

THE GCRO



CAW!

Guilford Council of Religious Organizations

1/14/2005

A Newsletter of Guilford College Campus Ministry

Vol. 15 No. 8

“A Tsunami of Doubt: Understanding God’s Love and Grace after Disaster”

The Friday, January 14 brown bag lunch discussion in the Hut will consider the question of “theodicy” – how a good God can allow bad things to happen. Some of the standard responses will be shared, and participants will be invited to share their own questions, answers, and curiosities. All are welcome, 12:00 p.m.

Hillel Sponsors Tu B'Shevat Seder

Tu B'Shevat is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the trees and all of nature. During Religious Emphasis Week, Hillel will hold a seder (a ritual meal) with

prayers and readings that feature this celebration. The Kabbalists believed that one way we can fix the world is through our prayers and celebrations. All are welcome to participate in the seder in this spirit. The seder will be held at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, January 24. Contact Ariel Brandt (rbrandt@guilford.edu) for details on location.

“Eyes Wide Open”

An exhibit of the human cost of the war in Iraq, “Eyes Wide Open,” will be brought to Greensboro January 23-25 by the American Friends Service Committee. The central feature of the exhibit is more than 1,400 pairs of shoes with the names of U. S. soldiers killed in Iraq. A

wall of remembrance lists the names of Iraqi civilians killed in the conflict, and 1,000 pairs of civilian shoes symbolize the tens of thousands killed in the war.

“Eyes Wide Open” will be presented at The Depot, 300 East Washington St., 1:00 – 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 23 and 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday. Volunteers are needed to help set up the exhibit 7:30 a.m. on Sunday and take it down after 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Proctors during the exhibit are also needed.

Friends Center at Guilford College is among several local congregations and organizations co-sponsoring the exhibit. Contact Friends Center at 316-2445 for information. **Fifteenth Annual Reli-**

Psst...

Wishing there were some way to combine your love of Stump Speeches, Monty Python, and German shepherds? If so, this dream (however weird it may be) will soon be realized with the arrival of Guilford's Fifteenth Annual Religious Emphasis Week. A full schedule is on page five. Enjoy!

Concordance Caper

Before winter break and holiday consumption of sweets caused your memory to become fuzzy, the last caper asked you to find the scriptural reference for Post Toasties' original name, Elijah's Manna. Kathy Coe, Becke Jones, and Eli Havivi responded with the correct location: I Kings 17 and 19. Joan Mansfield phoned in with cita-

tions of "manna" in the Bible, but we were looking specifically for a connection with Elijah. This is the first time in a long time that the caper "chariot of fire" has not carried Joan to victory! We'll leave a seat for her, nonetheless, at the caper table.

As the good rabbi often does, Eli offered a bit of Mishna on the Jewish propensity for deli sandwiches, often traditionally called "Elijah's sandwiches"!

This week, the food for caper thought comes from an ad on CBS for its show, "Judging Amy." The tag line for the commercial was, "Love is patient, but it's not always kind." What familiar biblical passage were they paraphrasing?

Extra credit if you can name the Quaker-themed TV series in which "Judging Amy's" star had a recurring role.

Call the Campus Ministry

gious Emphasis Week Features Noted Visitors

GCRO's 15th annual Religious Emphasis Week, January 23 – 29, 2005, will be highlighted by the visit of Luby Casey Campus Ministry Visitors Tom Mullen and Nancy Faus (Mullen), as well as best-selling author Kristin Henderson, author of *Driving by Moonlight*.

Mullen is the former dean of the Earlham School of Religion, a Friends minister, and author of numerous books, including *Birthdays, Holidays, and Other Disasters, Laughing Out Loud and Other Religious Experiences, A Very Good Marriage, and Where Two or Three Are Gathered Together, Someone Spills the Milk*. A popular speaker and humor writer, he has a unique outlook on the human condition and ministering to a broken world.

Faus is an adjunct professor at Bethany Theological Seminary and is the immediate past

president of the Hymn Society of the U.S. and Canada. A member of the Church of the Brethren, she is an expert on the liturgical use of music and the role of song in worship. With Tom, she is currently serving as interim co-pastor of a Brethren congregation in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Kristin Henderson, a Quaker from Washington, D.C. married to a Navy chaplain, will lead a writing workshop 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 29 in Founders Gallery with her German Shepherd, Rosie. Her popular book, *Driving by Moonlight: A Journey through Love, War and Infer-tility*, chronicles a cross-country trip in a Corvette with her dog Rosie as she contemplates her husband's service in Afghanistan after 9/11, their attempt to have a child, and other life issues – with great humor and insight. Her workshop will share her process of writing, from conception to publication, as well as an exploration into fiction and non-fiction, which she entitles "Lying about the Truth."

A full schedule of Religious Emphasis Week events is listed on page five in the *Caw*.

Upcoming College Meeting For Worship Speakers

Keifer Bradshaw, Security Coordinator of Guilford College, will present the message on Sunday, January 16. Luby Casey Campus Ministry Visitors **Tom Mullen and Nancy Faus** will bring the message on Sunday, January 23 entitled "The Illusion of Futility."

College Meeting for Worship is sponsored by the Office of Campus Ministry and the Guilford Council of Religious Organizations. For more information call x2326.

From the Back Bench...

In the midst of my last-minute preparations for the spring semester last week, I received a call from the editor of the local paper's religion page. She wanted to know how I would explain the recent tsunami and the horrific loss of life to a child. "What does it mean to say that God is 'love,' that God is a caring and compassionate parent, in the context of such a tragedy?"

Although I was facing a minor crisis of my own in cranking out syllabi and other course material on a fast-approaching deadline, I felt it important to take the time to respond, even if briefly. I had no illusions of offering up brilliant theology for the readers of the *News & Record*, but I did feel it was important to put some thought into this difficult question for myself. So, I gave as much thought to this complex subject as ten minutes allows and fired off a 31 line e-mail, discussing the different ways one would deal with the subject with children and with college students, going into issues of abstraction vs. concreteness, the problem of natural properties vs. miracles, omnipotence vs. compassion, even the theological morass of *theodicy*, the consideration of how a "good" God can allow "evil" to occur.

I concluded with the thought that, after having children of my own, I could empathize with the image of God as loving parent: "I would have loved to be omnipotent and protect them from their own mistakes or the ones that might accidentally come from choices they made. But I could not both allow them to have free will and control them totally at the same time. My wife and I chose the former, allowing them to express their own free will within the context of our guidance and nurture. They did-

n't always make the right decisions; life didn't always deal kindly with them."

Only that thought made it into the article that graced the front page of Sunday's paper. So much for impressing anyone with big seminary words and evidence of scholarly *ennui*!

My guess is that the other local "people of the cloth" quoted in the article on "Where Is God in Tragedy?" had also waxed long with their answers, only to have them reduced to sound bites: karma, impermanence, God's sovereignty, God's compassion, human sin, God's judgment, signs and portents. The list is long – but not as long as the list of complex questions and answers surrounding each one.

That is what is often missing in responses to such disasters. We want simple, easy answers, but they are as rare as simple, easy answers to the Theory of Relativity or the structure of a classical piece of music. Why should God be any easier to figure out than Einstein or Beethoven?

We do, however, have a marvelous smorgasbord of religious thought available to us, and I find it comforting to delve into the struggle of the world's wisdom traditions to make meaning of life, death, joy, and suffering. At times like this, I find comfort in my own Christian tradition of Quakerism and the central mystery of the cross: God chooses to suffer with us, to experience our pain and loss; but the cross doesn't have the final word. There is also the mystery of resurrection, of new life out of death, of hope and future joy. There are other times, though, when Hindu concepts of karma, Buddhist impermanence, Muslim faith in Allah's absolute sovereignty, and the Hebrew

wisdom of the Book of Job speak to my condition.

That said, there is also the fact that in the face of such unimaginable horror, nobody wants a long lecture on our being "dust in the wind," on the mistakes of a past life that have swept a child from our arms, on God's absolute sovereign will, or even the geology and physics of plate tectonics. We want someone to be with us, to hear our anguished cries, and to embrace us compassionately, even silently. We want Presence, we want comfort, and eventually we need material assistance.

For me, right now, it is good enough to have faith that God is experienced in the Presence offered by the outpouring of works of mercy, and continue to wrestle with the question of where God was when the world hiccupped and 150,000 died. It is sufficient to say with the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier,

"I know not where God's islands lift

Their fronded palms in air.
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond God's love and care."
(*The Eternal Goodness*)

There, religion page editors aren't the only ones who can practice reductionism!

- Max Carter

Upcoming Events

“Friends and the Ministry of Writing”

Four well-known Quaker authors will present workshops on writing January 29, February 5, and February 26 in Founders Gallery as part of Friends Center’s Quaker Renewal Program series, “Friends and the Ministry of Writing.” Each Saturday workshop will be 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The workshops begin with Kristin Henderson during Religious Emphasis Week (see page two for further detail). J. Brent Bill, a Friends minister and author of 12 books on congregational life, youth culture, and Quaker thought, will lead the workshop on February 5. On February 26, Philip Gully and James Mulholland will be featured. Both are pastoral ministers of Quaker congregations in Indiana and are the co-authors of two highly popular and controversial books, *If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person* and *If God Is Love: Living Graciously in an Ungracious World*.

More information about each author and details about registering for the workshops is available in the Hut, by calling Friends Center at 316-2445, or by visit-

ing the Friends Center site at www.guilford.edu

“Spiritual Giftedness and the Workplace”

Jan Wood, Quaker minister, spiritual director, author and director of Good News Associates in the Pacific Northwest, will offer a workshop Saturday, January 22 exploring how spiritual giftedness functions in the workplace, 10 – 4 in Founders Gallery. On Wednesday, January 19 at 7:30 pm in the Gallery, Jan will speak on “What Is a Calling?” Both events are sponsored by the Guilford Initiative on Faith and Practice and are free and open to the public.

Conscientious Objection Events on Martin Luther King Day Weekend

The Conscientious Objector Guidance Committee (COG) of the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting is sponsoring two events related to conscientious objection, prompted by COG’s concerns about a potential reinstatement of a military draft, and with the attempt to pass legislation (HR 103) which removes the

option of alternative non-military service for those with objections of conscience.

From 7-9 pm on Friday, January 14, at the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting, J.E. McNeil, the Executive Director of the Center on Conscience and War, will hold a public discussion on the specter of a new draft and conscientious objection. The presentation is free and open to the public. COG especially encourages high school seniors to attend.

Second, on Saturday, January 15, from 9am to 5pm, J.E. McNeil will conduct a day-long Draft Counseling Training at the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting for individuals who want formal draft counselor training. Saturday’s session is open to 30 people, so COG seeks those with a strong leading to do draft counseling in their community.

Those who want to use this information as an active draft counselor are required to attend both Friday’s evening session and Saturday’s session.

For more information, please contact Pam Schwingl at 919-489-1802, or pschwingl@yahoo.com

Campus Ministry's and G-CRO's Fifteenth Annual Religious Emphasis Week

"Seriously, Faith Is a Laughing Matter!"

January 23 – 29, 2005

Sunday, January 23

1:00 pm College Meeting for Worship, led by 2005 Luby Casey Campus Ministry Visitors Tom Mullen and Nancy Faus, "The Illusion of Futility." Moon Room.

1:00 – 9:00 Opening of "Eyes Wide Open," American Friends Service Committee exhibit on the human cost of the Iraq war. Downtown at the Depot.

5:00 Catholic Mass. The Hut.

9:00 Movie in Shore Hall (tentative).

Monday, January 24

12:00 noon Open discussion on Quaker principles and Guilford's new strategic plan in the Hut; Guilford Christian Fellowship book table in Founders Lobby; Gideons, International Bible distribution in Founders Lobby.

4:00 pm Tea & discussion with Tom Mullen, "The appropriate uses of humor." Boren Lounge.

6:00 Tu B'Shevat seder, sponsored by Hillel. Location TBA.

7:00 Buddhist meditation. The Hut.

7:30 Tom Mullen, "Seriously, Faith Is a Laughing Matter!" Gallery.

Tuesday, January 25

10:00 am Friends ministers association meeting with Tom Mullen and Nancy Faus, "On Getting to Where You Want to Go by Being Who You Are." Boren Lounge.

4:30 pm Taize worship. Moon Room.

7:30 Nancy Faus, "What Should the Church Be Singing Today?" Boren Lounge.

Wednesday, January 26

12:35 pm Stump speeches. Founders terrace.

5:30 Midweek meeting for worship. The Hut.

7:00 Pagan mysticism. The Hut.

9:00 Movie in Binford Hall (tentative).

Thursday, January 27

4:00 pm Faculty, staff, and student panel, "Challenges to Faith at Guilford." Boren Lounge.

9:00 "Life of Brian." Milner Hall (tentative).

Friday, January 28

12:00 noon Open discussion, "Sharing the Light-hearted Side of our Religious Communities." The Hut.

4:00 pm Tea & discussion with Kristin Henderson, author of *Driving by Moonlight: A Journey through Love, War and Infertility*. The Hut.

5:30 pm "Chow down, Center down, Hoedown," QLSP potluck, worship, and dance (tentative). King 126.

Saturday, January 29

9:00 am – 12:30 pm Workshop with Kristin Henderson, "Friends and the Ministry of Writing." Gallery.

For information, contact the Campus Ministry Office, 316-2445

Celebration Days!

Coming soon...

January 15 **Seijin-no-hi** Coming-of-Age Day is a national holiday in Japan. Within the Shinto tradition, young women and men twenty years of age go to shrines wearing traditional clothing. Their families announce their adulthood to the kami or spirits, and pray for health and well being for a lifetime to come.

January 18-25 **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

January 19 **Sultan** (Sovereignty), the 17th month of the Baha'i year.

January 20 **Day of Hajj**/Day at 'Arafat commemorates the last revelation to the Prophet at Mount 'Arafat shortly before his death. Muslims on Hajj attend a service on the plains in front of Mount Arafat.

January 21 Muslims observe **Eid al-Adha** (the Festival of Sacrifice). This is the concluding act of pilgrimage and is observed even when not on pilgrimage.

January 23-30 **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** (Canada)

January 25 One of four New Year's days, **Tu B'shevat** (the 15th day of the month of Shevat) is the Jewish New Year's Day of the year for tithing fruit of trees. Nowadays, it is a day for environmental awareness and action such as tree planting. Special celebratory meals (Seders) include eating the seven fruits of the land (wheat and barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey-date), each of which symbolizes a spiritual reality.

GCRO Sponsors Interfaith Visitation

An interfaith visitation to area churches, temples, congregations, and synagogues is planned for the first part of the semester. Beginning with a visit to neighboring Persimmon Grove A.M.E. Church on January 16, the visitation will continue with trips to the Baha'i Fellowship, New Garden Friends Meeting, The Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church, West-over Church, Beth David Synagogue, Roman Catholic Mass on campus, a Muslim mosque, and worship at Prabhupada Village, a Hare Krishna community.

For details on dates and times of visits, contact the Campus Ministry Office, 316-2445.

Did You Know?

*By Ted Wilkinson,
religious guru/sophomore*

Because of the large amount of gods in the Hindu religion (by some number, almost 300 million), every Hindu is allowed to choose his or her own god or goddess. Interestingly, men choose goddesses more often than women do.

