

O C T O B E R 2 0 1 4

Mission and Innovation Newsletter

The Synod of the Northeast

In This Issue:

- Unity Cross Fit
- Fusion on Fire-Geneva
- Cross-Cultural Catalyst
- GACM
- Breaking Bread
- Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministry
- Unity Campus Ministry to University of NH
- Protestant Campus Ministry University at Albany
- Protestant Campus Ministry at Lowell
- Ithaca College
- United Campus Ministry at Plymouth State University
- Wilson Center/Main Christian Association at University of Main
- Russell Sage College



As we move into our New Way Forward as the Synod of the Northeast we celebrate the many ways we are able to resource and support one another in mission and innovation. In this first edition of our Mission and Innovation Newsletter we are delighted to share with you some of the ways we are encouraging new expressions of mission and cultivating new areas of innovation in partnership with our presbyteries and congregations. We share these in order to stir your passion for mission in your place, and to inspire new work as you reflect on these endeavors. As you engage in this reflection you are invited to contact our staff to find ways your Synod Community might come along side you in your dreams for new ministry.



Unity Cross Fit

"With the gracious support of the Synod's Faithful Servant Grant, a New Worshiping Community in Albany Presbytery will begin meeting this fall to pursue a vibrant, embodied theology. Through a blending of fitness and Christian worship we will reach out to people of all ages and abilities through infinitely scalable exercise and community building to both provide a place of worship and support, and to engage in local and broad mission. Our vision is to offer the greater Glens Falls Metropolitan Area area a single place where the human needs for connection, spirituality, and physical health can be met in community with others, striving to live into the fullest expressions of humanity in the bodies God has given us."

Fusion on Fire- Geneva

Project #1360 1001 New Worshiping Communities

Fusion on Fire was birthed by Lake Street Presbyterian Church out of the need for an alternative service to address the diverse inner city residents in Elmira. The traditional reformed worship service on Sunday morning was not attracting the multiracial families living near the 150 year old church. Under the leadership of Juhura Shazer, an hour long Saturday night contemporary service is attracting 85-125 intergenerational worshipers praising God. The music is a combination of praise and gospel hymns led by a praise team. The worship leaders consisting of 10 members meets mid-week to prepare for the next service. A weekly Bible study of 20-30 is studying the Book of Ephesians (studied Acts in the spring and summer.) More combined activities and worship services are being planned between the two worshiping communities to enhance the Body of Christ in the heart of the city of Elmira.

Priscilla Andrews, Interim CRE

Juhura Shazer, Fusion on Fire Preacher

Elmira Lake Street Presbyterian Church

lakestprchurch@stny.rr.com



Cross-Cultural Catalyst Hudson River



Rev. Sarah Henkel is excited to move into new position as Cross-Cultural Catalyst for Hudson River Presbytery. The Cross-Cultural Catalyst will spark energy in congregations to connect to the diverse stories of the people in their neighborhoods so that “walls become tables” through vibrant and committed cross-cultural relationships. Models and practices for cross-cultural ministry guided by Rev. Henkel at White Plains Presbyterian Church will vitalize the cross-cultural witness of the Presbytery. Stories from several community-oriented initiatives - an English as Second Language program, the beginnings of a community garden, the growing friendships between the three congregations that share space in the White Plains Presbyterian church building - will be shared widely with the Presbytery. These insights and learnings will encourage leaders to visualize cross-cultural ministry within the context of their own congregations. The movement between grounded cross-cultural ministry in one local congregation and the broad sharing of models and practices throughout the Presbytery will create a generative cycle of innovative action and inspiring interpretation. Hudson River Presbytery is eager to continue growing as a strong, diverse community of congregations!

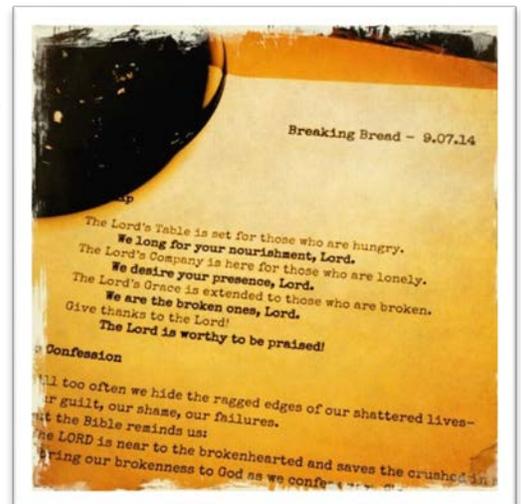
GACM

Genesee Area Campus Ministries, a covenant partnership of the regional judicatories of 5 denominations including the PC(USA), has for 50 years worked to be an agent of God's care in higher education, providing a bridge between spiritual and academic life, gathering and empowering students to be a prophetic, nurturing, and reconciling community of faith on campus and in the world. GACM currently provides a full-time chaplain at the University of Rochester River Campus, and, as of this past spring, part-time, volunteer assistant chaplains (both seminarians) at the Eastman School of Music. Sunday night worship, Wednesday evening "Dinner Dialogues," Saturday Bible study, monthly soup kitchen volunteering, special service projects, annual fasting-and-fundraising for world hunger, book discussions, movie discussions, game nights, and interfaith dialogues are all part of the ministry which we offer on campus, along with individual care to students from a wide variety of backgrounds.



Breaking Bread

"Princeton Presbyterians is comprised of devout believers, skeptics, and self-described "spiritual nomads" who find our community to be a safe place to explore tough questions about faith and life. In addition to Muslim-Christian dinners, book groups, leadership with the Women's Mentorship Program and other on campus partnerships, our ministry has two central weekly programs, Breaking Bread and Theology on Tap. Breaking Bread is a response to the PCUSA call for 1001 New Worshipping Communities. Breaking Bread is housed in the side chapel of Nassau Presbyterian Church, and hosted by Princeton Presbyterians. Theology on Tap is for all local young adults, seminarians, faculty, and Princeton University students. We gather Tuesday evenings and exchange ideas about faith and life. Through our programming, and through daily conversations with students about faith and life, this ministry seeks to love God and young adults with energy, hope, passion, and imagination."



Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministries

The students of Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministries (RPCM) are focused on spreading God's commandment to "love your neighbor" through participation in various social justice issues and fellowship. As of the fall 2014 semester, RPCM is active in bringing awareness to issues of:

- Domestic violence through work with the new housing project for women and children who are victims of domestic violence at First Reformed Church in New Brunswick
- Climate Justice by participating in the People's Climate March in New York City and working with other Rutgers' student groups who are passionate about environmental concerns
- Prison Reform by participating in pre-existing letter writing and tutoring programs, as well as working to put together a documentary screening and panel to get more students at Rutgers involved
- Homelessness via partnering with The Midnight Run in New York City to provide food and clothing to men and women experiencing homelessness



Victoria, an RPCM Peer Minister and President of the RPCM Student Association, and Alex, a Rutgers Student and member of the RPCM team marched in the Climate March in NYC on September 21

In addition to the call to be active in the fight for social justice, RPCM has weekly book study and fellowship that allow students to ask questions and engage in a Christian community. This semester, the book study will be focused on *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* written by Marcus Borg and N.T Wright. RPCM is also partnering with the Episcopal Campus Ministry to host a weekly ecumenical worship service on Wednesday evenings, which brings together students across the spectrum of Christianity.

As Christians we are called to serve and love, and that is the basis of the activities and events of Rutgers Protestant Campus Ministries. Our focus is to invite Christian students into a community that turns itself outward to do God's will. We are excited for the new opportunities this year will bring and we look forward to opportunities and conversations that will allow us to grow in our faith.

The Unity Campus Ministry to the University of New Hampshire



The United Campus Ministry to the University of New Hampshire
Located at the Waysmeet Center

The Waysmeet Center is the hub of UCM at UNH: *Where all paths converge, all journeys connect, all ways meet.*

It is a gathering place for the entire campus and seacoast community, but it also houses the Cornucopia Food Pantry, which feeds over 6,000 people annually, and an intentional residential community, where 8 students live in covenant with each other. UCM has been a force for social justice in Durham and at UNH for over 60 years.

“Waysmeet is a sanctuary for all. It is a vibrant, loving, ever-evolving place of community where food, laughter and friendship are always found.”Caroline Robb ‘14

The Protestant Campus Ministry at the University at Albany



The Protestant Campus Ministry at the University at Albany seeks “to bring students together on campus to make a difference in the world.” Towards that end we offer a wide range of opportunities for undergrads and grad students with some faculty and staff as well. At the heart of our ministry is our Sunday evening worship and Sunday Supper where a diverse group of students gather for some amazing music (led by our worship band), an engaging reflection and an opportunity for prayer and community-building. We have over 25 different local faith communities which work with us as “Congregational Partners.” On Tuesday evening they take turns hosting “Faith and Food” – yes! More food and a great interactive faith experience! We host a variety of smaller group experiences such a bible study for undergrads and “Theology on Tap” for grad students. However, what we are best known for our campus in our commitment to Community Service. Each month host 2-3 different events where we partner with local agencies to help the homeless in downtown Albany, feed those in a shelter, serve the children of Arbor Hill and much, much more! Our ministry utilizes the gifts of 8 Peer Ministers who meet weekly with our part-time Campus Minister, Rev. Sandy Damhof. We also work together with our partners at the Interfaith Center to host interfaith dialogues, program and educational events such as our recent Interfaith Cookout and Game Night. Together, we are making a difference! You can learn more at our website: ualbanycornerstone.org or follow us on Twitter (ua_cornerstone) or Instagram (ua cornerstone)

Protestant Campus Ministry at Lowell



The Protestant Campus Ministry at Lowell (PCML) is an inclusive and welcoming ministry of presence on the campus of the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Worship is offered on Sundays at 4:30 PM in the Serenity Center in the new student center. A signature ministry of PCML is “The Pastor Is IN” table – consistently provided on Mondays on North Campus and on Wednesdays on South Campus. These out-of-office office hours offer students (and faculty and staff) the opportunity to sit and chat about various personal, academic, work, and/or spiritual concerns. Conversations range from cars to bosses at work to trouble with classes to prayer life to the Gospel of John. Those who stop by are invited to respond to a question of the day; candy is, of course, also available! The Campus Minister serves on various University committees: Multicultural Programming Committee (out of which comes, for example, MLK week); Network of Health Educators (one project of which is the Stress Relief Fair offered on Reading Day each semester, at which the Campus Minister spreads out the 28' x 32' canvas labyrinth that was the project of a field education student, and at which PCML serves tea – decaf, of course!); Greeley Scholars for Peace Studies Advisory Board (previous Greeley Scholars, in residence during April, include: Linda Biehl; Pdraig O'Malley; Gavriel Salomon; Leymah Gbowee; John Prendergast; and Albie Sachs); the Gathering at the Well Forum Planning Team (a forum offered each April); and the Thanksgiving Food Drive and Distribution Committee (2014 marks our 6th year). The Campus Minister also invites student participation in community activities, such as: the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and the annual Service Against Genocide, sponsored by the Greater Lowell Interfaith Leadership Alliance; and Lowell Women's Week – specifically in PCML's annual interfaith event, “Braided Streams: Women of Faith Speak”.

Ithaca College Protestant Community



The Ithaca College Protestant Community is an ecumenical ministry housed out of Muller Chapel and financially supported by the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, American Baptist Churches USA, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, as well as evangelical/non-denominational churches in the Ithaca area. The Chaplain works very closely with the Board of Directors as well as the Student Leadership Council to foster Christian community via Sunday services, Wednesday night student-led worship, small groups, service opportunities, social justice advocacy and awareness, retreats, and campus outreach events. As a diverse community (racially, theologically, ecclesiastically, etc), we strive every day to do what the church has failed to do all along in keeping the body of Christ together. Thankfully, grace abounds!

United Campus Ministry at Plymouth State University



<https://www.plymouth.edu/office/campus-ministry/united-campus-ministry/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/United-Campus-Ministry-at-PSU/198984613578899>

Founded in 1973, [United Campus Ministry at Plymouth State University](https://www.plymouth.edu/office/campus-ministry/united-campus-ministry/) provides students from all faith backgrounds with a safe space to explore the big questions, build community and serve others. We practice "radical hospitality" -- all are welcome, and all are loved. Our objective is to nurture thoughtfully spiritual young adults who are committed to social justice, community service and living their faith. We host a variety of discussion and study groups, as well as offering opportunities to serve local needy. Our annual Thanksgiving Baskets project, a collaboration with Catholic Campus Ministry, is currently in its 41st year. Students assemble and deliver about 200 baskets to the hungry in Plymouth and 12 surrounding towns. New this year, UCM students are working together to plan, prepare, serve and share a monthly meal with residents of the [Bridge House](#), our local homeless shelter. None of this would be possible without ongoing support from the Synod of the Northeast. Blessings and Peace to You!

Wilson Center/Maine Christian Association at the University of Maine



The Wilson Center is a progressive and ecumenical campus ministry at the University of Maine. We have students from a wide variety of Protestant denominations who participate in our programs – Presbyterian, UCC, Methodist, Unitarian Universalist and Baptist to name just a few. We also have many students from the Jewish, Catholic and Islamic communities who join us on a regular basis for Interfaith events. The goal of the Wilson Center is to provide a place where ALL UMaine students can explore their spirituality to it's fullest. We host a Wed night Dinner and Dialogue group, two weekly meditation groups, and an Inclusive Bible study every Monday evening. We are involved in various social justice projects throughout the year. This fall we are working with Wabanaki REACH and other activists to promote and support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission going on in our State and to address wrongs done to Native Americans in the name of religion. We also host a live music coffee house once a month to raise money for the Shaw House – a local youth and teen homeless shelter. Life at the Wilson Center is never dull! We strive always to follow the lead and energy of our fabulous students and the model set forth by Jesus of Nazareth: to work for social justice, to honor diversity and include all people.

Russell Sage College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute



The Campus Ministry program of Troy Area United Ministries serves two colleges, Russell Sage College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. At Russell Sage I work with the Spirituality Center to develop programs for faith development, spiritual exploration and interfaith dialogue. This semester we have invited the Interfaith Amigos to lead a workshop on “how to talk about faith and healing in a pluralistic society”. We are also working with the LGBT club on campus to host a conversation with Alex McNeill, the first transgender person seeking ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA). As the Protestant Chaplain at RPI, I lead small group reflection and Bible study. This semester we have continued our “Belief Anonymous” program, where atheists, agnostics and believers are invited to talk about their beliefs in a non-confrontational and confidential setting. On both campuses I provide opportunities for prayer and meditation, including labyrinth walks.

Thank you to the Synod of the Northeast for your continuing support.

Rev. Beth Illingworth

Campus Minister for Troy Area United Ministries