

CHURCH COUNCIL BULLETIN

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Summer 2010

North Carolina Council of Churches

Council Marks 75th with Celebration at Duke

With song, prayer and praise, the North Carolina Council of Churches celebrated its 75th anniversary with more than 200 friends at Duke University's Divinity School on May 18.

The afternoon began with a historical program featuring remembrances by some of the Council's longtime activists, including Executive Director Emeritus Collins Kilburn; Julia Elsee, who spoke about farmworker issues; Rufus Stark, who spoke about the Council's groundbreaking work on the impact of tobacco; Bett Hargrave, who spoke about the work of the ERA Committee; and Richard Smith, son of Council Founder Shelton Smith.

Explaining how the Council came to work on tobacco and the subsequent fall-out from that effort, Stark said, "If there is a moral to this story, it is that we must not be weary in well-doing. The Council is of great service to the member churches in taking on the hard issues."

Following a time for dinner, fellowship and recon-

nections, the worship service took place in Goodson Chapel. Along with the chapel's organ, United Voices of Praise from United Church of Chapel Hill and the Moravian Brass Choir provided music.

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church, delivered the homily. At the time she was elected Bishop, Ward was the Council's First Vice-President. She spoke fondly of her time spent working with the Council and powerfully of the work yet to be done. Photos from the 75th can be found on page 3.

As a special giving opportunity during this 75th year, donations are still being accepted for anyone interested in becoming an Anniversary Friend or a charter member of the Covenant Society. To learn more, visit www.nccouncilofchurches.org and click on the "Donate Now" button.



Bingham Keynotes Critical Issues Seminar in October

The Rev. Canon Sally Bingham, founder and president of The Regeneration Project, delivers the keynote address at the North Carolina Council of Churches' 2010 Critical Issues Seminar. The theme for this year's seminar is "Loving God's Creation: Fully Integrating Creation Care with the Church's Mission and Ministry." It takes place Oct. 14 at Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro.

Bingham, an Episcopal priest and Canon for the environment in the Episcopal Diocese of California, is internationally known for her work with the national Interfaith Power & Light campaign. She has mobilized thousands of people to put their faith into action through energy stewardship and advocacy as one of the first faith leaders to

fully recognize global warming as a moral issue.

"We are honored to have Sally with us for this event," said George Reed, the Council's Executive Director. "As the 'Founding Mother' of Interfaith Power & Light, Sally was one of the first prophetic voices to sound the alarm about global warming. She has breathed new life into the efforts of people of faith to protect God's earth and all its inhabitants."

Along with Bingham's address, the daylong seminar features workshops led by experts from a variety of areas related to Creation Care. Topics include: Greening Your Congregation; Preaching on Creation; Bearing Witness and Responding to Disaster; Legislative Approaches to Creation Care; and The Price of Color and Poverty.

"The despairing headlines that surround us threaten not only God's life-giving and sustaining Creation but also our sense of hope," said Jill Rios, Director of North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light. "This seminar provides a chance to immerse ourselves in learning about Creation Care and gain practical, hands-on skills and tools to apply and integrate 'love of Creation' into all aspects of our lives as people of faith."

A complete list of workshops and leaders will be available online or by contacting the Council office after Aug. 15. The cost for the day, including lunch, is \$25, but for students it's \$15. Some scholarship assistance is available. Register by using the form on page 3, by calling 919-828-6501 or at www.nccouncilofchurches.org.

Clergy and Lay Leaders Discuss Immigration

This summer, the North Carolina Council of Churches continued a series of morning events where spiritual leaders had the opportunity to learn about immigrants in North Carolina communities. The new “papers please” immigration law in Arizona has proved divisive for those interested in immigration from grassroots advocates to the President, and heated rhetoric around the issue continues to be widespread. Meanwhile, the number of clergy who have attended this series – more than 450 to date -- reflects the challenge of faith as it intersects with this issue.

Council Program Associate Chris Liu-Beers traveled to Hendersonville, Greensboro, Charlotte, Chapel Hill and other cities around the state from late May through early July, providing opportunities for ministers to hear from local experts and ask questions.

Speakers have brought to light both the difficulty of being an immigrant in the United States and the calls from scripture for congregations to stand in solidarity with immi-

grant communities. In Greensboro, Rev. Mark Sills addressed the disconnect between scripture and contemporary hypocrisy saying, “I challenge you, who have ancestors who came here for the same reasons the Mexicans, the Guatemalans, and the Hondurans and others are coming here today, look at your history then cast the first stone.”

In Raleigh, United Methodist Bishop Al Gwinn reminded his audience of 45 that caring for immigrants is about listening to the heart of God. We are called to bear witness, Gwinn said, to the truth of God's love for immigrants in word and deed.

This fall, the Council premieres a new film about immigrant families called “Brother Towns.” In partnership with local filmmaker Charlie Thompson, the Council will host free screenings in cities across the state. It will provide a great opportunity to learn about immigration in a casual setting. For more information, visit www.welcometheimmigrant.org/film.

Partners in Health & Wholeness Launches Breakfast Series in August

Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW), an initiative of the North Carolina Council of Churches, holds its first clergy breakfast on health on Thursday, August 26 from 8:30-10:00 a.m. at St. James African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion Church in Goldsboro. The church is located at 206 South George Street, and Dr. Dwight Cannon serves as pastor.

The purpose of the PHW clergy breakfast is to: draw the connection between health and faith; illustrate the current scope of preventable health problems in North Carolina (including how many people are obese or suffering from other preventable diseases, how overweight and obesity affect overall health and quality of life, etc.); and discuss opportunities for clergy to improve their health as well as the health of their congregants through PHW and other faith-based health initiatives.

The Rev. Joseph C. Brown, Sr., Presiding Elder, A.M.E. Zion, Dunn-Lillington District, is the guest speaker. Faith leaders serving in the Wayne County area or anyone generally interested in how places of worship can improve the spiritual and physical health of God's people, please contact PHW Project Director Willona Stallings at 919-828-6501 or willona@nccouncilofchurches.org.

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Photos from the Council's 75th Anniversary Celebration



Julia Elsee and Executive Director Emeritus Collins Kilburn were among the speakers during the historical presentation at the 75th celebration. *Photo by Steve Dear*

Dinner provided time for Council supporters to make new friends and become acquainted with old ones. *Photo by Kathleen Brogan Minton.*



Attendees renewed their baptism as part of the evening worship service. *Photo by Kathleen Brogan Minton.*

Participants in the worship service gathered in Duke's Goodson Chapel. *Photo by Kathleen Brogan Minton.*



Registration Form
2010 Critical Issues Seminar
Loving God's Creation:
Fully Integrating Creation Care with the Church's Mission and Ministry
Thursday, October 14, 8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Congregational United Church of Christ, 400 W. Radiance Dr., Greensboro

NAME _____ CHURCH/ORG _____

ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____

PHONE: HOME () _____ WORK () _____

Registration Fee (lunch included): ___ Regular registration (\$25) ___ Student (\$15) ___ Check here for vegetarian meal. The meal will feature sustainably, locally grown produce. Some scholarship funding is available.

To reserve your space at the 2010 Critical Issues Seminar, please submit registration by Oct. 7. Lunch cannot be guaranteed after that date. To receive a printed list of workshops and presenters by mail, available after Aug. 15, check here _____. Information about workshops will also be online after that date. Online registration is available at www.nccouncilofchurches.org.

Make checks payable and mail to: **NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**, 27 HORNE Street, Raleigh, NC 27607. For **questions** call 919-828-6501 or e-mail nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org

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Arrival and Departure

Summer marks an exciting time for the North Carolina Council of Churches with the arrival of a new staff member, but the Council also must say goodbye to another.

Peace activist, writer and musician David LaMotte has joined the Council as program associate for peace. He lived for a number of years in Western North Carolina and has just completed his Masters of International Relations, Peace and Conflict Resolution as a Rotary World Peace Fellow at the University of Queensland in Australia.

“I am the son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers who encouraged me to take the concept of ‘calling’ seriously, and I have been doubly blessed in that I have felt more than one strong calling in my life,” LaMotte said.

Prior to beginning his studies in Australia, he was co-founder and volunteer director of a non-profit that partnered with underfunded schools and libraries in Guatemala. In 2007, Heifer International named LaMotte a Hero of Humanity. He was the breakfast keynote speaker in 2008 to

the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and took part in an interfaith peace delegation to Israel and the West Bank that same year.

“I’m thrilled at the idea of plugging into the essential work that the Council is doing, and at the idea of being back in North Carolina, which will always be home to me,” he said.

Meanwhile at the end of July, the Council bids farewell to Jill Rios as Director of Interfaith Power & Light. Rios, who has served in that role for two years based out of Asheville, resigned to devote more time to her family, health and other, more locally-based projects.

“The Council’s longstanding tradition of peace activism is in excellent hands under David’s leadership. We are delighted to have him with us,” said Executive Director George Reed. “At the same time, we are sad to see Jill go. She has done remarkable work for the cause of Creation Care in the state and nation, and we will miss her.”