

Rev. Sue Gabrielson is new Executive Director

The Board of Trustees has selected the Rev. Sue Gabrielson as its new Executive Director, replacing the Rev. Dr. Bill Barter, who has stepped down in order to return to full time at St. Ansgar. Dr. Barter will continue as the Lutheran representative on the Board of Directors and will remain active on the Public Policy Committee. See Bill's letter on page 2.

Rev. Gabrielson has been the Minister for the Sanford Unitarian Universalist Church since 2003 where she has been instrumental in expanding the church's community outreach. Rev. Sue, as she is affectionately called, is particularly proud of their Corner Cupboard non-food pantry, leading the congregation through an 18-month process of becoming a "Green Sanctuary" and facilitating a tri-church collaboration project with three southern Maine UU congregations.



Before attending seminary Rev. Gabrielson worked as a Police Officer for five years in New Hampshire. She has also worked in Higher Education as both an administrator and a faculty member, and has traveled extensively around the world by ship to more than 25, primarily third world, countries.

Rev. Gabrielson earned her undergraduate degree in Religion and Sociology from the University of Vermont, a Masters degree in Adult Development from Vermont College, and a Masters in Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Multi-disciplinary Human Services and Public Policy. She enjoys the outdoors, adventuring and is a certified personal fitness trainer. When not at work she can be found volunteering in her daughters' (Grace, age 15 and Ellie age 10) schools, coaching, and spending time with husband, Rudy and extended family. Before attending seminary she spent five months thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Rev. Gabrielson has had extensive experience with grassroots social and environmental justice efforts, is committed to the mission of the MCC, and excited about coming on board. Welcome Rev. Sue!

The Council is pleased to welcome the following new directors:

Diane Dicranian
Religious Society of Friends
(replacing Leslie Manning)

Rev. Alison Longstaff
Swedenborgian
(replacing Rev. Alison Lane-Olsen)

Rev. Dr. William Barter
Lutheran (ECLA)
(replacing Carol Duehring)

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** Appointed Denominational
Representative*

Executive Director
Rev. Sue Gabrielson

Maine Council of Churches
www.maineCouncilofchurches.org
156 High Street, Portland, ME 04101

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(207) 772-1918

From the Outgoing Executive Director

Just about one year ago, at a time of transition for the Maine Council of Churches, I agreed to serve as the Executive Director. First of all, I cannot believe how that year has flown by! In a year's time, we have done a lot of work together. The working board of the MCC has been outstanding in making sure that the voice of the church in Maine is strong in many areas that concern people of faith. We have advocated for the hungry, the newcomer, the worker, and the uninsured. We have stood strong against torture, and we have continued to be a voice of civil discourse in the town square.

These days, ordained ministry is constantly evolving, and a wonderful opportunity for outreach has become available through collaboration between my own Lutheran Synod, my Portland congregation, and the Episcopal Diocese of Maine. The ELCA will be placing a newly ordained mission developer in Portland, and she will be based at St. Ansgar. I am the local senior pastor charged with seeing that it all works. In addition, I continue to serve as chaplain for the New England Synod Council of the ELCA. Because of these new responsibilities, I do not feel that I can give enough time and attention to the Maine Council of Churches as Executive Director, and I have stepped aside so that a new director can come on board.

In many ways, I'm not going anywhere! Starting now, I will be serving the MCC where I started two years ago, as the denominational representative for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As such, I will sit on the board and will still be engaged in the work of the council. I have pledged to help the new Director in any way I can. The work of the MCC is of great importance to me and to people of faith throughout Maine. I see this next transition as a furthering of the work of the Council as we continue to allow God to "make all things new." I thank you and the board for the opportunity to be Executive Director, and I look forward to a long and fruitful partnership.

Blessings,



Pastor Bill Barter

Maine Council of Churches is now on Twitter!
Follow us for updates: @MECouncilChurch

This newsletter is published twice annually by the Maine Council of Churches. Editor: Jennifer Dimond. If you would prefer to receive this publication electronically, please send your email address to:
subscribe@mainecouncilofchurches.org.

Public Policy Updates: A Letter from Leslie Manning

As we prepare for this month's Board meeting, I am submitting my final report as chair of Public Policy. It has been a tumultuous five years that I have been chair of Public Policy, and I am looking forward to new leadership and new directions as we move forward. My thanks to Suzanne Lafreniere for taking this on, along with her many other responsibilities.

Over the last four years we have had to play aggressive defense and now it is time to start planning and building on what we can achieve as we unite around our priorities for the upcoming legislative biennium. Our chief asset is our ability to unite and communicate, to bring the voices of faith into the room and under the dome, and to give voice to so many who are unable to speak out for themselves. Prisoners and those awaiting trial, asylum seekers, and those fleeing intolerance and persecution, the elderly and the sick who lack the resources to show up and speak up and all those who fear retaliation when they do.

The eradication of poverty and economic security, including a livable wage and adequate assistance to those unable to work remain our chief focus. Healthcare, hunger and homelessness, aging in place and addressing the root causes of poverty are included in this focus.

Reducing violence and bias while promoting civility and respect has emerged as the second leading issue that we plan to address. Responding to inflammatory remarks is not enough; once again we have to address root causes and model what we want to see in our communities, meeting rooms, courts and places of worship. We will continue to uphold the worth and dignity of every human being, even those with whom we disagree, and look for opportunities to partner with others, such as the Christian Civic League and interfaith groups, on issues like human trafficking, whenever we find common ground.

Finally, the environment and right relationship with the earth is our third issue. Climate change, sustainable practices, local foods and protecting our natural resources are common themes in all of our denominations' concerns and we will be building on our previous ten years of justice work in this area.

On Sunday, August 31, Anne D. (Andy) Burt, our environmental justice consultant, was invited to help organize a Fish Day with Phippsburg area churches at the Popham Chapel. Using the MCC Fishes and Loaves program as a model, Andy organized a panel discussion featuring local fishermen, an aquaculturalist and Rep. Mick Devlin, a state representative and marine scientist. The evening was well attended and culminated in a free sea foods dinner for almost 100 people. The local community has subsequently organized a CSF—community supported fishery— and has received its first orders. For more information about the Bath/Phippsburg area CSF, please call 207-372-1059. or email: support@portclydecatch.com.

As always, Maine remains a national priority in setting the federal agenda. Our Senators will continue to be highly prized coalition builders and we can expect an increase in the numbers and types of requests we will get to engage with them.

As we engage in this work, with every level of government, we ask the question "What difference does the voice of faith make on this issue?" We will not be able to be all things to all people, but we can stand together, as we have for so many years, finding common ground and working together for the common good.



**MCC and St. Albans Episcopal Church
Partner to Host Screening of Important
Documentary on Hunger**



The Maine Council of Churches and St. Albans Episcopal Church in Cape Elizabeth hosted the New England premiere of **Every Three Seconds**, a powerful new documentary film that chronicles the stories of five ordinary people whose lives became extraordinary when they made the decision to be a part of fighting hunger and poverty. The film screening, followed by a discussion with director Daniel Karlsake, took place Saturday, October 11th at the Portland Museum of Art Auditorium.

Every Three Seconds serves to remind us that those who make significant social change are not born 10 feet tall, but are regular folks who are drawn step by inspired step into making a difference in their communities and the world. The audience at the premiere and audiences in churches and schools across Maine who have received free DVDs of the film have been delighted by the artful, informative and inspiring stories of a 10 year old boy, a college undergraduate, two seniors and a thirty-something, each took on a challenge to fight hunger and poverty and met it.

The film can be ordered on Netflix, Amazon and in DVD. For more information see:

<http://www.everythreeseconds.net/>

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR...
...FEED THE HUNGRY

"Love your neighbor: Feed the hungry" is a new initiative of the Maine Council of Churches. Based on the Study Circles model, the program can be used by congregations, faith-based organizations, schools, and any group wanting to learn more about hunger and ways to address it.

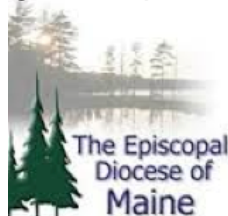


The program guide walks groups through four sessions that address food insecurity among working families, children, seniors, rural households, urban settings, and the homeless. There is also a 30-minute video that is an excellent promotional tool for the entire program.

The program is entirely available via digital sharing. There are a limited number of printed materials and DVDs available for loan as well.

Join the anti-hunger work now! Go to www.maineCouncilofchurches.org, and click on the "Economic Justice" tab in the main menu. From there, click on "Poverty".

This program made possible through the generosity of:



Your Contributions Make A Difference

by Ed Rea, MCC Treasurer

In 2013 the Board of Directors took steps to bring financial stability to the Council and ensure its long-term sustainability; in 2014 these efforts are paying off:

- Program activity is up,
- Expenses are down by more than half since 2012,
- New sources of funding for specific programs have been found, and
- The budget is balanced with a sustainable draw on our investments.

Where do you, the individual and congregation donors, come in? We will shortly send out our fall appeal. Over a third of our budget comes from contributions from individuals and congregations, and half of those contributions are received at the end of the year. Without your faithful support the Council can not survive. Please help us to continue to build a culture of justice, compassion and peace in Maine.

Maine Council of Churches Donors 2014 to Date*

Acadia Friends Meeting
Allen Avenue UU Church
American Baptist Churches of
Maine
Cushman Anthony
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William Barter
Constance Baskett
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***Thank you to all our donors
for your generous support!***

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

*Gifts received 1/1/14 - 11/7/14

Every effort has been made to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this list. Please send corrections to sgabrielson@mainecouncilofchurches.org.

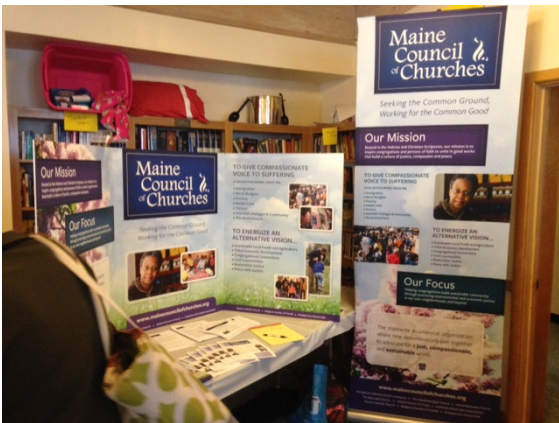
MCC On the Road

The Maine Council of Churches exhibited its display on October 17-18th at the United Church of Christ's annual convention in Augusta. There was a lot of interest in the projects that were displayed there, especially the "Love Your Neighbor—Feed the Hungry" program the Council is offering to all the member churches, as well as MCC's Civil Discourse initiative.

On Friday, Pastor Bill Barter gave a well received and inspiring talk to the convention and on Saturday our president, Richard Berman, staffed the display. We are making an effort to let parishioners and Churches know of the Council's efforts and programs to support our member Churches in doing the good works they are involved in.

On October 24-25th Ed Rea brought our display and materials to Presque Isle for the Episcopal Convention.

The Council is interested in spreading the word of our programs and would like to hear of other opportunities, so if you know of any please contact us at:
sgabrielson@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.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Candidates Promise to Campaign Civilly Is yours on the list?

Over 100 candidates for Federal and State public office have signed the Maine Council of Churches' **Covenant for Civil Discourse**:

- To act respectfully toward others and to attempt to understand others' points of view.
- To refrain from personal attacks, while maintaining the right to vigorously disagree.
- To refrain from making statements that characterize my opponents as evil.
- To refuse to make untrue statements in defense of my position.
- To value honesty, truth, and civility while striving to find workable solutions.
- To expect others working on my behalf to meet these same standards for civil discourse, and to disavow statements that violate these standards.

Who has signed?

Gubernatorial candidates **Eliot Cutler** and **Michael Michaud**, U.S. Senate candidate **Shenna Bellows**, U.S. House candidates **Chellie Pingree** and **Blaine Richardson**, 25 State Senate candidates, and 75 State House candidates. (As of October 10, 2014)

For a complete list of candidates who have signed visit
www.mainecouncilofchurches.org

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Our Member Denominations: Episcopal Church; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; New Jerusalem Church; Presbyterian Church (USA); Religious Society of Friends; Roman Catholic Church; Unitarian Universalist Church; United Church of Christ; United Methodist Church.

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Promoting Civil Discourse in Politics

As the political season unfolded in Maine this fall with an onslaught of commercials, the Maine Council of Churches sponsored a series of events to promote civility in public life. The Council encourages robust debate on public affairs but, as an organization representing nine Christian denominations in Maine, it advocates for discussion rooted in an environment of mutual respect and honesty.

Building on an initial effort in the 2012 campaign, MCC asked each of the 399 candidates for federal and state office to affirm their commitment to civility in Maine public life by signing a Covenant for Civil Discourse. 27% signed including Elliot Cutler and Mike Michaud, in the gubernatorial race; Shenna Bellows in the U.S. Senate race; and Chellie Pingree and Blaine Richardson in Congressional races. The signers were publicized in ads run on October 17th in 5 papers: *Bangor Daily News*, *Coastal Journal*, *Forecaster*, *Kennebec Journal/Morning Sentinel*, and *Sun Journal* (see sample ad on page 6).

On its September 16 “Maine Calling” show, MPBN addressed civil discourse with a MCC sponsored panel of Executive Director Bill Barter, Colby College professor Dan Shea, and Bowdoin College professor Michael Franz.

MCC worked with the Goldfarb Center at Colby College to produce a September 18th panel discussion in Waterville titled “Civil: The Way Politics Should Be?” Panelists were Michael Franz, Rachel Talbot-Ross of the Portland NAACP, Heidi Shott from the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, former State Senator Ethan Strimling, and Carroll Conley of the Christian Civic League of Maine; Dan Shea was the moderator. The discussion was broadcast on MPBN’s “Speaking in Maine” program on October 16th and is available on both MCC and MPBN’s websites.

Leading up to Election Day, MCC organized ecumenical services around the state on Sunday, October 26, to pray for civil discourse. Hosting services were High Street United Church of Christ, Auburn; Christ Episcopal Church, Gardiner; and The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Portland.

More information on the civil discourse effort is on our website.



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.

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To download a copy of the Covenant, or to view a list of candidates who have signed the Covenant, please visit the MCC website and select the “Witness” tab.

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