or before March 14, 2002. Encourage members of your congregation to attend. Tables of ten can be reserved.

For additional information, please call 716-882-4793.

### Ticket Order Form

# _____ Regular Tickets	@ \$25/person	\$ _____
# _____ Honoree Tickets*	@ \$40/person	\$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed		\$ _____

Name of Honoree \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\* Price of honoree ticket includes dinner and personalized award plaque

**Return with payment by April 5 to:**

Network of Religious Communities  
1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496

### Nomination Form

**Must be returned on or before March 14, 2002, to have honorees name on a plaque and in the program**

We wish to nominate for our 2002 Religious Service Award:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

We have chosen this person because (in 75 words or less): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested brief introduction of honoree: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Return by March 14 to: Network of Religious Communities, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496.**

## Speakers Available from Local Branch of Jubilee USA

The Western New York Coalition for Debt Relief is a group of people representing congregations, orders and organizations of Roman Catholics and Protestants. The members of the Coalition are eager to speak to congregations or groups to explain the need for debt relief in developing countries.

The Coalition is a local branch of Jubilee USA, formerly Jubilee 2000, an organization striving to encourage our country and other so-called First World Countries to relieve the debt of many poor countries who are actually subsidizing the wealthy, industrial countries while at the same time denying their own people education, health care, and often their very survival. This is a complex problem involving the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the complicated issue of globalization.

The Coalition welcomes invitations to speak about this very vital problem. Please contact Kathleen Heffern, Office of Church and Ministry, 795 Main Street, Buffalo 14203, 716-847-5531.

## Network/Food For All Staff Changes Announced

Patricia Griffin announced her resignation as Director of Food For All, effective the beginning of January 2002. (Please see "Thanks to Pat Reception Planned" on page 4). Rather than immediately replacing the position, the Network Personnel Committee and the Board of Governors has agreed to implement an interim plan until the end of June.

Kelly Kowalski will continue as the Nutrition Outreach and Education Project (NOEP) Coordinator. A temporary part-time assistant, Tina Mesicascio, has been hired to work with Kelly to fulfill the goals and objectives of a grant provided by the NYS Nutrition Consortium. Maureen Gensler will work with the Food For All Public Policy Committee to plan the annual Faith and Hunger Conference (see page 2) and help fulfill other goals and objectives of the grants received from religious denominations and national hunger programs.

In the meantime, the Network's Personnel and Program Committees will assess future needs. A permanent plan will be presented to the Board of Governors for approval in June.

## Calendar of Events

### February 22, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

"Thanks to Pat" Reception at the Network of Religious Communities, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo; for information call 716-882-7705; see page 5.

### February 23, 7:30 p.m.

*Conversations in Christ and Culture* continuing series at the Montante Cultural Center, Canisius College; speaker, Dr. James H. Cone, Union Theological Seminary, New York; for information call 716-888-2824.

### March 1

*World Day of Prayer* services in congregations throughout Western New York; organized by Church Women United; for information call the Church Women United office 716-882-4793; see page 3.

### March 3 (time to be announced)

Choral Festival, Frank Scinta, Director, at Kenmore Presbyterian Church, 2771 Delaware Avenue; sponsored by the American Guild of Organists, Buffalo Chapter; for information call 716-875-5858.

### March 8, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

*Women of Afghanistan: A Community Forum* at YWCA, Buffalo; sponsored by the Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Women's Rights; for information call 716-645-2533; see page 6.

### March 11, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

*Islam Among the World Religions*, fourth in a six-session series, *The World of Islam* at the Islamic Center, 745 Heim Road, Getzville; sponsored jointly by the Network of Religious Communities and the American Muslim Council of Western New York; for information call 716-882-4793.

### March 16, 9:00 a.m.-1:45 p.m.

*Putting "FAIR" Back Into Welfare, 3rd Annual Faith and Hunger Conference* at St. Joseph University RC Church, 3269 Main Street, Buffalo; sponsored by the Public Policy Committee of Food For All/Network of Religious Communities; \$7.50 registration includes lunch and materials; for information call 716-681-2246; see page 2.

### March 16, 12:00 noon

*Fashion Show & Luncheon* at Master Builders Hall, 173 Delaware Road, Kenmore; sponsored by Church Women United; fashions by Jacqueline Shoppe of Williamsville; \$8.00; for reservations call 716-882-4793 by March 9.

### March 22-23

*Life Enhancement for Couples Retreat* at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center; led by Psychologist Kent Bath and his wife, Amy; for information call 716-626-5977; see below.

### March 24, 4:00 p.m.

*The Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, England*, at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, 128 Pearl Street, Buffalo; Christopher Robinson, Conductor; general admission \$15.00, student admission \$10.00; for information call 716-855-0900 ext. 227.

### April 8, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

*A Cultural Atlas of Islam*, fifth in a six-session series, *The World of Islam* (location to be announced); sponsored jointly by the Network of Religious Communities and the American Muslim Council of Western New York; for information call 716-882-4793.

### April 15 & 16

*Extraordinary Leaders in an Anxious World—18th Annual Growth in Ministry Seminar*; sponsored by Catholic Charities of Buffalo, Episcopal Community Services, Lutheran Service Society of New York, and Samaritan Pastoral Counseling Center; speaker Dr. Roberta Gilbert, M.D., author of *Extraordinary Relationships* and *Connecting With Our Children, Guiding Principles for Parents in Troubled Times*; for information call 716-743-9117 or 800-660-5053.

### April 18

*22nd Annual Appreciation Dinner* at the Hearthstone Manor, 333 Dick Road, Depew; sponsored by the Network of Religious Communities; for information call 716-882-4793; see page 7.

### April 26, 7:30 p.m.

*Celebrity Recital featuring Erwan LaPrado, Organ, winner of the Grand Prix de Chartres* at St. Paul's Cathedral, 128 Pearl Street, Buffalo; co-sponsored by Friends of Music at St. Paul's and The American Guild of Organists, Buffalo Chapter; for information call 716-855-0900 ext. 227.

### May 5, 3:00 p.m.

*Peter DuBois: Organ Recital* at Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral, 5776 Broadway, Lancaster; sponsored by the American Guild of Organists, Buffalo Chapter; for information call 716-875-5858.

### May 13, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

*An Islamic Perspective of September 11, 2001*, sixth in a six-session series, *The World of Islam* at the Islamic Center, 745 Heim Road, Getzville; sponsored jointly by the Network of Religious Communities and the American Muslim Council of Western New York; for information call 716-882-4793.

## Couples Retreat at the Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center!

In Life Enhancement for Couples, Psychologist Kent Bath and his wife, Amy, show couples how to recognize a relationship in trouble and define problems in manageable terms. Kent and Amy teach the skills couples need to move beyond these problems and fulfill the dreams and potentials of their couplehood. The workshop is based on a model of personal and spiritual growth.

Life Enhancement for Couples involves both direct teaching and experiential components, focusing on practical behavioral and cognitive changes that increase emotional intelligence. Learn how to im-

prove communication, decrease conflict, raise awareness of your own and your partner's feelings, connect more openly with the world outside the relationship, take more joy from everyday life, become better friends, increase serenity and playfulness in the relationship, live with love as a verb, and become better parents, sons and daughters. This supportive workshop is being held on the evening of Friday, March 22, and all day Saturday, March 23, in the cozy atmosphere of the lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center.

Please call 716-626-5977 for a complete brochure or more information. You may also email your request to [info@kentbath.com](mailto:info@kentbath.com).



# Become a Member of the Network

Membership in the Network of Religious Communities is open to denominations, congregations, and religious organizations in Western New York and the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario who subscribe to the mission statement and purposes of the Network and contribute toward its financial support. Each member is entitled to appoint one voting delegate to the annual meeting of the General Assembly.

The current member denominations are: AME Zion Church (Buffalo, Syracuse, Albany District); Baha'i Spiritual Assembly; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Northeast Region; Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints; Episcopal Diocese of WNY; Episcopal District AME Church; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Upstate NY Synod; Hindu Cultural Center and Temple; Islamic Community; Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo; Mennonite Church; Presbytery of WNY; Religious Society of Friends; Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo; Unitarian Universalist Association; United Church of Christ, Western Area of the NY Conference; and United Methodist Church, Buffalo District. A complete list of member congregations and religious organizations is available upon request.

Individuals are invited to join the Network as auxiliary members. An auxiliary member subscribes to the mission statement and purposes of the Network, supports the work of the Network, and contributes toward its financial support. Auxiliary members may attend the General Assembly as observers.

*Mission Statement: Motivated by the sacred texts and traditions of our unique faith communities, the Network of Religious Communities, Inc., in recognizing a multiplicity of religious beliefs, respects the right to be and celebrate who we are within our particular religious traditions. Because our humanity is deeper than our division, we promote dialogue; facilitate the sharing of spiritual activities and resources; and work for justice and peace. The Network is not a religious community unto itself, rather a forum providing opportunities for cooperative ventures, the strengthening of our religious communities, and the betterment of the community as a whole.*

*The purposes of the Network are to: facilitate communication and increased understanding among the members and between the members and the wider community; foster cooperation within and between the faith communities to which the members belong; facilitate collaboration in areas of common concern and in response to needs in the wider community; and promote justice, peace and the common good (as expressed in the faith traditions of the members) in Western New York and the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario. Initiative shall be enabled at all levels of the Network. The core beliefs and integrity of all religious communities shall be respected in all policy statements issued and actions taken in the name of the Network.*

**Our congregation/religious organization would like to become a member of the Network.**

Our congregation would like to join the Network. We agree with the Mission and Purposes. Enclosed is our 1-year membership contribution of:

- \$100 for congregations with 100 or more members.
- \$50 for congregations with less than 100 members.

Our religious organization would like to join the Network and we agree with the Mission and purposes.

Enclosed is our 1-year membership contribution of \$50.

We have also enclosed a special gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the work of the Network.

We would like more information. Please contact us.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation/Religious Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send completed form to:**

Network of Religious Communities  
1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209-2496

If you, your congregation, or your religious organization would like to join the Network, please complete the appropriate form and send to the Network office.

**I would like to become an auxiliary member of the Network of Religious Communities.**

I would like to join the Network and I agree with the mission and purposes.

Enclosed is my 1-year membership contribution of \$25.

I have also enclosed a special gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the work of the Network.

I would like more information. Please contact me.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send completed form to:**

Network of Religious Communities  
1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209-2496

- Lay Leader
- Clergy
- Secretary
- Newsletter Editor

*Editor: Maureen Gensler*  
*Guest editorials welcome*  
*Please pass Network News on to others:*

# Network News

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*The Reverend Dr. G. Stanford Bratton*  
*The Reverend Francis X. Mazur*

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**Appreciation Dinner**  
**April 18**  
**To Reserve Tickets, see Page 7**

## Network Officers Elected

At its annual meeting on November 27, 2001, at Prince of Peace Church of God in Christ, the General Assembly elected the Very Reverend Allen Farabee as President of the Network of Religious Communities. Re-elected to serve a second year as Treasurer was Ms. Eula Hooker. The term of office for each position is one year.

Also elected by the General Assembly were Network Trustees: Emerson Barr, Lana Benatovich, Daniel Kantor, Lloyd Noyes, and Steve T. Roth. They are responsible for the stewardship of the physical property of the Network.

The Board of Governors, at its meeting on January 17, re-elected the Reverend David McKee, Vice President for Program; Ms. Marlene Glickman, Vice President for Administration; and Ms. Sheila Nickson, Secretary.

Please call the Network office 716-882-4793 if you would like a complete list of congregations and religious organizations elected to be represented on the Board of Governors.

## Have You Changed Your Address?

Please help us update the *Network News* mailing list. If your name and/or address are incorrect on the mailing label, complete the form and return to the Network office. Also include a copy of the label attached to this newsletter so that we can make the correction in the database. Thanks for your help!

**My name and address should appear as follows on the *Network News* mailing list:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please add my name to the mailing list.

Please remove my name from the mailing list.

**Send completed form and copy of label to:**

Maureen Gensler, Network of Religious Communities  
 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209-2496  
 FAX: 716-882-3797