

ARK

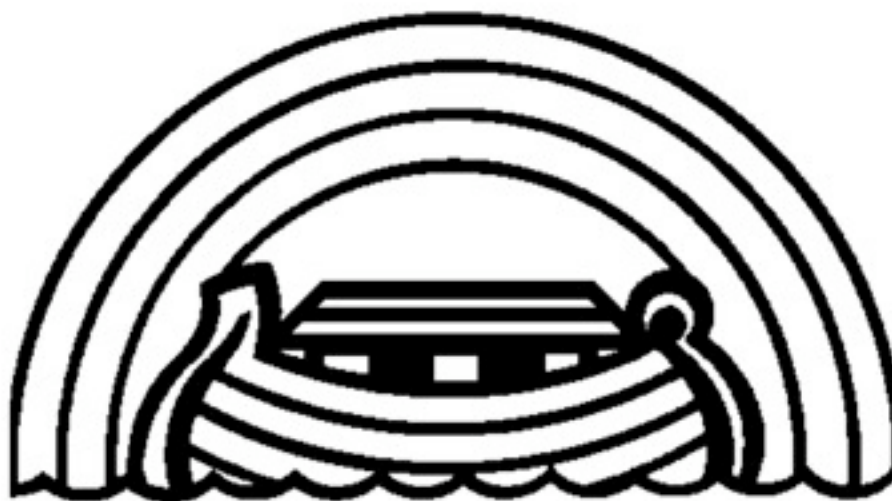
VOLUME 22

EDITION 2

FEBRUARY
2011

The

© Copyright 2011 AAIF
all rights reserved



**Interchurch Families:
Christian Unity Made Visible
in our Households**

Please see www.aifusa.org for membership information and forms

The ARK, a publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families

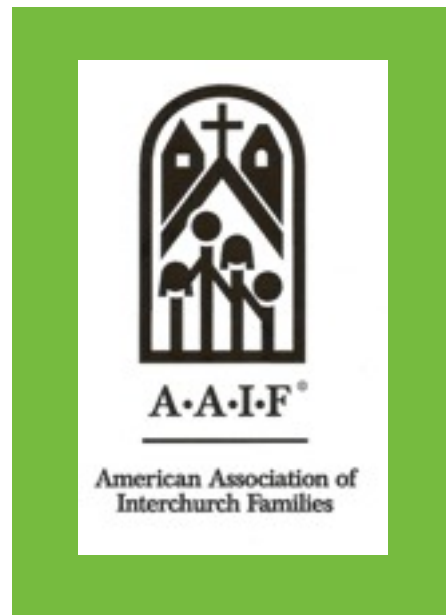
Psalm 139: 1-24

**“I Am Fearfully and Wonderfully Made:
Discovering Ourselves, Loving Each Other
and Living in the World”**

Ghost Ranch Conference Center PCUSA

Youth Program Topic for 2011 created based on Psalm 139

Psalm 139 should be read in its entirety. Please read it as an exercise using Lectio Divina with the filter of an ecumenist. What lines sparkle for you? If you feel inspired to write a poem, short essay or article, or prayer based on this psalm, please share it with other ARK readers. This Psalm is very powerful. Read carefully, it has the potential to open many productive discussions.



Pursue peace with everyone, without that holiness no one will see the Lord.
~ Hebrews 12:14

**Make plans now to attend the next
AAIF Biennial Conference
to be held in 2012**

Please see www.aifusa.org for on-going updates



2011



Continuing the theme of being responsible for creation as interchurch families that we began at the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference

build on many foundations, but love will always be needed

In July 2010, the American Association of Interchurch Families Biennial Conference took place at Holy Wisdom Monastery of the Benedictine Women of Madison Wisconsin. Their newest building had received a most prestigious national LEED building award for the way that it had been built in an environmentally responsible way. This decision to rebuild their old structure was made after receiving input from many sources in their area and across the country. The Benedictine Women of Madison are dedicated to giving hospitality and to preserving the environment; the two go hand in hand.

Their new sustainably built building is and it was

Healthy Style: Tips for Healthy Eco-friendly Living and Design from American Public Television

- Our interconnectedness exists on many levels; We can

AAIF City Chapters:

Listening Project

Are you interested in meeting and talking to other interchurch families in your city between AAIF Biennial Conferences?

Please See

www.aifusa.org for membership information

Please contact:

AAIF.co.chair@gmail.com or Laura & Franz Green at fandlgreen@cox.net

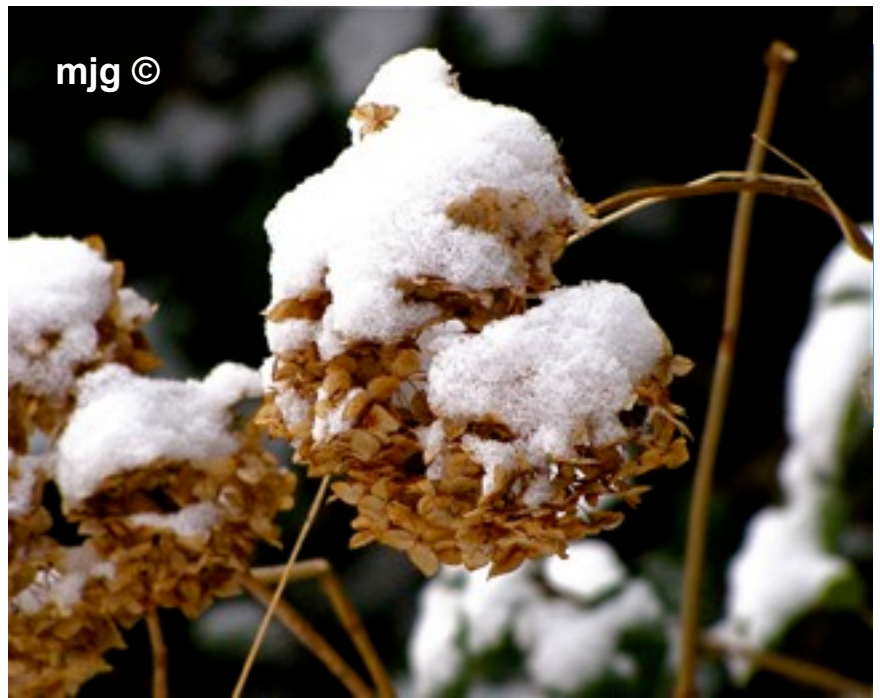
For information about how to form a City chapter in your area or how to find the AAIF City Chapter closest to you.

Please contact:

mjglauber@gmail.com for the ARK - AAIF Listening Project Materials to be used by your aaif City Chapters.

Food grown fresh in the garden at Holy Wisdom Monastery is served at meals directly from the garden





mjg ©

built in an environmentally friendly manner. Anyone who might see this project would be very impressed by what they have accomplished. Our first question was “How?” They began by asking for input from many sources. They continue to be inclusive and to embrace the input of others while maintaining their dedication to their own Benedictine values which have served them so well for centuries.

I left feeling invigorated and inspired by their beautiful gardens, their lifestyle and dedication to living out their beliefs in everything they do which included how they built buildings, even the way they disposed of trash and how they parked their cars.

The Benedictine Women of Madison are restoring 10 acres of oak savanna and prairie, the original and natural landscape of their area, by increments each year so the water that filters back into the lake down hill from them will have purified water entering it from their property. They are being good neighbors. They are displaying a practical form of Christian charity toward their neighbors and serving as role models for the rest of us.

...invigorated
and inspired by
their beautiful
gardens, their lifestyle
and dedication to living
out their beliefs in
everything they
do ...

I came away wondering how we might be able to expand on this kind of building if we wanted to do this in our own homes and neighborhoods. The task seems overwhelming. I didn't know where to begin. Living simply so that others might simply live on our shared planet seems like a major undertaking. so that task perhaps wouldn't be my entry point, I would have to begin by taking incremental steps moving in that direction.

However, it will remain ever present in the back of my mind as a foundation or goal for me to attain.



Plant Diversity

mjg ©

How could I realistically enter into a more sustainable lifestyle that would serve the environment in better ways and make me a “good neighbor”? What other factors would make this decision easier for me to make, and, better yet, more likely to be able to reach some kind of milestone or make some kind of progress on this journey? It was time to begin a process of learning more about what constituents being a green house or building and in contrast to what doesn't.

What are some of the current problems that we encounter in our existing buildings? Some buildings are just too expensive to heat or cool. Some buildings have what is referred to as “Sick

Building Syndrome” meaning that the way they were constructed contributes to our on-going illnesses from allergies, asthma due to humidity and mold and to forms of cancer

Some buildings are just too expensive to heat or cool...or have “Sick Building Syndrome” ...The emphasis is on our interconnectedness and our interrelatedness in finding solutions that are comfortable and beautiful. exposure by long term to formaldehyde or fiberglass particles emitted into the air we breathe through air filters. As I began my search for what constituted “green building,” I realized that our understanding of what constitutes “green building” and the “best practices for green building” may continue to evolve and to grow as we continue our journey along this path. It will be a collective or collaborative process.

I learned that new construction waste has traditionally made up to 40% of the material disposed in landfill. Healthy Style Tips for Healthy Eco-friendly Living and Design by



American Public Television has created a video with many solutions that will benefit both our budgets, our aesthetics, the environment and political trends. They can be found at www.healthystyleshow.tv

The emphasis is on our interconnectedness and our interrelatedness in finding solutions that are

comfortable and beautiful. In viewing the solutions that were offered, I never felt that comfort was being sacrificed for energy efficient building nor was beauty.

viewing the solutions that were offered, I never felt that comfort was being sacrificed for energy efficient building nor was beauty.



The process of becoming and creating was emphasized. The process of creating community and for finding solutions together that benefitted all of us mutually is emphasized. Practical suggestions were discussed for various situations. The viewer could then apply them in whatever ways they might work best for them. Re-purposed buildings were put to

good use. Industrial by-products have been made into environmentally friendly insulation.

new construction waste has traditionally made up to 40% of the material disposed in landfill.

This was very much like the process that the Benedictine Women of Madison had followed in order to be able to create and to build their award winning LEED building for their monastery.

This DVD “Tips for Healthy Eco-Friendly Living and Design” is available in our public library under the call

numbers DVD 690.8047 HEA 2007 - It makes an excellent introduction to sustainable living and eco-friendly living and design transitions that we can be on the look out for as we make paint decisions for the interior of our houses, replace kitchen cabinets, counter tops, install insulation, buy new cars, buy new towels or bedding, buy soap, clean our linoleum floors, update any household appliances and ask

Beet greens growing in the garden at Holy Wisdom Monastery



questions of the builders we may hire to make any changes or retailers where we may purchase items so that we can live more healthy lives inside our own homes and as a consequence do good things for the environment and the entire planet at the same time. It



is one of those win-win situations.

“Sustainable architecture is a process that can be lots of fun,” one of the members of the Milwaukee Urban Ecology Center explained, “since it is being aware of how you build as you build.”

A joyful awareness of our actions is a way of being Christian that goes beyond thinking of only of ourselves. This leads us toward putting an action plan into our Christianity.

For Christians, care of the environment is part of who we are and who we have always been. Gardening is part of sustainability. Being connected to creation is part of being Christian. Being interconnected and interrelated is both Christian and ecumenical and therefore also interchurch. Other world religions also happen to embrace a love for the environment and our interconnectedness and interrelatedness with all that is and all that has been given to us by the Creator, no matter how we refer to this divine spirit as this divine spirit has been revealed to us through our particular cultural point of reference.

May those bonds of love from the Creator spirit who gave us our earth home help to bring us closer together in love, one with the other, so



theological categories." This is what sets his book apart from previous studies. Peter Smith notes that "Johnson, a biblical scholar at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, readily acknowledges that Christians have had major doctrinal differences from non-Christians in both ancient and modern times."

Johnson has been named the winner of the 2011 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his argument that Christians' demonization of non-Christian religions was a mistake — one that modern Christians should learn from as they navigate their own era of religious diversity. Johnson wrote in his

that we may find peaceful paths for finding ways to protect this earthly home for future generations.

by Mary Jane Glauber

"Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity." -

2009 book that, "Christianity's failure to adequately come to grips with its first pagan neighbors inhibits any positive effort to engage present-day adherents of world religions."

There are two main factors that set Johnson's book apart from most studies on this topic. In his book, "Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity," Johnson examines the different ways of being religious and concluded that Christians had many similarities

Prairie Restoration Project at Holy Wisdom Monastery ↓

Grawemeyer winner finds links among early Christians, Jews, pagans -reported Louisville journalist, Peter Smith

"Early Christians thoroughly demonized the religions around them, but they actually had plenty in common with their pagan neighbors in the multicultural world of the Roman Empire, author Luke Timothy Johnson says." This is significant because it's a new way to view a familiar subject matter but Johnson wanted to look at ancient Christians' relations with their neighbors through a more "neutral" lens than that of "Christians using Christian



to their neighbors in the Roman Empire, including pagans and Jews. Johnson explained to Peter Smith in an interview that "First, we tend to think of people as religious and non-religious, but religious people are as different from each other often as they are from non-religious people, depending on how they perceive the divine power and second, what their religion is for and how it's accessed varies within the same religion."

Johnson explains that religious practices fit into four categories, and there were plenty of Christians, pagans and Jews who fit each of them:

1. Some sought "divine benefits" such as miraculous healings. This could be sought either from Jesus or from pagan Gods and at their shrines.
2. Other religious beliefs promoted moral improvement. Johnson compares the Greek philosophers and the Gospels or the epistle of James.
3. Still others sought to transcend a corrupt world with an eye toward the afterlife, where the soul could be freed from the prison of the body. Johnson explains that the ancient Gnostics would have been in this category, but they were considered to be heretics by other Christians.
4. There was another group of religious people who promoted social stability in this world — with pagan priests and later Christian leaders promoting their own hierarchies and those of the Roman Empire.



Susan Garrett, a professor of New Testament at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and director of the religion award, which is given jointly by the seminary and the University of Louisville told Peter Smith that, "On a scholarly level it's a completely new framework for the study of early Christianity in comparison

Willow Leaves blowing in the wind at Holy Wisdom Monastery

with other ancient religions."

What truly distinguished this book for Garrett was "the connection Johnson draws from the ancient world to the modern world," Garrett said. In Peter Smith's report he notes that "Johnson said the different categories help explain similarities between followers of modern religions — such as those in the mystic Christian, Islamic and Buddhist traditions, or those Christians and Muslims who seek close ties between religion and the state."

It also explains divisions within Christianity," Johnson said.

"Many inter-Christian divisions are caused not by differences in doctrine or morals," according to Johnson. It's temperament. People who are focused on moral improvement, often don't like people who are (practitioners of) what we call popular religion, and on the other side neither seem to like bishops, either," Johnson points



out. And those who emphasize "divine benefits" often "don't really think that academics like me are really religious either," Johnson said. But these are "all legitimate ways of being religious," he told Peter Smith.

Johnson, whose book was selected from among 52 award entries for the \$100,000 award, is scheduled to give the Grawemeyer lecture on April 12 at 7 p.m. at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary's Caldwell Chapel.

Peter Smith indicated that Johnson's book has received mainly positive reviews. "The Christian Century magazine said it offered a way to "reframe (ancient Christian) texts with the hope of opening a new conversation that can uncover commonalities between early Christianity and its religious others."

Johnson and Peter Smith did find a critic of the book "in the journal First

National Workshop on Christian Unity
Equipping Church Leaders in the Quest for Christian Unity
Sponsored by the National Ecumenical Officers Association
NWCU
in Pittsburgh -
May 9-12, 2011

Willow Leaves blowing in the wind at Holy Wisdom Monastery

Things, reviewer Robert Louis Wilken said Johnson "stumbles" in overlooking unique aspects of early Christians, such as their combining of ritual, teaching and administrative roles in the office of bishop. Wilken goes on to state that "Johnson in his zeal to show undeniable similarities between Christianity and Greco-Roman religion, ignores major ways in which the new religion broke with longstanding religious conventions,"

In rebuttal, Johnson explains that "Obviously, Christian theology, or understanding of the divine, is distinct from that of Greco-Roman paganism or idolatry". "That's patent....We could repeat that truism forever and reach no new insight," Johnson explained that his focus was "on religiosity, not on theology."

Johnson explained to Peter Smith that "What needs explaining is why Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries looked so very much like Greco-Roman paganism."

Peter Smith's original article can be found at the Louisville Courier-Journal. I am very thankful first that he brought this new book to our attention and second that he also included any potential complaints that anyone might have with this

study. I am delighted that this book and its author have won the 2011 Grawemeyer Award in Religion for this topic. The book shows the beginnings of some of the current divisions we are experiencing within Christianity at this time. This allows us to be able to discuss these divisions in a more complete way so that perhaps we can find a form of Christian Unity that will address our need, that is our apparent diversity of needs within our varying needs for being religious people.

We may not be religious in the exact same ways. We have never been religious in the exact same ways. And yet if we were to build a house, we would hire people who had different skills to be able to complete the house. If we made an analogy for how we can all be religious together perhaps using the comparison for how we might go about building a house might help us to see that we need the different skills that diversity provides. A genuine respect for the skills and talents that others can offer will help to move the dialogue along. May we find our talents and skills so that we can hold them up to be admired across traditional boundaries.

Many different talents will be needed so that we can successfully complete the task. It will take all of us working together in order to find the kind of Christian Unity that Jesus mentioned and that John speaks of in the Bible.

"That we may all be one" John 17:21

Summary by Mary Jane Glauber

GRAWEMEYER AWARDS

H. Charles Grawemeyer, an industrialist and philanthropist, established the awards at the University of Louisville in 1984 with a \$9 million endowment. They recognize powerful ideas in five fields. The religion award is given jointly by the university and Louisville Presbyterian



Theological Seminary.

The winners, chosen from nominations from around the world, receive \$100,000.

Grawemeyer was a Louisville native and chemical engineering graduate of U of L. He rose to become chairman of Reliance Universal, an international coatings company, before retiring and starting his own company in Shelbyville, Ky. He died in 1993.

Further information can be found online about the other categories of Grawemeyer Awards at the Louisville Courier Journal.



Continuing on the journey toward Christian Unity together:



Suggested Ecumenical Activities to consider for after this week ended for us for the rest of the year:

Previously announced in the ARK, The "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity took place from January 18-25, 2011. This is an annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The theme chosen for 2011 was "One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer" (cf. Acts 2:42). Throughout 2011, we will be able to choose ways to join other Christians everywhere in praying "that they may all be one" joining our prayer with that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Begun in 1908, these days have been set aside each year so that Christians the world over may share the prayer of Jesus: **"that all may be one... that the world may believe"** (John 17:21). **"One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer"** (cf. Acts 2:42) was the 2011 theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

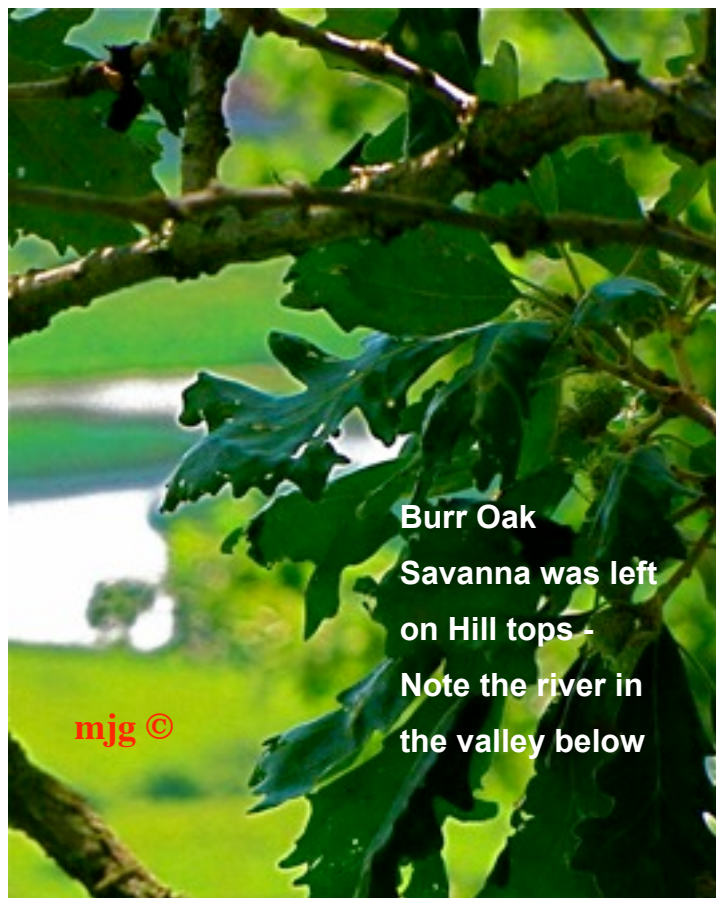
One of the suggestions was that we may like to continue the activities begun during the "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity during the coming year. I looked over the suggested activities and began to think of ways that these wonderful ideas could be put to use. They are many ideas so that from among them we should be able to find something that should work for our local areas. The ideas are diverse so that we should be able to do out reach using them. I am attaching some of my own questions for you to consider as you apply them. You may have some of your own questions to add in order to be able to develop each of these topics for your own use. I would like to hear about which ones you decided to use and how well it

worked for you. Did you have to make any adaptations for your group? What changes in understanding did your group indicate they experienced at the end of the activity you chose to put into action?

One of the suggested activities was for the local planning committee to sponsor some sort of contest -essay, prayer, art, poster - to involve young people in an effort to articulate and illustrate the quest for Christian unity or the 2011 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity theme. Offer prizes, display the entries and include the winners in a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity event. **[Where would the prizes come from and what would make a worthwhile prize that would appeal to young people so that they would be drawn out to do this kind of an activity? The second part of what could be done with the winners' entries is far more likely to happen given our current economy. How did you go about getting the adults in the community to promote this event?]**

A suggested list of possible activities for that week included: Organize joint meetings of similar congregational groups - catechists and Sunday school teachers, parish councils and vestries, finance committees, youth, seniors, men's, women's, interchurch families for prayer, socializing and informal sharing of experiences. **[Are these to be social events or a sharing of information? This would need to be clarified ahead of time as to why they were meeting. What is the expected outcome from having met as a group?]**

Another suggested interchurch congregational activity was to schedule joint Bible study sessions around Acts 2:42-47 and the scriptural theme of "One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer"(cf. Acts 2:42) as suggested for the 2011 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. At the end of that suggestion, they express their hope that the churches would wish to continue the Bible Study and ecumenical form of worship on into the coming year so that this isn't just a one week or one time event. **[I see great potential in joint Bible studies especially if they are handled with**



**Burr Oak
Savanna was left
on Hill tops -
Note the river in
the valley below**

compassion and if everyone is allowed to participate equally.]

One of the suggestions of events for the planning committee for the "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity involved providing direct information about what programs had been successful in the area in helping to move all of us in the direction toward Christian Unity. **[This is extremely important for helping to define our ongoing goal, to keep us all focused on that goal, to remind us of our progress so as to motivate us to continue, to help create a sense of community through our sharing of stories, and to allow us to be inspired by the Spirit]**

One of the suggestions was for us to "Launch a speaker series, featuring theologians, ecumenical specialist/staff, spiritual directors or social justice leaders" **[I wondered to myself if we have exhausted all of the "good will" tickets of any potential local speakers, are there some still willing to come to speak, or do we need to begin to seek out new voices and new perspectives from a new generation?]**

Organize tours of area churches conducted by guides who can share each church's art, architecture, history, organization, liturgical traditions, membership profile, outreach programs, etc. **[This has great potential as a starting point for opening up a dialogue between churches. It would be best if this happened and there was also a follow up plan in place so that the discussion could continue. A guided discussion may need to be developed so that each church comes out understanding their own beliefs better as they compare their beliefs.]**

Expanding on that idea, one of the suggestions highlighted the possibility that we could organize a concert to share the music used in different worship

traditions. How different are our traditions?

Then, I believe there is one tradition that worships in silence. What happens in that silence? Perhaps members from that tradition could share information with the rest of us about that form of worship.

There were many suggestions for how we could plan and celebrate the "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity:

Coordinate a child/youth Ecumenical Sunday experience in the community. Mimes, musicians, storytellers and crafts persons offer unique ways to develop future ecumenists. In the context of an Ecumenical Sunday fun fair, families and individuals can experience ecumenism and perhaps become more deeply

involved in building unity among the churches.

[What are the key skills that we need to identify that children need to have in order to become ecumenists as adults? How do we then cultivate and nurture these ideas in our current American cultural and social climate as it currently exists so that our current society will hold up these values as being of importance for future generations to maintain? Children are the future; this is an important topic that merits being studied in depth.]

Where joint worship cannot be shared, have pulpit and/or choir exchanges, observing the norms of reciprocity of the participating churches.

Please share your story for how you chose or are choosing to spend this year in an ecumenical way leading toward Christian Unity ... either that week or during the rest of the year ...

What are you doing, even in a small way, to promote Christian Unity?

Send your article to mjglauber@gmail.com Please put "the ARK" in the subject line

"That we all may be one" John 17:21 and Acts 2:42-47 should be referenced in your article.

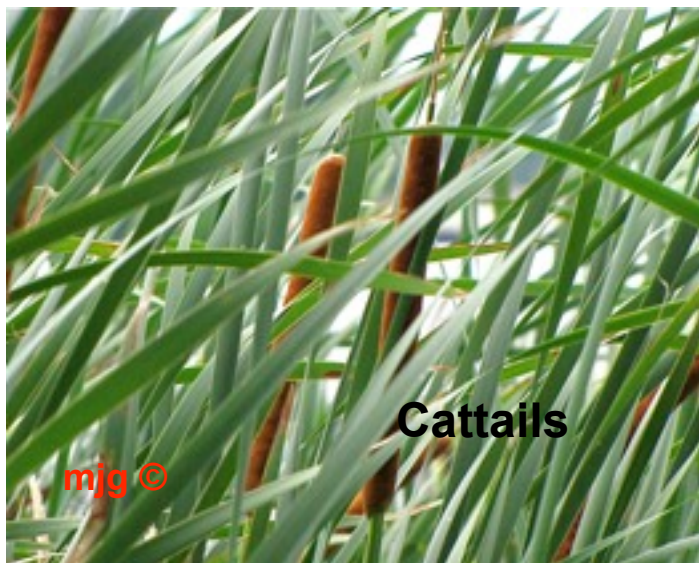
"Where are we going next?"

After the close of the "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity by creating a written article to share with other ARK readers.

ARK readers have expressed an interest in reading more about the following Topics of Interest:

We are also looking for the ways that you have successfully nurtured ecumenism in children in articles you may wish to submit in the future.

How to meet "the other" when "the other" inspires fear - Finding common talking points while dealing with our own FEAR(s) - Looking for solutions and ways to avoid wars, on the grand scale, so both big wars, and those irritating little human conflicts between people.



Cattails

mjg ©

[This may be a sweet introduction to another preaching style, but what happens next? Where does our understanding move to next? What kind of change can we help to bring about that will help to lead toward Christian Unity?]

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity worship daily in different churches of the community using the traditional prayer forms of the host congregation.

[How much time will each parishioner be able to dedicate to this mission? How do we generate an interest in visiting other churches? Many people have homes where both parents must work in order for them just to survive. Time is a real problem for many families, and we know that time is money.]

Offer a morning, afternoon or evening for reflection focusing on the prayer of Christ "that they all may be one" from John 17:1-26 and on this year's theme "One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer".

[What format will be used once we are all gathered? How many denominations will be included? What is the goal of this initial group meeting? How will we be able to make everyone feel included and comfortable in this kind of setting?]

Schedule at least one major Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God during the Week of Prayer. The celebration can fall on any day of the week.

[How much interest does the greater community have in this issue so that planning for this is worthwhile and attending this worship is perceived as being worthwhile?

- If ecumenism has "been placed on the back burner," what are the underlying causes for this? What issues then are being perceived as far more pressing if not ecumenism?

- Is it not ecumenism that will provide the underlying solution for most of the other problems we face in all of our communities?]

Obviously anyone who was in a position to be planning for the "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity for January 18-25, 2011 would have



Native water plants

mjg ©



considered all of the suggested items on this list before selecting which ones may or may not have worked best in their area within their geographical and physical restraints. That week was really intended to be just an introduction for the new year, we have the rest of the year to continue on this journey. We can implement any of these topics during this year. Which ones will work best in your area? Which ones will you be willing to try?

Many thanks to the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute and the World Council of Churches for their wonderful diversity and plentiful number of suggestions

Guy Montgomery ↓ - *sunset in Wisconsin at 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference*



for ways that we can reach out to meet “Other” Christians who are our neighbors in our own communities.

The Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute has also created a broader list for ways that we can work together to make the world better for those who are less fortunate than we are. The complete list begins at this link : http://www.geii.org/wpcu_christian_unity_throughout_the_year.htm

I would like to highlight a few from their list. These are opportunities for serving in ecumenical ways:

Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week
(February 20-27)

This annual observance challenges our awareness of and involvement in the wider ecumenism of interfaith understanding. For information contact:

National Conference for Community and Justice
760 N. Frontage Road - Suite 105
Willowbrook, IL 60527
Tel: 630 789-6709; Fax: 630 789-6718
Website www.nccjtriad.org

Ash Wednesday

(March 9, Western Churches)
Neighborhood churches having a joint celebration of the word of God, including the blessing and imposition of ashes or another act of repentance, is a symbolic way to begin the season of Lent.

Lent

(March 9- April 23, Western Churches;
March 13- April 24, Eastern/Orthodox Churches)

A modern-day pilgrimage, inviting Christians to experience worship in a different church in their neighborhood on consecutive Sundays, encourages interest in Christian unity. Interest increases when visitors are publicly welcomed and given opportunity to talk informally with the host congregation. As a lenten pilgrimage, such services express an ecumenical dimension to the season's prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

(March 18-21)

Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a movement of the ecumenical Christian community, and its recognized partners and allies, grounded in biblical witness and our shared traditions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Our goal, through worship, theological reflection and opportunities for learning and witness, is to strengthen our Christian voice and to mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues. For further information contact: Molly Keane, Conference Coordinator
Ecumenical Advocacy Days
c/o Office of Public Life and Social Policy United Church of Christ
100 Maryland Ave. NE, Suite 330

Washington, DC 20002
Tel. 202-386-6397
Email info@advocacydays.org
The issues for which church members advocate correspond with the UN Millennium Goals in general.

The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of Aids (March 6-12)
The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of Aids is a national call to religious leaders and to the African American community at-large to involve and educate our churches by providing prevention facts about HIV/AIDS and by encouraging compassion for people infected and affected by the disease. (traditionally the first full week of March starting Sunday ending Saturday)

For additional information contact:
The Balm In Gilead
701 East Franklin Street Suite 1000
Richmond, VA 23219
Tel (804) 644-BALM (2256);
Fax: (804) 644-2257
E-mail: info@balmingilead.org
Website: www.balmingilead.org

Easter Sunday

(April 24, Western Churches;
April 24, Eastern/Orthodox Churches)
A sunrise service of the celebration of the word of God or the liturgy of the hours gives

the Easter liturgy its ecumenical dimension when shared by neighborhood churches. This can be followed by a simple fellowship of sharing traditional Easter foods which highlight the cultural aspects of interchurch activity.

World Community Day

"Living Our Faith, Unlocking Action"
(November 3)

World Community Day (WCD) is celebrated on or near the first Friday in November, and focuses on justice and peace in the global society. Themes are chosen by the Ecumenical Celebrations Committee and seek to relate the issues of justice and peace in the United States. Since 2004, every other year is written as a service appropriate for Interfaith participation, providing the opportunity to reach out to our Jewish, Muslim, and other sisters. It is also an opportunity to engage in an in-depth study of global issues related to the theme. For information about its observance contact:
Church Women United
475 Riverside Drive, Room 243
New York, NY 10115.
1-800-CWU (298)-5551; Tel 212-870-2347; Fax 212-870-2338.

Email
djamilahsamad@churchwomen.org

Website www.churchwomen.org.

Are you Presbyterian?
Did you just publish your first book?

**Presbyterian Writers Guild seeks best
new author:**

ANGELL AWARD GOES TO BEST FIRST BOOK
BY A PRESBYTERIAN WRITER

[http://www.pcusa.org/news/2011/1/5/
presbyterian-writers-guild-seeks-best-new-author/](http://www.pcusa.org/news/2011/1/5/presbyterian-writers-guild-seeks-best-new-author/)

Are other denominations also encouraging emerging writers? Please let me know the ways that this is happening. To receive this award, the Best First Book must be published in 2010 so that the author can give copies of it to the reviewers.

**Libbye Montgomery - organized the 2010
AAIF Biennial Conference ↓**



Do you see other topics that lend themselves to being resolved by Ecumenical groups working in unison that have not been mentioned? More are listed at the www.geii.org website.

Have any groups been left off of the list who could be better served by an Ecumenical group than by separate churches working to try to accomplish similar tasks?

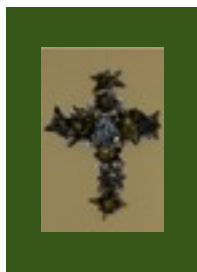
How would you work to create the foundations so that these ecumenical groups could be formed to provide a more efficient service or a service that currently doesn't exist but which is greatly needed in our community for which you are aware?

What resources and skills would be needed to be able to make this service available and a successful joint ecumenical project that would also help to lead us toward Christian Unity?

If we are all one big family of humanity, have we considered everyone? Have we called everyone in to sit at the dinner table with us 'so to speak' and so we can all discuss together what needs to be discussed as equals? ARK readers would like to read your reflections.

Please think
on these things.

M.J. Glauber



“Teach Me”

Earth teach me stillness

As the grasses are stilled with light.

Earth teach me suffering

As old stones suffer with memory.

Earth teach me humility

As blossoms are humble with beginning.

Earth teach me caring

As the mother who secures her young.

Earth teach me courage

As the tree which stands alone.

Earth teach me limitation

As the ant which crawls on the ground.

Earth teach me freedom

As the eagle which soars in the sky.

Earth teach me limitation

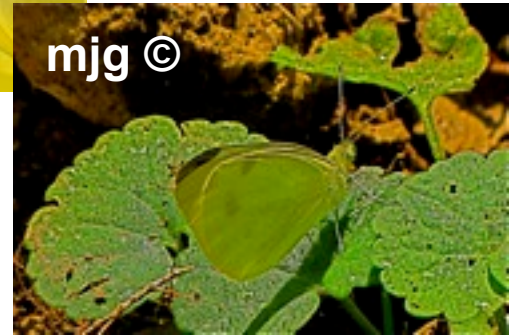
As the ant which crawls on the ground. Earth

teach me resignation

As the leaves which die and fall



Grass
Skipper
Butterflies
sunning
themselves
in July



Earth teach me regeneration

As the seed which rises in the spring.

Earth teach me to forget myself

As melted snow forgets its life.

Earth teach me to remember kindness

As dry fields weep with rain.

from “The Treasury of American Prayer”

compiled by James P. Moore, Jr

in the Chapter

“Wisdom, Understanding and Humility”



Lamar Burton talks to the ship's captain ↓

Moore attached a note at the end of this prayer in which he writes, “This ancient prayer from the Ute tribe, whose land encompassed what is today Utah and Colorado, speaks to the need for wisdom in all things.” Moore adds, “While people of the Native American nations and tribes had not developed a religious identity in the way European settlers had done, they nonetheless were deeply spiritual. Their prayers always appealed to a higher power as the major force in their lives and in nature.”

- I believe that we have far more in common with this kind of spirituality than we have that is different. M.J. Glauber

**“O, God, help us not to despise or oppose
what we do not understand” ~ William Penn**

From “The Treasury of American Prayer,” James P. Moore, Jr. called this short prayer by William Penn: “In Search of Empathy.” Moore explains that “Penn, who had founded the Pennsylvania Colony, who had been a convert to the Quaker Faith, had become passionate in his promotion of tolerance.” “William Penn opened up Pennsylvania to individuals of all faiths and backgrounds,” Moore points out. In this prayer, Penn speaks of tolerance in the midst of human differences,” Moore observes.

Upon seeing sunset

***O God, I thank Thee for such direct
manifestations of Thy goodness,
majesty and power!***



Carol Natella takes a look at the sunset over Lake Mendota at the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference



James P. Moore, Jr. also included this prayer by George Washington Carver, the “inventor, scientist, and social activist, who believed that human knowledge and the hand of God were inextricably linked. While one could not test a personal relationship with God to the satisfaction of individuals through human quantification, he believed in the existence of an Almighty and that Divine Providence had a plan for everyone. In composing this simple expression of thanksgiving, Carver was recording his reactions in witnessing a spectacular sunset not far from his laboratory at Tuskegee University in Alabama.”

Looking forward to the 2012 AAIF Biennial Conference

- details to follow at www.aifusa.org

International Standard Serial Number: ISSN 1943-6467 (print)

THE ARK, A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF INTERCHURCH FAMILIES

©Copyright 2011 AAIF all rights reserved

MARY JANE GLAUBER, VOLUNTEER ARK STAFF

MJGLAUBER@GMAIL.COM

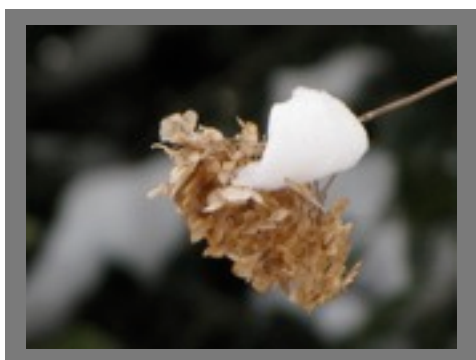
2506 GLENMARY AVENUE
LOUISVILLE, KY 40204-2111

To:

February 2011

Volume 22
Edition 2

The ARK



icy snow on hydrangea in February in Kentucky