

WAC CHURCHLETTER

JUNE 2009



WYOMING ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES - ON LINE NEWS
1131 13TH .
SUITE 210
CODY, WY 82414
307-527-7026

JOHN PEACOCK - NEW WAC DIRECTOR

John Peacock of Cheyenne, Wyoming has been selected as the new Director of the Wyoming Association of Churches beginning July 1st. He replaces The Rev. Warren Murphy of Cody, who has held that position since 2004. John is an Episcopalian who has long been active at St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming. He has also been active in numerous Cheyenne faith events including an On Sacred Ground event, an AIDS walk and an International Day of Peace.

In addition to his church work, John has an extensive background in business management. He most recently served as operations manager for the Corral West Ranchwear chain based in Cheyenne. He will be joining WAC at a time of rapid change and changing structural dynamics in both the state and in the life of established church denominations. The WAC has undergone a change in its own organizational structure.

John stated, "My vision for the Association is quite simple - a vibrant and faith based organization discerning common ground from among its members in order to be an effective state-wide voice for environmental and social justice issues". He will need the prayers and support of WAC's board, judicatory members, affiliated congregations and the many organizations that have partnered with the WAC in recent years.

NEW WAC CONTACT INFORMATION

Please note the new address changes as of July 1. The email address: wychurches@wyoming.com stays the same. WAC's new mailing address will be:

**The Wyoming Association of Churches
321 Gardenia Dr.
Cheyenne, WY 82009
New Phone #: 307-631-8914**

The Rev. Warren Murphy will be continuing to serve as a liaison to WAC on some environmental as well as on domestic violence prevention issues. He can be reached at:

warrencmurphy@gmail.com

His cell phone # is: 307-272-9362

The WAC also expresses thanks to Rose Hackett and Pam Noesner who have served in an administrative capacity over the last four years. We wish them well in their future endeavors.

2009 NEW PASTORS' CONFERENCE



Once again the WAC is pleased to sponsor a “New Pastor’s Conference” to be held August 30th - September 2nd at scenic Ring Lake Ranch near Dubois. This conference has been well received and is open to any clergy who are new to Wyoming or newly ordained within the last two years. Cost per participant is \$190 and spouses are welcome to attend.

The New Pastor’s Conference offers clergy a chance to hear about the role churches have played in Wyoming’s history, about some of the unique issues congregations face here and experience time with other clergy in an ecumenical setting. Most importantly, participants at past sessions have received valuable information on how to be successful during the state’s changing times.

Ring Lake Ranch offers a unique mountain setting close to the Fitzpatrick Wilderness in the Wind River Range. Time will be available for fishing, hiking and horseback riding. Participants can also take in the surroundings from their cabins.

The WAC is soliciting the names and addresses from judicatories and others about who is new in Wyoming. Invitations will be issued during the month of July. Judicatory officers and individual congregations are asked to financially assist new pastors to attend if that assistance is necessary. This is an excellent way for new clergy to find out about ministry in this unique state. Please contact us at wychurches@wyoming.com for more information.

ANNUAL MEETING - OCTOBER 9-10

This year’s WAC Annual Meeting and celebration has been scheduled for October 9-10 in Cheyenne. Guest speaker for this year’s event will be The Rev. Peg Chamberlin, President-elect of the National Council of Churches of Christ. Peg is also Director of the highly successful Minnesota Council of Churches.

This year’s annual meeting will address the major shift changes going on in denominational life. It

will also address new models on how ecumenical work can be helpful in addressing these changes. Peg Chamberlin will be offering her unique perspective on these topics.

The annual gathering will also include an installation services for John Peacock, new WAC Director. As usual it will be a time for judicatory leaders, WAC members and others to celebrate the unity of the Christian faith in Wyoming.

WAC AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

For the first time in many years, the WAC and the National Council of Churches in Christ (NCC) have developed a partnering relationship to address important environmental issues. A recent grant was given to the WAC by the NCC to publicize and promote the Wyoming Range Legacy Act which recently passed Congress and was signed into law by President Obama. The NCC and WAC lobbied hard to see to fruition the act's passage.

In addition, to the NCC's Washington, D.C. presence, two public local forums were held in Wyoming to garner local support. The forums were entitled, "On Sacred Ground - A Celebration of the Wyoming Range". They were held at Western Wyoming College in Rock Springs and the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The WAC's partners in putting on these events were Citizens for the Wyoming Range, the Wilderness Society, the Wyoming Outdoor Council, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Wyoming Wildlife Federation and the National Outdoor Leadership School.

Now that the bill has passed, the WAC has re-focused on another broad based effort to protect the Red Desert from excessive oil and gas development. The NCC will continue to work with WAC and are diverse partners in seeking to protect this unique part of Wyoming's landscape.



On Sacred Ground
FAITH & THE ENVIRONMENT

ON SACRED GROUND LIVES ON

"On Sacred Ground" (OSG) is a unique movement led by people from both the faith and environmental communities to work together on a common agenda. WAC has received a special gift from the Turner Foundation to assist six OSG "Affinity Groups" in carrying on localized activities. Following is a summary of OSG events as compiled by Diane Corsick who has served as technical consultant for this project.

**On Sacred Ground
Turner Foundation Grant
Final Project Summary Report
May 31, 2009**

OSG Douglas

OSG Planet Partners Community Committee is nearing the first goal of our Xeric Demonstration

Garden at the Wyoming State Fair Grounds funded by WAC and the Turner Foundation. This project will be ongoing as the garden requires rather intensive care especially during this first year. The goal of this garden is to provide a visual guide for others who want to beautify their area and do it in a way that considers and respects the environment. These plants require very little water and add a wide assortment of flowers and bushes to give color and texture in a garden that fits Wyoming landscape. We hope this xeric garden will demonstrate and educate others in ways to better care for the planet and that it will inspire the use of plants that conserve water. (Sara Baker)

OSG Cheyenne

Our OSG organization, the Green Coalition of Cheyenne, held a city-wide Earth Day celebration and festival from 10:00 to 3:00 at the Unitarian Universalist Church located at 3005 Thomes Avenue on Saturday, April 18th. In spite of our "wonderful Wyoming" spring snow storm, we had over 100 visitors to the inside part of the festival which included The Nature Conservancy, Laramie County Conservation District, Department of Environmental Quality, the Laramie County Centralized Pharmacy, Pam Pallack and The Compact, and the Cheyenne Sanitation Department. To promote this activity, we had ten "spots" on Wyoming Public Radio, three paid ads in the Wyoming Tribune Eagle, free advertising in two newspapers, a state-wide email list, and the local college's public service television channel. We put up about 75 printed posters around town. The day of the event we had coverage from the local Channel 5 TV station and newspaper. We hope that this project will help to strengthen our On Sacred Ground affinity group here in Cheyenne as well as inspire, educate and motivate the festival participants to help care for our environment. Plans are already in the works to have another festival next year. We are very grateful for the support of the Turner Foundation as well as the Wyoming Association of Churches. (Sandy Gaulke)

OSG Casper

The Vision of "On Sacred Ground – Casper" is to see our community be transformed from wasteful consumption to sustainable preservation of God's Creation. Our main focus is on education in our congregations and throughout the wider community. We are at this point in our life, focusing on smaller, time limited and very concrete and doable tasks, allowing us to gain visibility and a positive reputation for follow through. We believe that the best way to make an impact and avoid burn out is by offering folks something that they can do easily and every day. So each project we take on is lead by the member or friend who has a certain passion that they are willing to lead and we provide the backup, contacts and resources. Our premise is this: There are two great responsibilities common to all faiths: to love one another and to care for God's good Creation. The turnout was very positive and we did indeed gain new members, ideas and energy on our board. With the help of the Turner grant we were able to distribute pens and pencils made out of recycled materials and also do demonstrations on how to make school items from recycled materials. We will in our community have projects that will benefit our local environment and therefore . . . the world. (Dee Lundberg)

OSG Laramie

On Sacred Ground of Laramie sponsored an educational and inspirational event for Earth Day 2009: "Environmental Education for Life." Our mission is to help protect our natural environment through connections to spirit, education, conscious action, and joy. We believe that Environmental Education is the keystone for bringing all citizens in Wyoming back to our sacred land. Without Environmental

Education, our younger generations will continue to be connected to their computers and cell phones and will miss the opportunities to reconnect with the outdoors and our land. We believe that the current “de-naturing” of our children is a root cause of many of the societal problems facing our state and nation. We aim to turn this around for Wyoming’s future.

Our Earth Day event, held on the University of Wyoming campus at the College of Education, featured a keynote speaker, Rebekah Simon-Peter, an ordained Methodist minister with BridgeWorks in Rawlins, Wyoming, and a panel of five educators who responded to the keynote speaker and spoke of their visions for creating and implementing curricula for Environmental Education for life; i.e., from kindergarten through graduate school and to the end of life. We will be targeting many of these people in the future for their support in helping us facilitate design and implement K-19 curricula throughout Wyoming; pass necessary legislation; motivate local school districts and boards; work with local citizens on place-based Environmental Education; and promote passage of the “No Child Left Inside” legislation re-introduced in Congress on April 22, 2009—Earth Day. (Suzanne Lewis)

OSG Lander

Pushroot Community Garden: HOLY WOW! Did we build raised garden beds!?! We had a fabulous community turnout May 16, 2009 which matched the fabulous weather of the day I cannot overstate the gratitude I have for all the volunteers. Approximately (25) people from all walks of life and faiths joined together for 4-6 hours as we built 18 raised beds and filled them with soil. Each volunteer put in about (3) hours of work time; a good number pushed it beyond that. By the end of the day Sunday, the plots were labeled with a letter or number designation. E-mails were sent to the folks who have rented plots with their plot information, so that folks can plant any time after that. I am humbled and grateful to be part of this project. The Pushroot Community Garden is grateful for Turner Foundation funding for media development: newspaper ads and articles, radio advertisements, fliers, and for reimbursements to garden managers for items needed for the garden, and garden development. (Andy Eckhart, Pushroot Garden Manager)

OSG Cody

My report from the Cody OSG is short, sweet and a bit disappointing. After a vigorous start with a well attended community gathering, we seem to have hit a dry spot. The initial community meeting raised many important faith-environmental issues. However, at the time we had no funds to pursue any of the projects. By the time the Turner Foundation grant was available through Wyoming Association of Churches, the local community group seemed to have lost its momentum. We had a couple of smaller community meetings where we decided to focus on "dark skies" as our topic. We added support to Sen. Case's dark skies bill in the legislature. We got a couple of columns run in the local press. There were a few folks who worked very hard on this. We do have a project to print brochures on "dark skies" that can be placed throughout the community. But little is happening at the present time. (Reverend Warren Murphy)

“SAVE THE DATE - MARIE FORTUNE IN WYOMING”



Dr. Rev. Marie Fortune of Faith Trust Institute is coming to Wyoming



September 22, 2009:

Holiday Inn—Cheyenne, WY

September 24, 2009:

Parkway Plaza—Casper, WY

8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m. each day

~No registration fees~

WCADVSA
P.O. Box 907
Rock Springs, WY 82902

For more information contact:

Jolene Lux, RRD

Phone: 307-382-2803

Fax: 307-362-5611

E-mail: jolene@wyomingdvsa.org

MOVING DOWN THE ROAD



With this issue of the Churchletter, I get to say goodbye as WAC Director and welcome my successor, John Peacock. I can only tell you it has been a wonderful four and three quarter years of being the point person for the state's ecumenical presence. It has also been a pleasure to have met with and worked with those who have devoted their lives to bring about positive changes in the state of Wyoming.

I arrived in Wyoming 32 ½ years ago as a young Episcopal rector at a tiny rural parish in Dixon, Wyoming. I have been privileged to also lead congregations in Lander, Ft. Washakie, Atlantic City and Cody during those years. During all those assignments, I remained active in the Wyoming Association of Churches (and the old Wyoming Church Coalition). The WAC has always been the church's prophetic voice in Wyoming. During my time as director, I have worked hard to maintain that legacy. I remain convinced that there must be a voice of faith that questions and confronts those who accept injustice and align themselves with the rich and the comfortable.

When I began my ordained ministry, I took to heart Jesus' sending forth of the "70", those followers who committed their life to following the path of Jesus (Lk 10:1-12).

I have always been haunted by his words, "Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road" To me, this means our ministry must never be dragged down by possessions, unreasonable commitments and staying put in one place. Jesus was about change...both of the world and in people's personal lives. I continue to believe that this remains our call today. I leave this position with no great wealth, modest possessions and no honorary degrees. I look forward to continuing my journey down the road.

As for the WAC, yet a new chapter begins. We have become a trimmed down organization still defining its task in a rapidly changing world. We are still here to offer advice and service to the mainline denominations' churches that are themselves facing defining moments of change. I urge you to welcome John Peacock as the one who will now carry the WAC torch. Remember a "torch" is used to bring about light when darkness seems to not end.

As for me, I will continue to be available to assist the WAC when asked. I will be working on my long delayed book on the religious and spiritual history of Wyoming. Most of all, I will be out there on the road following the path of Jesus.

Warren Murphy

REMEMBER TO GIVE TO THE WAC

As you should all be aware, the WAC has had to expand its fund raising capabilities because of the downturn in judicatory giving. Letters are being sent out to thank and remind our members to please renew for 2009. We also offer you and your congregation an opportunity to join our membership. Each individual and congregational member has a vote at the WAC annual meeting. You also make it possible to keep our online Churchletter and website to continue. Consider a donation based on the following categories.

Membership in WAC is easy. Just send us a check and your email address. Please have your congregation include us in the 2009 budget. We are a great Wyoming Mission project.

Congregational Memberships are:

\$40 for 50 members or less

\$75 for 51-100 members

\$125 for 101-200 members

\$200 for 200 or members

Individual and family memberships are \$25

Of course, additional gifts are also always appreciated. Please send contributions to the WAC at 321 Gardenia Dr. Cheyenne, WY 92009.

COMING ACTIVITIES - SAVE THE DATES

Aug 30 - Sept 2, 2009	Annual New Pastors' Conference - Ring Lake Ranch, Dubois, Wyoming Call the WAC for reservations 307-631-8914
Sept 22 & Sept 24, 2009	Dr. Rev. Marie Fortune of Faith Trust Institute is coming to Wyoming September 22, 2009: Holiday Inn—Cheyenne, WY September 24, 2009: Parkway Plaza—Casper, WY 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m. each day ~No registration fees~
Oct 9-10, 2009	SAVE THE DATE! Annual WAC meeting - Cheyenne

The Wyoming Association of Churches, The Rev. Warren Murphy, Director and Rose Hackett, Administrative Assistant publishes this newsletter. We welcome your comments and suggestions. If you know of someone who would like to receive our publication, please email us at wychurches@wyoming.com. If you do not wish to receive the ChurchLetter, simply email wychurches@wyoming.com and type "unsubscribe" in the subject line