

Cathedral Voice

A monthly newsletter from Washington National Cathedral

DECEMBER 2006

A WORD FROM THE DEAN

Are You Going Home For Christmas?

The weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with lists, schedules, and plans. And one of the most frequent questions I hear people asking in those weeks is, Are you going home for Christmas? Of course that raises all sorts of questions. Where after all is home for us—where our parents are currently living? Where our children are? Where we grew up? Where we lived the longest? Where we live now?



Mixed in with the excitement and good cheer of the Advent and Christmas season is for many of us, I sense, a profound yearning that at its roots is cosmic and primordial. Something in this time reminds us of our aloneness; it stirs our fears, and heightens our need for hope. As the nights grow cold and the days grow shorter, we, like our pagan ancestors, light candles on an Advent wreath to call God back—to recover the light and warmth we long for.

Our response to the darkening season is often twofold. For one, we tend to jump the gun on Christmas by busying ourselves with going, doing, and buying. The parties and preparations can be both exhilarating and exhausting, but nearly always something about the joy of the season, however commercialized, proves strangely contagious.

Our other response is that we think with some excitement and hope about going home, to wherever that place of rest and peace is for us. The Christian faith says that ultimately home for all of us is a chilly stable on a starlit night where oxen, shepherds, and two woebegone travelers cluster together against the cold. And there at the center of their circle is a manger containing a child whom the world

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Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation Launches Alliance for Women's Empowerment

The Cathedral College's Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation has joined the Commission on the Advancement of Women of InterAction and Religions for Peace to convene The Women's Faith and Development Alliance (WFDA). The alliance will advocate for setting women's empowerment as a key priority for investment in development worldwide. Together the communities of the alliance have committed to a program of advocacy and action designed to realign leaders and organizations from merely acknowledging the importance of women's empowerment and development to fully integrating and executing it in their policies and programs.

InterAction is the largest alliance of U.S.-based humanitarian and development nongovernmental organizations with more than 160 members. Religions for Peace is renowned for its network of international and interfaith mobilization efforts. Mary Pat Brennan has joined the CGJ&R as coordinator for women's programs, working along with the center's managing director, Jean Duff. Invaluable support is provided by Bahareh Sharghi, Elizabeth Ballantine, Beth Hadley, and Mona Hanford. The CGJ&R team works closely with the InterAction team led by Suzanne Kinder-vatter and Religions for Peace's Jacqueline Ogega.

A particular strength of WFDA is the combination of moral authority and the worldwide reach of faith communities and the expertise of global development



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will come to know as Emmanuel, God-with-us.

It's the simplest, most haunting of stories, and one the world never tires of telling. Because it says the Creator of the Universe, the Master of galaxies and black holes—as well as the Maker of you and me—has come to make this piece of cosmic dust we call Earth a home, a place of life and warmth. That means that home can be anywhere, because it is wherever we human beings discover the warmth and light that come from God.

My hope is that during this Advent season we can make an important pilgrimage toward home, reflecting, prepar-

ing to receive this new birth, relishing the glories of Advent hymns and anthems. Then on Christmas Eve we can gather at the manger, where none of us is a stranger, and where a light from beyond this world shines brilliantly. And there as we sing “Silent Night” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem” we will know that all of us are home, and none of us is alone.



The Very Rev. Samuel T. Lloyd III

Sister Helen Prejean to Headline Martin Luther King Day Program



Each year the Cathedral has honored the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by sponsoring a program on youth non-violence on the weekend of his national holiday. On January 15, 2007, the Cathedral's annual Martin Luther King Day observance will include an array of guests, presentations, and activities, all dedicated

to fostering peace within each of us, our community, and in our world.

As part of the observance, the Cathedral will hear Sister Helen Prejean speak passionately about her work to foster non-violence, most specifically her tireless work against the death penalty. Sister Helen is the author of the best seller *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*, which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and spawned the Oscar-winning film. Actor Tim Robbins has adapted the book and film for the stage, and it is being performed by high school and college students across the country.

In addition, recording artist Bomani Armah will lead an innovative presentation using hip-hop music and other elements of popular culture as a tool for positive change. Joining Bomani Armah in the presentation is Chris Bacon, subject of the award-winning documentary, *Blue Line: Destination Christylez*.

Also joining the Martin Luther King Day program will

be the Urban Nation H.I.P.-H.O.P. Choir of Washington. Focusing on the acronym H.I.P.-H.O.P. (Hope, Integrity, Power – Helping Our People), the choir's mission is to channel the creative and artistic energies of a targeted group of youth into a dynamic, structured ensemble that will foster excellence in

all facets of their lives. Students who range in ages 13 to 18 participate in the Urban Nation H.I.P.-H.O.P. Choir. They gain a better understanding and awareness of their heritage by performing a variety of musical styles that evolved from the tremendous contributions of African Americans, particularly spirituals, gospel, jazz, contemporary, inspirational, folk, musical theater, and classical music. In addition to performing, Urban Nation emphasizes academic excellence, community service, intercultural appreciation, discipline, and positive awareness.

The choir has performed at the White House and the Pageant for Peace (lighting of the national Christmas tree) and has shared the stage with such notable performers as Stevie Wonder, Oprah Winfrey, Celine Dion, James Taylor, Paul Simon, Denyce Graves, and Renee Fleming.

The program is scheduled for 2 PM to 4 PM in the Cathedral nave, Monday, January 15, 2007.



Bomani Armah

Center for Global Justice, continued from page 1, column B

and women's communities to address the United Nations Millennium Goals of eradicating poverty. As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said, "No tool for development is more powerful than the empowerment of women." Development experts agree that improvements in women's health, rights, education, economic opportunity and nutrition yield exponentially expanded results. Yet investment in women's development falls far short of the point needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

WFDA envisions a branded advocacy campaign similar to other development programs such as Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History. The advocacy campaign is scheduled to begin at a Women's World Summit in Washington in the spring of 2008. Development experts affirm that WFDA is an idea whose time is now. Jean Duff, managing director of the CGJ&R, emphasizes how the alliance is dedicated to the big idea that progress for women is key to impacting global poverty, and that "our collaboration can make a visible difference in attitude, policy and legislation for women all over the world."

For more information, to volunteer or contribute to the alliance please contact Mary Pat Brennan at (202) 537-2354 or e-mail mbrennan@cathedral.org.



Mary Pat Brennan has recently joined the staff of CGJ&R as coordinator of women's programs. An educator and trainer experienced in women's economic and political empowerment, she brings to the task her interfaith connections and a life-long commitment to social justice. She is an ordained elder and member of the Tacoma Park Presbyterian Church.

**Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year
from the staff and volunteers
at
Washington National Cathedral!**

Who Knew?

A walk through the nave always reveals a sign or two entitled "What's Going on Here?" The signs most often help visitors understand why something is "missing" or shrouded



in a tarp. For months over the past year a small scaffold and tarpaulin covered a work place in the Human Rights Bay in the narthex. It was there while Cathedral artisan Sean Callahan

carved Chas Fagan's "Human Rights" half boss.

To find this new work of art, enter the Cathedral by the main doors at the west end. Take an immediate left while still in the narthex, and look up. The half boss is located in the rib vaulting of the low interior "porch," directly across from the small statue of Eleanor Roosevelt.



Fagan's design interprets the passage from the Hebrew Testament book of the Prophet Amos: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream" (5:24). The half boss depicts water cascading down into a pool where it flows clockwise and takes on the form of a man, woman and child on the bank being freed from the bondage of injustice and oppression. A broken chain hangs from the man's wrist, symbolizing the triumph of freedom. Throughout Holy Scripture, water symbolizes the divine act of purification and gift of new life, most prominently for Christians in the waters of baptism.

Although designed by Chas Fagan, the half boss was executed in stone by Cathedral stone carver Sean Callahan. Carved boss stones are an integral part of the Cathedral's design, and this half boss is the only such stone to feature a concave (rather than convex) profile. It is also the only carving at the Cathedral to incorporate fine metal into the design. Local metal crafter Michael Schwartz fabricated the pewter and silver chain at the center of the carving, patinating the metal to match the limestone perfectly.

Earlier this year Sean's photograph appeared on AOL's website in a Labor Day photo feature showing workers and artisans with unique or unusual jobs. Who Knew?

The Human Rights Boss will be dedicated in honor of Canon Margot Semler in a special Evensong, Wednesday, December 20.





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Sacred Circles Scheduled for February

Sacred Circles, a two-day celebration of women's spirituality, is scheduled for February 16 and 17, 2007, at the Cathedral. Sacred Circles offers participants the wisdom and experience of artists and teachers and a deeply felt sense of women's spiritual community, gathering this year around the theme of "the many aspects of implementing love." Marking its tenth anniversary in 2007, Sacred Circles was recently recognized by the Harvard Pluralism Project as a national example of a women's interfaith community. For a detailed listing of Sacred Circles' keynote speeches and all events and programs visit <http://www.cathedral.org/cathedral/sacredcircles/index.shtml>.

Come & Behold Him: Seventeenth Year of Crèches



For years the Cathedral has exhibited crèches from its collection of more than 500 sets from countries and cultures worldwide. Each year only a portion of the collection can be displayed, with each set on a roughly three-year rotation.



The majority of the Cathedral's collection was donated by Cathedral friend and retired docent Mrs. Beulah Sommer. Her collection contained many beautiful and rare pieces collected by her family and friends.

The Cathedral collection now includes miniature sets, sets made from rare materials, and unusual depictions, as well as the more typical examples found in many homes. These delightful crèches show the story of Jesus' birth interpreted by diverse cultures, in many different materials. This year a new crèche from Alabama uses driftwood found over the years, another from Arizona depicts the native cultures of America, and a pastel ceramic crèche from Egypt features native animals including a traditional donkey as well as lop-eared goats, grazing sheep, and a water buffalo.

Again this year, the exhibit, on display in the Cathedral's Rare Book Library Exhibit Room, has been organized and curated by Lori Amos.

Enjoy the exhibit with your family. Exhibit-related family programs will be offered in the exhibit room on December 20, 21, 27, and 28 from 11 AM to 1 PM. Call (202) 537-2934 for details. Suitable for ages 4 through 11.

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