

MCC Board Charts Course for the Future

Last fall, the Maine Council of Churches Board of Directors faced the challenging reality of a dwindling endowment fund if the organization stayed on its current path. The group debated, and ultimately reaffirmed, that the MCC continues to be a relevant, respected and necessary voice for people of faith throughout the state, and have been working together to develop a fiscally responsible plan to ensure that MCC continues its 150-year tradition of inspiring a culture of justice, compassion and peace.

Realignment of Staff and Priorities

The Board acknowledged that a reduction in staff and related expenses was an essential step toward financial sustainability. This would necessitate increased involvement by the Board and volunteers. The decision was made to reduce staffing to part-time employment, with staff being supervised and supported by the Executive Committee and other Board members, who would elevate the public profile of MCC through a coordinated communications and

social media effort. The MCC board recently voted to hire a part-time Executive Director. Turn to page 3 for our welcome of Rev. Dr. Bill Barter.

Statement of Purpose

At its June 2013 retreat, the Board developed a statement of purpose to guide the organization's efforts:

To inspire congregations and persons of faith to create a culture of compassion, justice and peace through worship, prayer, advocacy, teaching and modeling respect for the worth of all creation.

The types of activities that support of this purpose and will be the focus of the MCC's efforts include:

- Annual civil discourse event(s)
- Ecumenical prayer and worship services around key issues, world or local events, and elections
- Speak to and organize people of faith on public policy issues related to the MCC mission at the local, state and federal levels

- Create systems to educate and engage people in the pew in advocacy.

Vision for the Future

The Board also outlined several key goals for what MCC will look like five years from now. These included:

- Depth of participation among current member denominations
- Exploration of adding new denominations and faiths to MCC

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Thank You, Reverend Jill Job Saxby

The Maine Council of Churches is grateful for Jill's steady, responsive leadership during her seven years as Executive Director.

Read Silver Moore-Leamon's tribute to Jill on page 2.

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- Have a seat at the table for policy development, educating decision makers and taking a stand when appropriate
- Greater engagement of individuals within MCC member congregations; enable individuals not affiliated with a congregation to join MCC

While we have much work to do, the Board was encouraged by the positive energy generated at the retreat, as well as by the efforts of directors and volunteers over the past several months to develop a comprehensive fundraising plan, streamline the administrative workings of MCC and implement a plan to further engage people of faith in the mission of the Maine Council of Churches in the weeks and years to come.

We will keep you informed of our progress, and welcome your feedback! If you are interested in learning how you can get involved in the Maine Council of Churches, or if you'd like a board member to come speak to your congregation, please contact us at (207) 772-1918 or info@mainecouncilofchurches.org.

Thank You, Reverend Jill Job Saxby

by Silver Moore-Leamon, Former MCC Board Member

What a wonderful writing assignment: summing up Rev. Jill Job Saxby's 2005-2012 stint as Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches! Following the 30-year tenure of Tom Ewell, Jill had the proverbial big shoes to fill.

Jill served admirably as advocate for the vulnerable and the poor, doing so specifically and unapologetically in the language of faith. She has said, "To speak about God and Jesus and the Biblical prophetic imperative in the halls of power was a very satisfying part of the job to me...the part that felt like ministry." Jill has a fine mind, a deep faith, and a warm, compassionate nature; these qualities combined to make her a superb preacher.

Finishing the Giving Winds Project, developed with Maine's Indian tribes to provide funds for housing and development projects other than from gambling ventures, was especially meaningful to Jill. Working with coalitions of like-minded groups, Jill was often the spokesperson on civil rights groups in our prisons, regulation of toxic substances in rivers, the air, and in products to which babies were exposed, becoming a voice on the national stage against torture. She advanced the standing of the Council in the halls of public discourse.

In a recent communication Jill said, "I suspect that when I look back at the end of my life, the job/ministry I will remember most fondly will be my seven years at MCC." Under her leadership, the Council did lots of good work with lots of great partners; Jill ensured that the MCC remained alive to be able to recreate itself in its next format, as it has many times over 100 years.

All of us who have worked with Jill are grateful for her steadiness, her responsible approach to carrying out assigned duties, her fine organizational skills and, while everything seemed to be going up in smoke, her marvelous, saving sense of humor!

Public Policy Updates

The Council has been very busy this Legislative season. The Public Policy Committee and volunteers have testified at the State House on a wide range of issues:

- Supplemental and new state budgets
- Against repeal of voting rights for felons
- In support of health care access
- Against gun violence and in support of expansion of background checks
- Elimination of toxins in children's products
- Restoration of alewives run on Native lands
- Support of efforts to reduce student hunger

The MCC Public Policy Committee is grateful for the efforts of our volunteers who make this important work possible. We value our alliances with community partners who welcome the voices of people of faith in discussions of state federal policies. We work on issues related to our mission with wonderful partners such as the Environmental

The Maine Council of Churches Public Policy Committee meets monthly from September - June on the Monday preceding our board meeting. For more information on how you can get involved, please contact us at (207) 772-1918 or info@mainecouncilofchurches.org.

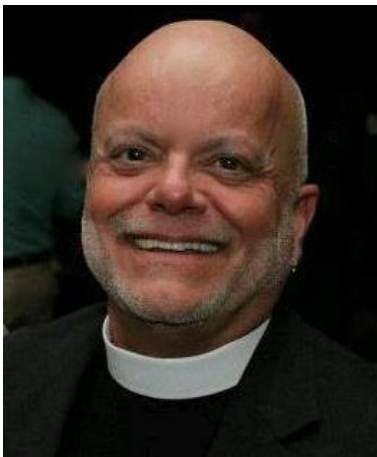
Priorities Coalition, Maine Prisoners Advocacy Coalition, Cover Maine Now (health care), Maine Hunger Initiative, Coalition for a Safer Maine (gun violence), Maine Can Do Better (economic justice), and Maine Immigration Reform Coalition.

Our voices and our prayers matter.

We seek to represent the positions of our denominations in thoughtful and prayerful dialogue, not only with our elected leaders but with the members of our congregations and our clergy. We welcome participation from any social justice or witness group and celebrate the recent formation of a new partner in these efforts, the Maine U/U Social Action Network (MUUSAN).



Pastor Bill Barter recently testified in support of LD 1353, An Act to Further Reduce Student Hunger.



MCC Hires New Executive Director

The Maine Council of Churches has hired the Rev. Dr. William M. Barter to be the next executive director. Dr. Barter has been ordained for 31 years, and is Senior Pastor of St. Ansgar Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Portland. He most recently served as Vice President of our board of directors.

Dr. Barter is a Maine native. A graduate of Cheverus High School, he holds a B.A.

from USM, an M.Div. from the Catholic University of America, and a Ph.D. from Walden University. In addition to being a pastor, he is licensed in Maine as a doctoral psychologist.

Dr. Barter serves as chaplain and elected representative to the New England Synod Council of the ELCA. He is married and lives in Brunswick.

Please join us in welcoming Bill to his new role, and feel free to drop him a line at wbarter@mainecouncilofchurches.org.

Rooted in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the mission of the Maine Council of Churches is to inspire congregations and persons of faith to unite in good works that build a culture of justice, compassion and peace.

Supporting the MCC

A Top 10 List for Congregations

10. Designate the MCC to receive the proceeds from a public supper or other fundraiser one month.

9. Hold a special offering one Sunday specifically to benefit the MCC.

8. Split the plate: One Sunday, direct half of all loose offering to the MCC.

7. Invite children to create artwork around a particular theme or Bible story then sell the art, with proceeds going to the MCC.

6. Intentionally include the MCC as a line item in your Outreach/Mission budget for the next fiscal year.

5. Create a challenge: invite 20 people in your church to give \$10 each.

4. Involve your Sunday school or youth group in a loose change collection. A friendly competition can see what group/pew/class collects the most.

3. Host a coffee hour information session to spotlight the work of the MCC. We will provide the materials.

2. If you have an Alternative Giving emphasis during the holiday season, include the MCC as a project.

1. Got an idea worth sharing? We'd love to hear about it! Try it out and share it with us at info@mainecouncilofchurches.org.

Together we can make a difference!

Initiatives in Giving

by Richard Berman, Development Chair

This year has been a challenging and interesting one for the Maine Council of Churches' development efforts. Our Board of Directors not only achieved 100 percent giving, but did it earlier than in any previous year. For me, the most interesting work was to interview donors and hear the stories of why people give to the MCC. It has been personally inspiring to me, and I'm pleased to share some of these testimonials with you in this issue of our newsletter.

Of course, dear reader, we need your help in supporting the very important Advocacy, Ecumenical and Educational work the MCC is accomplishing throughout the state. Please consider sending your support using the form on the back of this newsletter, or visit the "Donate" page on our website to make a secure online donation through PayPal. We would greatly appreciate it, and it will enable us to continue MCC's important mission work.

Finally, I would like to thank the Development Committee for their tireless efforts to keep the MCC in funds for its mission: Ed Rea, Rev. Allen Ewing-Merrill, and Donna Yellen.

Why I Give to the MCC



"When I served in the state Legislature on the Criminal Justice Committee, I saw that the Maine Council of Churches was a consistent and critical voice in Augusta for improving the treatment of the disenfranchised. Their advocacy was around restoring justice, alternatives to incarceration of juveniles, and for reduced use of solitary confinement. We need this type of compassionate, empathetic and spiritual testimony in Augusta."

-Cush Anthony, Longtime MCC Donor

"I share my gift with the Maine Council of Churches because I believe it is a great advantage to show how Christians live. The essence of Christianity is to love one another, and the MCC models that truth in what they do and in how they do it. Christian churches, despite our theological differences, want to imitate Christ in his teachings and action of helping and influencing others to good works. The Maine Council of Churches, through its advocacy actions and educational programs, is helping others actualize Christ by sharing their many gifts."

**-William Richards, MCC Donor
Club Manager, Portland Yacht Club**



Thank you, Cush and Bill! We are blessed by your support.

Maine Council of Churches Donors 2012-2013*

Acadia Friends Meeting
Gretchen Adams
Roger Addor
All Souls Universalist Church
Allen Ave. Unitarian Universalist
Church
Cushman Anthony
Margaret Baillie
Ron Bancroft
Rev. Dr. William Barter
Constance Baskett
Richard Berman
Henry Bird
Osmond Bonsey
Theresa Bonsey
Deborah Breault
Richard Bullock
Karna Burke
Timothy Carberry
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Cynthia Christie
Janie Clark
Mary Clark
Faith Comstock
Myrna Cook
Sage Currie
Shirley Curry
Deb Curtis
Philip & Catharine Curtis
Margaret De Rivera
Lois Dennett
Christine DeTroy
Joan Dinsmore
George Dole
Durham Monthly Meeting of
Friends
Edna Ellis
Richard Ellis
Elm St. Congregational Church
Episcopal Diocese of Maine
Thomas Ewell
Revs. Allen & Sara Ewing-Merrill
Farmington Friends Meeting
First Congregational Church, S.
Portland
First Parish, Gorham
Rev. Thomas Frey
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Sarah Smith
Rev. Christina Sillari
South Congregational UCC,
Kennebunkport
Martha Southard
Southern Maine Friends Meeting
St. Alban's Episcopal
Lorna Stuart
Christopher St. John
State Street Church UCC
SUMH UCC
Swedenborgian Church
The Synod of the NE Presbyterian
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Raymond Veroneau
Edward Walworth
James Ward
Holly Weidener
Mariellen Whelan
Rev. K. Gordon White
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John & Kathleen Wirtz
Wiscasset UCC
Adin Wolfram
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Mark Worth
Donna Yellen
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for your generous support!***

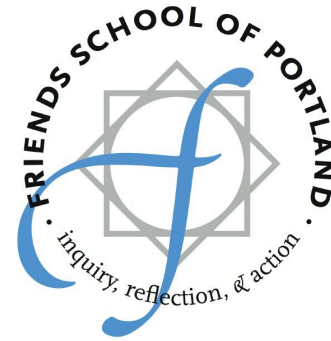
***Your gifts help us further our
impact, outreach and
advocacy throughout Maine.***

*Every effort has been made to ensure the
completeness and accuracy of this list.
Please send corrections to
wbarter@mainecouncilofchurches.org.
Thank you!*

*Gifts received through 9/25/2013

Ewell Fund Recipients Announced

The Tom Ewell Fund was created to honor the work of a previous Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches upon his retirement. The Board of the MCC recently voted to award funds to two organizations carrying out important work in Maine: the **Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)** and the **Friends School of Portland's Parenting for Peace Program**.



“Both recipients represent an important aspect of Tom’s priorities of peacemaking and justice,” said Leslie Manning, MCC president. “They promote the values that are consistent with our vision at the Council, and we are happy to see this money put to such good use. We are grateful to practice this opportunity for stewardship and look forward to continued support for the good work of the Maine Council of Churches in seeking economic, social and environmental justice for all.”



MCC Board Member Receives Watering Can Award

Board member Donna Yellen was among those honored by Maine Initiatives at its 2013 Watering Can Awards event, held at the Ocean Gateway Terminal in June. The Watering Can awards honor Maine people for watering the roots of change, cultivating new ideas, providing the fertilizer to grow justice, changing public and private policies and practices, and inspiring others to act.

Donna and the Preble Street community provide food and shelter, teach poor people to advocate and act on their own behalf, and keep homelessness and poverty issues in the front and center of the public arena. Congratulations, Donna, on this well-deserved recognition!

Maine Council of Churches Joins National Efforts to End Torture

The Senate Intelligence Committee spent four years investigating the CIA's torture program. The committee's findings (in a 6,000-page factual report) have been adopted by the Committee, but not released. They are sitting in a Congressional vault and with the CIA.

The Maine Council of Churches and religious leaders around the country think it is time for the Senate to make the report public. Working with the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT), MCC has invited clergy and other religious leaders from around Maine to sign an ad that will appear in the *Bangor Daily News* urging Senators Susan Collins and Angus King, both of whom serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee, to vote for release of the report. The ad will be timed to coincide with the anticipated Senate vote, which will likely happen in late September or early October. The Council received a grant from NRCAT to support this statewide effort.

To read the full text of the ad or to learn what you can do to get involved, visit www.maineCouncilofchurches.org/tortureandprisons or email endtorture@mainecouncilofchurches.org and we will send you more information.

Special Events

MCC Hosts First Civil Discourse Event

How do people of faith talk together when they don't agree?

That was the premise of the MCC's first Civil Discourse event, which took place at the University of Southern Maine on September 20, 2012 in partnership with the USM Interfaith Chaplaincy. Billed as "An Ecumenical Conversation with Four Maine Spiritual Leaders," the program focused on same-sex marriage, a key issue faced by Maine voters in last fall's general election.

Speakers included the Rt. Rev. Steve Lane, Bishop of the Episcopal

Diocese of Maine; Fr. Joe Daniels of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Maine; Rev. Susan Craig of the United Church of Christ; and Rev. Michael Davis of the United Methodist Church Tri-State District.

"A conversation is different than a rally. Here we are trying to hear one another and understand one another and maybe find some common ground," said Bishop Lane to the more than 150 attendees at the event. "The hope is if we listen carefully and speak clearly we will understand the places where we do connect."

The MCC is making this effort a regular focus, with future sessions addressing current, relevant issues.

A Covenant for Civil Discourse

Adopted by the MCC board in 2009, the Covenant for Civil Discourse was signed by more than 80 candidates and campaign officials by September 2012. Those signing the covenant pledge:

- 1. To act respectfully toward others, including those who oppose me/us in public debate, and to attempt to understand others' point(s) of view. I/we would extend this attitude of respect to all those engaged in civil discourse in America.
- 2. To refrain from personal attacks, while maintaining the right to vigorously disagree.
- 3. To refrain from making statements which characterize my/our opponents as evil.
- 4. To refuse to make untrue statements in defense of my/our position.
- 5. To value honesty, truth, and civility while striving to find workable solutions.
- 6. To expect any person, party, campaign or organization working on my behalf, or to whom I contribute money, to meet these same standards for civil discourse.

To download a copy of the Covenant, or to view a list of candidates who have signed the Covenant, please visit the

Sample promotional poster from the 2012 Civil Discourse event.

Maine Council of Churches

In Partnership with the USM Interfaith Chaplaincy

Event is Free of Charge

Parking in Bedford St. Garage Complimentary

How do people of faith talk together when we don't agree?

Join...

- ✕ Bishop Steve Lane (Episcopal)
- ✕ Fr. Joe Daniels (Roman Catholic)
- ✕ Rev. Susan Craig (UCC)
- ✕ Rev. Michael Davis (United Methodist)

Civil Discourse on Same Sex Marriage

An Ecumenical Conversation with Four Maine Spiritual Leaders

Thursday, September 20th

Luther Bonney Hall
at the University of Southern Maine
Bedford Street, Portland
www.maineCouncilofChurches.org



Bishop Lane



Father Daniels



Reverend Craig



Reverend Davis

Maine Council of Churches

7

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