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Washtenaw Newsletter included on page 5!

Introducing a new Mission Statement:

"CTA-MI is a prophetic voice committed to the formation of inclusive Catholic communities of faith in accordance with Vatican II theology. This mission, rooted in the life and message of Jesus, compels us to reach out to empower people in justice, love and compassion."

This new mission statement differs from the former one developed ten (10) years ago which reads "Call To Action of Michigan is a prophetic voice for systemic change toward freedom, justice and inclusivity within the Catholic Church."

At a retreat, January 9th – 11th, in a prayerful setting at the Sisters of St. Joseph Transformation Spirituality Center, Nazareth, MI, board members met to reflect and pray about the future and purpose of our organization. The above change in our mission statement is one result. In addition, a new CTA brochure will follow outlining in specific terms the meaning of our mission.

The shift in focus came from our opening principle written on a chalk board in bold letters for all to read: "We will celebrate what is right in our church, in our neighborhood, in our families, in our communities and in our lives and work and try to make things better". We are trying to shift to a very positive approach continuing to provide a strong emphasis on changes that are needed. We believe changes will come in due time under the guidance of Spirit.

Board members agreed that we will not see specific systemic changes happening any time soon "within" our church. The restoration movement appears to be alive and well, especially through the appointment of very conservative bishops by John Paul II, bishops like the newly appointed Allen Vigneron to Detroit. An example of Vigneron's leadership is reflected in his statement "to aggressively defend the teaching of the Catholic Church". When asked about the success of the Michigan ballot proposal to do stem-cell research, passed by a more than 2 to 1 margin, including Catholic voters as well, he responded, "---having lost a political battle---we're not going to give up the war". One can easily note the language used here, "war" "battles" "fighting". (Deciders?) CTA is about embracing all life, celebrating what is right, praying and working to make things better for all.

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Mark Your Calendar:

Call To Action - Michigan State Conference

Saturday September 19, 2009 in Lansing

Keynote Speaker: Edwina Gateley





From Lansing ...

After a Christmas break, Lansing Branch gathered in January. Although we had other plans for the evening, after reading the newly proposed CTA-MI mission statement, our entire discussion that evening centered on this revised statement. Much lively and invigorating sharing ensued. We quickly learned that any time an organization chooses to make some major focus changes, it can and will lead to some deep and thought provoking discussion. CTA-MI is currently in this process. Open honest sharing is truly good for each of us as well as the organization.

Our February and March (3rd Thursday of each month) meetings will focus on listening to the presentations by John Shelby Spong at CTA National in Milwaukee. Most of our branch members who were at national attended one or both of his offerings and found him inspiring as well as thought provoking. We are looking forward to these evenings and the lively invigorating sharing.

Lansing Branch has scheduled the presentation "Always Our Children" given by members of Fortunate Families for Thursday, April 16, 7-9 p.m., at Plymouth Congregation Church here in Lansing. From what we have heard from others...this presentation will help each of us to better understand this journey for the gay and lesbian persons and their families. Should be an enlightening evening.

Karen Rose, kroses@comcast.net

From Metro Detroit ...

"What this world needs most right now is a new generation of prophets. The problem is that we have lost all respect for them. In fact, we may not even recognize them when we see them. Yet, it was precisely for times such as ours that God sent the prophets. It is surely time for this generation to rediscover them." (Joan Chittister, OSB)

CTA-Metro Detroit decided to make the most of Lent by reading and discussing Joan Chittister's book, "The Cry of the Prophet: A Call to Fullness of Life". Gatherings will be every two weeks - on Saturdays in Detroit and Sundays in Clarkston. Our first meeting will be a joint meeting on February 21 at 10:30 a.m. at Gerry Sellman's, 1806 Leverette, Detroit (gersellman@sbcglobal.net). The rest of the schedule is:

- March 7 at 10:00 in Detroit,
- March 8 at 2:00 in Clarkston (Mary Hennig, 248-625-3367)
- March 21 at 10:00 in Detroit,
- March 22 at 2:00 in Clarkston
- April 4 at 11:00 in Clarkston (joint meeting)

Feel free to join either group according to your schedule. You can order Joan's book from benetvission.org.

Metro Detroit will host an updated Seder Meal/Eucharistic on Holy Thursday, April 9 at 6:00. We are looking for a location that would hold 20-25 people.

Other ideas for Lent:

→ E-Course for Lent on "The Cry of the Prophet." An online retreat and practice group led by Joan Chittister, Benetvission and Spirituality and Practice. (Cost \$29.95 for a 6-week retreat) Sign up at www.spiritualityandpractice.com/prophet

→ 2009 Lenten Reflections by Fr. Ed Hays – Free weekly e-mail blasts of Fr. Hays' reflections will go to opt-in NCR subscribers. Fr. Hays has authored more than 30 books. Sign up at NCRonline.org

→ Every Wednesday at Oprah.com there is an interactive discussion on Spirituality at 9:00 p.m.

At our last meeting, we formed 5 workgroups: Rights of the Laity, Financial Accountability, Funeral/Wake Services, Outreach/Social Justice, Ad Hoc Seder Meal/Eucharist. A number of CTA members have already volunteered – GREAT! Please let me know if you are interested in being part of one of these groups. (eb120246@sbcglobal.net or 313-963-0448).

Don't forget to write your letter to Bishop Vigneron about the election of bishops. Also, here's a question for our members - Would you like to discuss one of Bishop Spongs' books? If so, which one?

Eileen Burns and Julia Archer – co-chairs

IT'S OUR CHURCH -- CTA-MI has received copies of letters from several CTA members who wrote to Cardinal Maida regarding the qualities a bishop should have and asking for lay participation in the selection of our next auxiliary. Canon 212 B3 states: "They (lay faithful) have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the Pastors their views on matters which concern the good of the Church."



We continue to encourage you to write – now Bishop Alan Vigneron - and encourage him to seek out the laity and listen to their suggestions – a practice of the Apostles in the early Church. Share with him the qualities you think a candidate for bishop should have. Exercise your right, no, your duty, to make your opinion known.

The address is: Most Reverend Alan Vigneron, Archdiocese of Detroit, 1234 Washington Blvd. Detroit, MI 48226. CTA-MI would appreciate receiving a copy of your letter. It's our time. It's our Church.

CTA Michigan Board Develops New Mission Statement

CTA of MI Board members met in Kalamazoo for their annual retreat despite horrible weather conditions, and the results made their efforts worthwhile. As members fought the snow and wind coming from Detroit, Lansing, Rochester, Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo we all questioned what we were doing. Our retreat guide, Matt Hayes, came in from Indianapolis asking similar questions, but we began with a short session Friday night. It featured DeWitt Jones in a National Geographic film entitled, "For the Love of It." Dr. Matthew Hayes is President of Brebeuf Jesuit, a Catholic Prep School in Indianapolis, and his approach to our efforts focused on appreciative inquiry, a process which looks at what is good about something, instead of dwelling on what is wrong. The shift in focus enabled us to write a new mission statement with renewed enthusiasm and commitment.

The board was also able to divide itself into working committees who began addressing the tasks of improving PR, clearing up administrative tasks, continuing educational opportunities and speakers and gathering and sharing information about intentional communities. We tackled our tasks with positive energies. Dr. Hayes reminded us to use the acronym SMART (Specific Measureable, Accountable, Realistic and Timed) as a guide for good goal setting.

We would especially like to thank Kim Franke and Jim Rose for bringing Dr. Hayes to facilitate our retreat January 9-11. Our discussion about the positive aspects that each has gleaned from our church experience encourages us to build on what is good.



President Jeannine Daly drafts organizational goals.



Newly elected secretary, Mary Ann Botorowicz records the minutes of the Board of Directors' retreat.

NEW OFFICERS

-- Last fall, following our by-laws, CTA-MI began the process of electing officers. Every two years the Board accepts nominations for President and Secretary for the odd years (and Vice-President and Treasurer for even years). After publishing a request for nominations in the newsletter, we received several names and I contacted the nominees. Some candidates were unable to serve. One candidate for each office remained, so there was no need of a formal election process. Jeannine Daly as President and Mary Ann Botorowicz as Secretary were installed for a two-year term at the January meeting of the Board.

Congratulations to two generous members!

-- Julia Ann Archer, Chairman of Election Committee



FORTUNATE FAMILIES

 (FF) is an organization of Catholic parents "who have come to realize what a special gift their homosexual sons and daughters are to their families and the whole body of Christ – not in spite of but because they are gay." They have come to cherish their family story and speak about it and share it with friends and others who have gay children or are curious about the gay community. Their program is called "Always Our Children."

The board of CTA-MI decided to help the FF parents with spreading their message. We have invited a panel of FF parents to speak in each of the CTA-MI branches. We feel their simple message that they loved their children before they knew they were gay and they now love and cherish them with that knowledge can give comfort to other parents of gay sons and daughters. The following branches have already decided on a place and date:

METRO DETROIT AND ROCHESTER-NORTH METRO – Saturday, February 28 – 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Sts. Simon and Jude Parish, 32500 Palmer, Westland, MI 48186

Parents and family members of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender children are invited to share a Day of Reflection. The fee is \$25 per person or \$40 per couple. However, no one will be turned away because of inability to pay. This event is not limited to Catholics only. All parents are welcomed and encouraged to join in!! The day of reflection will end with a liturgy celebrated by Fr. Gerry Bechard. For further information and to register for the February 28 event, please contact Tom Nelson and Linda Karle-Nelson at 248-489-1505, lindakarle@earthlink.net

LANSING – Thursday, April 16, 2008 – 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Plymouth Congregational Church, 2001 E. Grand River, Lansing MI 48912 --- Free will offering

Contacts: Karen Schrauben, 8510 Wintergreen St., Lansing MI 48917, 517-627-5434, kroses@comcast.net
Janet Glisson, 1428 Corbett St., Lansing, 517-484-0443, j.behappy@comcast.net

Fortunate Families's website offers information about the mission and activities of FF: www.fortunatefamilies.org

HISTORIC MOVE FOR U.S. CATHOLICS

U.S. Catholic reform organizations have joined together in an unprecedented move to form the *American Catholic Council (ACC)*, calling for a historic national assembly of the American Catholic Church, lay, religious, priestly, and episcopal. The organizations involved include the *Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (ARCC)*, *Voice of the Faithful (VOTF)*, *Call to Action (CTA)*, *Corpus*, *FutureChurch*, among others.

ARCC president, Professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligious Dialogue Dr. Leonard Swidler, stated: “The Reform Movement of the Catholic Church in America in the spirit of Vatican II is on the cusp of a great leap forward.”

Swidler went on to say that “ARCC and other organizations have for several years been promoting the idea of all major Catholic Reform groups in the U.S. joining together in an *American Catholic Council* to move our common agenda forward. The great leap forward is now being launched!”

“The way the Church is now is not the way it was meant to be,” said John Hushon, a VOTF board member who serves as the ACC co-chair. He added that, “Vatican II attempted to recapture the universal call to ministry, but this promise has not been fulfilled.”

Many other reform organizations are in the process of formally endorsing the American Catholic Council “Declaration for Reform and Renewal,” which launched the call for a national council.

The Declaration, found online at www.americancatholiccouncil.org states: “We seek reform of the governing structures in our Church so that they reflect the better aspects of the American experience: a democratic spirit, concern for human rights, freedom of speech and assembly, and a tradition of participation and representation.”

The American Catholic Council is scheduled to take place in Detroit in the fall of 2011, the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 35th Anniversary of Cardinal Dearden’s “Call to Action,” which was designed to actualize the reforms of Vatican II for the U.S. Church.

See www.americancatholiccouncil.org and www.arcc-catholic-rights.net for more information on the American Catholic Council and the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church.

Leonard Swidler, President of ARCC

Tel: 513-508-1935; E-mail: dialogue@temple.edu

Mission and Goal of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (ARCC) is to bring about substantive structural change in the Catholic Church. ARCC seeks to institutionalize a collegial understanding of Church in which decision-making is shared and accountability is realized among Catholics of every kind and condition. It affirms that there are fundamental rights which are rooted in the humanity and baptism of all Catholics.



2009 Call to Action-Michigan Board of Directors (left to right)

Jim Rose (Kalamazoo) – Vice President, Kim Franke (Kalamazoo) – Treasurer, Mary Ann Botorowicz (Detroit) – Secretary, Jeannine Daly (Rochester North) – President, Sr. Beth Rindler SFP – Past President.

New Mission Statement ...

Continued from page 1

Bishops seem afraid to speak “OFFICIAL” Catholic teaching: “THE BODY OF THE FAITHFUL, AS A WHOLE, ANOINTED AS THEY ARE BY THE HOLY ONE, CANNOT ERR IN MATTERS OF BELIEF”. (Lumen Gentium #12) We will continue to remind the bishops that error, even in church doctrine, did happen in the past and can happen again without first consulting the faithful as a whole. We in CTA welcome bishops into an honest and respectful dialogue, especially after Bishop Vigneron’s statement: “I always find it interesting how people who have little or no knowledge of what the Catholic Church teaches and are the first to ridicule these teachings”. We in CTA are knowledgeable about what the Catholic Church teaches. That’s why we exist.

Meanwhile, Call to Action of Michigan moves forward with steadfast commitment to forming intentional communities of faith, doing good works, planning educational projects, listening to all the people, supporting different groups and their goals. ALL CATHOLICS in all parishes are invited to join us on our spiritual journey that excludes no one.

CTA WASHTENAW AREA NEWSLETTER

NOTE: CTA-MI welcomes the CTA Washtenaw chapter to our newsletter. We look forward to other cooperative efforts.

*“Our Mission is:
To Be A Prophetic Voice for Systemic Change Toward Freedom, Justice and Inclusivity
within the Catholic Church.”*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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In Ann Arbor, CTA Washtenaw continues with the business of “feathering our nest” at St. Clare’s / Beth Emeth. We are so blessed to have our own monthly meeting space complete with the use of a kitchen. This month we were given the gift of the use of a kitchen cabinet where we can store dishes, condiments, etc. No more toting the giant plastic tub a la Santa each month!

Several members, mindful of the theme of CTA Annual last November, proposed that our potlucks should “go green” (do NOT think football here, or plates may fly!). Led by Judi Pawloski, Rosemary Rader and Joyce Mason, we’ve come up with a plan that will allow us to use hard washable plastic plates & bowls and knives & forks. Now that we have our own storage cabinet, we can wash & dry after our meal & store them. To complete our donated set, Dollar Store here we come! Judi donated a stack of fabric napkins (very elegant!) and volunteers will bring them home to launder between meetings. We’re working on “bring your own water bottle or mug.” Altogether there was an enormous decrease in the amount of “landfill” left behind after the last gathering.

Our group continues to bring food contributions each month to the Food Pantry run by St. Clare’s. It is an actual little white building there on the grounds which is open to the public each Thursday. I’ve talked to those who volunteer there and, of course, the need is much greater this year than previously. For CTA members who do not attend any particular church regularly this provides a perfect opportunity to contribute to a food pantry regularly.

CTA Washtenaw’s Meditation Group continues to meet at Marie Kennedy’s home. It’s led by Judi Pawloski and held just before our Monthly Liturgy gatherings. Reports from members are that all goes well with that group. The same cannot be said of another group, the Mid-Month Liturgy. We promised to keep you informed. Suffice it to say: that turned out to be a non-event. The first and only gathering was attended by two people (and two cats). End of event.

We continue to send letters of support to those who are speaking out and standing up in support of equality and justice. This month we sent a letter of support to Father Roy Bourgeois. Several CTA members had the privilege of meeting Father Roy when he spoke in Ann Arbor last Fall. The thought of such an individual being treated other than with great kindness made members eager to sign our letter.

Since CTA is not allowed to advertise in the churches, it’s difficult to make our existence known. During the month of January 2009 our Board decided to experiment with a way to attract new members. We placed display ads in “The Michigan Daily” on the two days before our last meeting and in “The Ann Arbor News” the week before the gathering. We’re waiting to determine the results of this investment. Most likely we’ll turn next to free online advertisements of CTA Washtenaw’s meetings.

Concluding our news of the month/s, it occurs to me that a most important step for our group has been the acquisition of a “permanent” home. Having a permanent address and space makes it so much easier to “advertise,” as well as to simplify the planning and execution of our regular meetings.

We join with all of CTA in prayers of thanksgiving for our new President, and for his safety and that of his family, and for the success of the enormous amount of work that awaits the new Administration.

Margaret Pooler, Vice-President, CTA Washtenaw

