

Episcopal Urban Caucus 31st National Assembly
Building Bridges – Healing Connections in a Broken World:
May the Beauty we Love Be what we Do
Double Tree Hotel - Pittsburgh, PA
23-26 February, 2011

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25 -- MORNING WORKSHOPS (10:00 - 11:30)

#1 *Unpeeling the Layers of Privilege*

Participate in an interactive workshop to begin to peel back the sometimes unrecognized layers of privilege. The methods used in this workshop are non-threatening, yet provocatively revealing. The exercises in this presentation have been used at conferences sponsored by the National Association for Independent Schools and is appropriate for adults and teens. Presenters include students from Pittsburgh area schools who have facilitated it for faculty, staff, and peers. Participants will find it easy to replicate the exercises in home settings.

Facilitator: Muriel Fox Alim - Program Director for the Fund for Advancement of Minorities through Education (FAME), has been an educator for over 15 years, teaching in public and private schools. She has served as the Diversity Coordinator for Winchester Thurston School and facilitated diversity programming for students, faculty and staff. She currently serves on the **Episcopal Diocese's Commission on Racism.**

#2 *From Service to Solidarity - Creating Communities of Inclusion*

The many layers of ministry with marginalized people (direct service, social analysis, and advocacy work for systemic change) call us into community and solidarity, in ever-widening circles. This healing project requires “Big Tent” community, an expanded heart, and deep roots as *the mysticism of service* --by God’s grace-- becomes a solidarity of love. In this workshop, come:

Listen to the stories of local “workers in the vineyard,” including Jubilee ministries in some struggling areas of the region and a new collaborative effort bringing Ignatian retreats to homeless women & men in Pittsburgh. **Learn** about an effective social justice formation process used in many congregations around the country, exploring principles and skills that nurture a faith that does justice, a lived-out love. **Engage** in roundtable conversation with a diverse group of contemplative activists working with the materially poor, incarcerated, homeless, disabled, AIDS/HIV community, those in Recovery, and through a variety of ministries fostering a “vibrant community where each belongs!”

Facilitators: Bill Farra, JD, member & primary guardian of the *Community of Celebration*, a Christian Community of the Episcopal Church with origins in the 1960s and with a presence in Aliquippa, PA since 1985. Bill serves on several non-profit boards as well as being the Diocesan Jubilee Officer for The Diocese of Pittsburgh; **Carol Gonzalez**, educator, contemplative activist, and lay leader in the Church. Carol has been a member of Emmanuel Episcopal on Pittsburgh’s Northside since she moved to an abandoned house in the Manchester neighborhood during mid-1970s to work in faith-based, community development. She is also a member & leader of *CLC-USA*, part of an international, lay, Ignatian community; **David Horvath** is a member of the staff of *JustFaith Ministries* in Louisville Kentucky (justfaith.org). David has been involved in social change and justice ministries for thirty years and is very active in local community and congregational-based organizing around these issues.

#3 “Feed My Sheep” - Youth at Risk: a Conversation Sharing Best Practices...What’s Working and, Not So Much...

Seeking engagement for attendees, with opportunity for local & national community activists to connect with one another from around the country as we focus on long-term solutions, sharing effective, practical strategies that address complex, inter-related challenges which include the need for strong spirituality formation for our next generation and the role of family support centers and partnerships. Prevention as well as intervention approaches will be addressed in this workshop hosted by the facilitators and others working with urban youth, including some representative of diocesan supported ministries: *Coal Country Youth, Neighborhood Youth Outreach Program, All Souls’ Lane for Learning, and UP 4 Reading, UP for Life!*

Facilitators:

William "Will" D. Thompkins is Director of Community Outreach at The Pittsburgh Project. Will is a native Pittsburgher with an undergraduate degree in Business Management and has spent most of his professional career working in the non-profit sector. He currently serves on several boards and has been a leader in the *One Vision, One Life* & other efforts to address violence.

Jay Arthur Gilmer, Esq. – Coordinator of PIRC (Pgh Initiative to Reduce Crime) in City of Pittsburgh Dept. of Public Safety, a homicide deterrence strategy intended to reduce gang/group related homicides in the City of Pittsburgh. It is based on the Ceasefire strategy developed by Professor David Kennedy of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in NYC. PIRC works by organizing law enforcement, social service delivery agencies, and broad-based community voices to speak directly to the offending population at call-in sessions. As an attorney, Jay uses his extensive experience in the corporate world to help faith-based groups become more efficient in delivering critical services to the poor. Jay serves on several non-profit boards and he and his family are members of Church of the Ascension in Oakland area of Pgh.

#4 Community Investing in 2011- Our Assets at Work in Underserved Communities

This workshop will begin with a 20 minute DVD overall presentation on Community Investing by Andy Loving, a leading social investment advisor. This will be followed with presentations by representatives of two Pittsburgh area CDFs (community development financial institutions): The Bridgeway Fund, a non-profit community development loan fund and the Hill District Federal Credit Union, a community development credit union with low income designation which provides banking services to one of the poorest areas of Pittsburgh. Discussion and time for questions will follow the presentations.

Facilitator: Sue Lloyd, *Episcopal Network for Economic Justice* Executive Committee Member

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS (2:00- 3:30)

#5 Healing Dialogue to Communal Action – Interfaith Bridges in Pittsburgh

In a world gripped by violence and conflict, we are called to practice the embassy and hospitality of God. Interfaith dialogue and shared action reveal a tangible manifestation of God's Peaceable Kingdom. Many faith communities in Pittsburgh have strived to embody this generous love in their relationships with their neighbors. Different faith traditions have engaged in a spectrum of activities in everything from dialogue, to ministry to our needy neighbors, and to activism and advocacy. In this workshop, we will explore some of the interfaith activities in the Pittsburgh area.

Representatives from three different organizations will describe their interfaith efforts and explore how diverse faith communities can grow in mutual respect and love for one another and serve a broken world together.

Facilitators: **Deborah Fidel** is the Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Area Jewish Committee (PAJC), which seeks a pluralistic society where the rights of Jews and of all people will be respected and secure. **Susan Simons** is the Director of Youth Programming for the PAJC and spearheads the *Building Bridges* program to bring high school students of diverse faith communities into dialogue and action. **Phil Hallen** is the Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the East End Cooperative Ministry, an interfaith ministry dedicated to serving those in need in Pittsburgh's East End. **Diana Marin** is organizer for *Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network*, a network of congregations and organizations in Southwestern Pennsylvania committed to advocating around issues of justice and fairness. **The Rev. Nate Rugh**, Associate Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church also served as Chair of the Pittsburgh EUC Working Group.

#6 Creating Cultures of Peace - "MAP"ping a Movement

MAP: The Movement Action Plan - How do we build a successful movement? A participatory workshop on the stages, roles, and principles of nonviolent social change based on the work of activist Bill Moyer. **Creating a Culture of Peace:** CCP is community-based peacemaking. Designed and developed by Janet Chisholm, the program allows participants to explore violence, active nonviolence, social change, community-building, and peace project planning. The program is part of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Peace Toolkit. Participants come to recognize their own power for making personal and social changes without violence and improve their skills for respectful engagement with opponents, instead of confrontation that polarizes.

Facilitators: **Wanda Guthrie**, EPF Member/Local Activist, and **Scilla Wahrhaftig**, AFSC Pennsylvania Program Director, have been working with others in the Western Pennsylvania area developing plans for particular resistance to injustice and long-term constructive programs for social change.

7 Holy Water, Sacred Breath: Eco-Justice & Creation Care: "Do unto those downstream what you wish those upstream had done to you."

Dr. Conrad Dan Volz and Mark Dixon will present and host a conversation on issues around water (the new oil) and Marcellus Shale drilling, an urgent regional issue with links to national & global energy, economic, and environmental issues. The concerns surrounding gas and oil extraction and related water contamination are directly related to both intra and inter-state political problems and open conflict around the world, making this a serious issue for faith groups interested in environmental justice and peace. Climate change, Transition Town, and other related topics will be included as we connect the dots in our search for sustainability.

Facilitators: Mark Dixon, Co-Founder of YERT, *Your Environmental Road Trip*. Mark left a career in Silicon Valley to visit all 50 states and film the weird, wild, and wonderful world of environmental sustainability throughout the country. Now working on a feature film based on that project, Mark is a Pittsburgh resident with an eye on the nation's environmental movement.

(www.yert.com)

Dr. Conrad Dan Volz is Director of the Center for Healthy Environments & Communities at the Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH), Univ. of Pittsburgh where Dr. Volz is also an Asst. Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health at GSPH. With over thirty years experience in occupational-environmental health and having worked in twenty-four countries, Dr. Volz' research has primarily been focused on how industrial and municipal toxins and carcinogens move through the air, water, soil, and groundwater to reach people and how to block this movement. Serving on several Advisory Boards, the author of numerous publications, and a frequent presenter, Dr. Volz is a passionate advocate for the environment.

#8 Justice for Workers: Churches & Ethical Practices Regarding Labor

Over the past 20+ years several General Convention resolutions have called for fair labor practices and supporting laborers' rights to organize. We are also called to maintain ethical practices in our own Church relationships with those workers who provide services for church events and church physical plants' maintenance. This workshop will examine the historical and contemporary role of the Labor Movement, worker rights, the issues of unions and non-unions and Episcopal Church policies regarding labor rights and contracting for services. Attendees will be able to take away practical tools to use when considering engaging labor in their home churches and dioceses.

Facilitators: The Rev. Tim Yeager, Financial Secretary/Treasurer, UAW Local 2320, AFL-CIO and **Dianne Aid**, TSSF, President of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice.

SITE VISIT Choices

BUS #1 - BIDWELL TRAINING CENTER/MANCHESTER CRAFTSMEN GUILD – Northside Pittsburgh

Manchester Bidwell Corporation offers diverse programming combined to create empowering, educational environments for adults-in-transition, as well as urban and at-risk youth, enriching Southwestern Pennsylvania and, eventually, the world. This site visit will include Bidwell Training Center (including state-of-the-art greenhouse), which has a proven record of success with over forty years of experience. Bidwell Training Center attracts national recognition for its innovative and career-oriented training, including the recent appointment by President Obama of Manchester Bidwell Corporation CEO **Bill Strickland** to the Newly Formed White House Council for Community Solutions where Strickland will join corporate, non-profit and foundation leaders from across the U.S. in offering solutions to President Obama for more efficiently and effectively addressing community needs. BTC/MBC's motto, "We change lives" is more than just a saying, it's a vocation for their students and staff. Since 1987, another component --MCG Jazz & MCG Youth and Arts—has had a mission to preserve, present and promote jazz through performances that strengthen the long time Pittsburgh jazz community and contribute to the overall cultural and artistic diversity of the region. For more info, check out their websites, the source of this info:

<http://www.manchesterbidwell.org/index.php>

This site visit will also have opportunity for a “drive-by” of **The Pittsburgh Project**, a nonprofit community development organization with a 25-year track record of developing leaders and serving the city’s most vulnerable residents. Year-round staff of 51 operates a progressive series of after-school and summer programs for 450 urban young people, deploys over 2800 people annually to perform free home repairs for Pittsburgh’s elderly homeowners, and spearheads economic development and job training efforts in Pittsburgh neighborhoods. <http://www.pittsburghproject.org/>

BUS #2 - NEIGHBORHOOD ACADEMY & EAST END COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES East End Pittsburgh

The Neighborhood Academy’s mission is to breakdown the cycle of generational poverty by preparing low-income youth for higher education. The Academy is one of Pittsburgh’s gem of a solution to a national crisis as this remarkable school provides a holistic college-prep education for students in grades 8-12 who come from low-income families. The Academy is dedicated to developing the minds, bodies, and spirits of students so that they might become fully productive members of our society. By so doing, students break the daunting cycles of poverty that can hold too many captive, depriving society of the full value of each beloved life.

The Academy began in 1993 as an innovative summer school program for at-risk youth. Drawing upon her work with the Larimer Avenue Youth Club, a youth ministry that met urban youth in their own neighborhoods, founder Josephine Moore, together with Reverend Thomas Johnson, designed The Neighborhood Academy Summer School - an intensive five-week skill-building program for seventh through eleventh graders. In response to the success of the summer school, The Neighborhood Academy opened its doors as a full year day school to its first class of eighth and ninth graders on September 12, 2001. **Now in their tenth year, N.A. has achieved a 100% college acceptance rate and have graduated six classes of seniors**, continuing to grow towards a target student enrollment of 100 students in grades 8-12.

The Neighborhood Academy is fully accredited by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS); is a member of the Nativity Miguel Network of Schools and the Schools That Can network.

The East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) is an interfaith ministry dedicated to helping at-risk children and youth, the hungry, the homeless, and others in need throughout Pittsburgh’s East End. The organization was founded in 1970, when 18 local congregations launched a unified effort to address the increasingly widespread and serious problems plaguing the East End. Today, it leads a community-wide effort, supported by more than 40 member congregations, as well as a corps of local businesses and foundations, generous donors, and dedicated volunteers.

For many of the individuals it serves, EECM provides the necessities of life: a hot meal, a safe place to sleep, food for the family. For others, it is a place to regain strength after a hospital stay, a support system to work toward recovery, or one-on-one help to change life for the better. For young people, EECM is educational programs, drug and alcohol prevention programs, violence prevention programs, Summer Day Camp, and a concerted effort to show our children a better future.