
FROM THE MODERATOR

Social Justice Task Force Launched

Results of the recent social justice survey of parishioners were presented by Moderator Linda Campanella at the “faith in action” forum held on May 3. For those who were unable to attend the forum but are interested in the results, Linda’s PowerPoint presentation has been posted on the AHCC web site at www.ahcc.org/VolunteerOpportunities.htm.

At the forum, Rev. Peter Grandy noted that if Jesus had read about the forum in our newsletter, he’d probably be sitting in the front row... and for good reason. Peter explained that justice was, and is, a central theme of the Jewish prophetic tradition. Being a Jew, Jesus knew from Micah 6:8 that we are called “to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God.” He knew from Amos 5:24 that in our civil life together, “justice should roll down like waters,” and from the Psalms (37) that “the Lord loves justice.” Peter reminded us that when Jesus began his ministry, he chose as text for his very first sermon a justice passage from Isaiah: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”

A special task force has been convened to help us put the scriptural mandate to “do justice” into a current context for AHCC; over the next couple months the group will develop ideas and recommendations for social justice ministry at AHCC that respond to the mandate while also reflecting and respecting the range of views of AHCC parishioners. The specific charge to the task force can be read in Linda’s presentation. The task force will be co-chaired by Ted Reed and Dayl Walker, and its other members are Jermaine Crooks, Booker DeVaughn, Tammy Exum, Dick Farr, Ray Ferrari, Cheryl Forbes, Pat Hollis, Lenell Kittlitz, Elam Lantz and Dave Schnatz. Director of Outreach Ministries, Tony Mein will serve as staff liaison to the group.

Good News!

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

It took bold vision, scores of volunteers, hundreds of donors, and five years for our Dreams to Reality campaign to be the extraordinary success we will celebrate on May 31. But it doesn’t take a capital campaign for AHCC to be a place for dreaming – and doing! We never seem to stop imagining new possibilities. AHCC is always investing in its mission and its future, and the investments pay dividends every day. What a vibrant, inclusive, innovative, thriving church AHCC is!

Inspiring examples of positive, often innovative things happening in our midst, including those that follow, abound.

- In January AHCC sponsored 5 lay persons to attend Stephen Minister Leadership Training in Orlando, Florida.
- Seventy-two folks, including 30 8th-grade Confirmands, have joined AHCC since January.
- Over 100 children participate weekly in a path-breaking, volunteer-based Christian education program now led by an ordained minister installed on Mother’s Day Sunday.
- Spirit Hill will have offered 6 community service projects for children and families by the end of this program year.
- On May 17 our worship services will be 100% youth-led.
- AHCC’s youth band (“God Squad”) will be recording a CD this year.
- The Bell Choir is back!
- Terence Blanchard’s epic “A Tale of God’s Will – Requiem for Katrina” had never before been performed in a church until it was performed to a full and diverse house at AHCC in April.
- AHCC partnered with the YWCA of the Hartford Region to take a “Stand against Racism” in April.
- Despite budget pressures, AHCC will make grants totaling more than \$200,000 to community organizations again in 2009.

- More than 25 AHCC members have led a group of volunteers from Hartford-area organizations to rehabilitate two 100+ year-old homes on Asylum Hill for sale to moderate income buyers.
- With annual mission trips to Ecuador becoming a mainstay of our outreach ministries, AHCC has gone global! The next group heads to Ecuador in June.
- Of 49 plots in our community garden on Huntington St., 12 are designated for the Boys & Girls Club and 14 have already been rented to neighborhood residents for the coming growing season.
- Our racially and socio-economically diverse School for Young Children on Asylum Hill is successfully completing its first year as a charter school with the addition of 2 kindergarten classrooms.
- Ongoing enhancements to the AHCC web site include features such as on-line pledging, video-streaming, and audio broadcast of sermons.
- During Lent a group of chaplains-in-training from Hartford Hospital used our labyrinth as part of their Lenten reflection.
- In February, two small groups gathered to study and reflect, chapter by chapter, on Dr. Wayne Rollins’ book, *Jung and the Bible*. In May, this was followed by a presentation by Dr. Rollins with over 100 in attendance.

Too often, and especially in challenging times, good news is crowded out by bad. Hopeful signs are overshadowed by worries. We fret, for example, over cutting and balancing budgets without stopping often enough to celebrate and appreciate the truly wonderful things we already do and will continue to do. Please join me in rejoicing in all that is good, all that is possible at AHCC. And keep dreaming!

-Linda Campanella, Moderator