



Ecumenical Christian Ministries
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ECM Newsletter

April 2008

Letter from Thad Holcombe

ECM Rumors and Affirmations

You may be aware of the news regarding the hotel to be built across the street from ECM. In addition, the street in front (Oread) will become a boulevard, and the apartment across Oread will become renovated. Rumors! We heard many, including we were being forced out, ECM was bankrupt and owed \$100,000 and ECM was selling and moving or closing. None of the above occurred.

Prior to the news of the hotel development, ECM was considering how to address much-needed capital improvements on the building. Built in 1960 and after extensive use by many, our building needed an upgrade. The ECM board began looking at ways to address this concern; one was to sell and relocate in a new building at some site. This was unanimously rejected as an option.

We decided to embark on a capital fund-raising campaign. At the same time, we are fortunate to receive the assistance of the Lawrence

Modern, a group advocating preservation and education of furniture and buildings of the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, and we fit the bill! The building was built in 1960, and we have time to do much needed research and may receive historical recognition once the building is 50 years old. We are beginning the process to become historically designated.

I think the result of meetings and discussion, plus feedback from ECM alum, KU faculty, staff, students and Lawrence community, was to acknowledge that the ECM building is more than a structure to be torn down or renovated; it is a sacred space for many. It has been a hearth around which folks have gathered to organize for peace with justice. Some come to live in the covenant-community of residents in the basement. It has been a place where individuals, groups and ministries felt they could pause in the midst of a dominant culture that teaches us to be so busy! Tears and laughter at gatherings have commemorated lives of those who have died, along with theatre productions and weddings. Faith journeys, vocational discernment and University Forums continue around the hearth of ECM.

We hope to begin our Capital Campaign in the fall of 2008 and are fortunate to have The Church Development Foundation to assist us. A feasibility study will include many of you receiving a survey to help us determine how best to proceed.

Thad Holcombe, ECM Campus Minister

Please let us know if you receive the newsletter in both email and paper. We are transitioning to email and would like to add you to our email recipient list. Contact us at (785) 843-4933 or ecmku@ku.edu

News at ECM

Join Us for Interfaith Seder **Interfaith Conversation- Peace Making- Community Building**

The Faith Forum: A Liberating Take on Christianity will meet on Wednesday evenings, 6-8pm over dinner, dialogue and viewing of short video presentations (meals \$3.00/students; \$5.50 others). On April 9, we co-sponsored the Faith Club Panel (Christian, Muslim, Jewish) in the Kansas Union to a wonderful response!

Join us for these special topics and experiences on Wednesdays:

April 23: Interfaith Seder Meal during Passover, 6pm (reservations by April 16)

April 30: War Beyond Borders Founder will present at 7pm on this peace making organization www.beyondwar.org.

May 7: Rachel Cloud, a KU graduate, recently returned from Columbia as a member of Christian Peacemaking Team, will share her experiences.

Silent Saturday- April 26

Bring your notes, laptop, books, journal and study, complete a paper, nap or daydream all is possible on a Silent Saturday.

Come at 12:30pm, when we will introduce ourselves to each other. Then at the sound of the "gong," we will enter silence. At 3:15 pm, we will break silence and share snacks. We will return to silence until 5:30 pm when we will prepare the table for a celebratory meal and finish near 7pm.

Cost is \$6.00 for food and snacks. Reserve your space by April 24 at noon on telephone 785-843-4933 or ecmku@ku.edu or reserve in person.

Pancakes for Finals - Sunday, May 11, 7-9pm



Come to ECM for "brain food," and take a break!



Geraniums and Goodbyes to Graduates and Others Leaving

Friday (Stop Day), May 9th , 6-7:30pm

The annual spring semester good-bye to those leaving ECM, KU and Haskell:

Come and join us whether or not you are graduating. We need your names if we missed you. Let us know and we will remind you of this fun occasion; you will have food and an opportunity to say a few parting words and receive a live geranium to recall our times together.

Care of Creation- Ecojustice Opportunities

This semester was the first time ECM had a Haskell Indian Nations University student as Ecojustice Coordinator. Leah Hitcher has organized opportunities to experience earth ethic concerns by participating in a Haskell-Baker Wetlands field trip.

Bison on the Konza Prairie

- **Haskell-Baker Wetland Field Trips**- ECM, Haskell Wetlands Preservation Organization (WPO), and KU Environs will sponsor these guided trips and discuss the history and issues pertaining to possible highway widening and/or construction through the Wetlands.

Thursday, May 1: meet at ECM for carpooling.

Saturday, May 3: meet at ECM for carpooling before sunrise.

- Monday, April 21, ECM hosted **Community Dinner on Sustainable Food Systems**, speaker **Gary Nabhan**, author of *Desert Smells Like Rain* and *Coming Home to Eat, The Pleasures and Politics of Local Foods*.

Alternative Breaks "Reunion"

What do **Arizona, New Mexico, New Orleans, El Salvador and Juarez** have in common? These places were Alternative Break sites- 58 students and others went to be introduced to different cultures, hard work and community experiences far different than the Lawrence "bubble." These were service-learning experiences where "consciousness" was raised by participants and "praxis" (reflection on action) was encouraged by the spring break coordinators.

A reunion of every AB participant with photos and storytelling will be on May 8, 2008 at 7pm. **FOOD** will be served. Fifteen or so photos from each AB will be presented, along with some great stories.



Alternative Spring Break in New Mexico

Juarez in Winter

The first ever ECM Alternative during a winter break went to Juarez, Mexico. The evaluations confirmed this southern border city is a microcosm of perplex issues where differing cultures, races and class converge in the tense atmosphere of US attitude toward illegal immigrants. The Earlham College Border Program provided an avenue for the Alternative Break Team to meet and experience the intensity of the borderland.

Sexuality Education Team (SEC) has Positions Open for Fall

More than 70 students and others registered for **Human Sexuality** in Everyday Life, a ten-week series led by Professor Dennis Dailey, KU Professor Emeritus of Social Welfare. It has been a good year, with many involved in **Real Person's Guide** and **Intimacy for Committed Couples** held in the fall. New members are welcome to SEC! Coordinators are Kyle Kitson, kitson@ku.edu and Jen Faber, tashbag@ku.edu.



Veggie Lunch- New Equipment- Great Volunteer Cooks!

The ECM **Veggie Lunch** hosts more than 100 every Thursday for what has been great veggie meals, along with the wonderful breads that are courtesy of Wheat Fields and Great Harvest! The Student Senate agreed to purchase a rice steamer (\$400) due to the persistence and political savvy of Student Senator, Sonia Marcinkowski. We received a nearly new upright freezer for a modest price. (Thank you John Hughes of First Presbyterian Church and Skeeter Link/Bob Thompson for moving it to ECM!)

We will miss the exceptional talents of Andrew Fox, who has co-coordinated Veggie Lunch; he will travel to Jordan next semester to study Arabic. Hilah Vanderlippe will continue her excellent job as a co-coordinator. Summer Veggie Lunch begins June 5- spread the word!

Koinonia Invites Applicants for Summer/Fall

Most likely, Koinonia will have four openings for summer and fall 2008. Many residents are graduating or returning to their country of origin. Application for summer/fall are available.

Summer/Fall openings in student cooperative at ECM Center, 1 block north of KS Union; individual rooms available; \$300 to \$357 depending on size and private or shared bath; includes utilities, internet, parking, laundry, storage, large dining/living room/ kitchen. Covenant agreement includes meeting once/week for common meal, orientation, chore rotation, volunteer 1.5 hours per week (summer) and 3 hours per week (fall-spring). Details at www.ecmku.org/koinonia

Fair Trade in the Heartland

ECM was a lead sponsor of the second annual regional conference "**Fair Trade in the Heartland: Starting a Movement, Building Communities,**" on April 11-12, 2008. Conference goals were to educate participants on the local to global economics and how they can support life-affirming trade practices that honor community and the earth.

Speakers represented the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Oxfam. **Fair Food and the Fair Trade Conference** participants marched 80 strong to Burger King, which has refused to negotiate for one-cent-per-pound increase for tomatoes. Workshops were held on Fair Trade concerns. Coordinator was Brenna Spurgeon, brenn.spurgeon@gmail.com.

More Lawrence Food Pantries Empty- Just Food



Responds

The increasing cost of food and the gap between wealthy and poor has not skipped Lawrence! **Just Food**, a coalition of churches, agencies and ECM, is attempting to be proactive and provide food to all food pantries so none go empty. ECM's Just Food will join with **Phi Kappa Phi** (junior/senior house) for an end-of-semester food drive. (A recent drive netted a box full of food--thanks!)

In addition, Just Food Coordinator Reanna Putnam at reannap@ku.edu welcomes others to create a team. Just Food volunteers can assist in delivering canned food, help in Lawrence Farmer's Market gleaning, and educating KU about hunger in Lawrence.

University Forum- Spring 2008

Forum Speaker from noon-1pm, with optional lunch at 11:30am

April 23

Grassroots Women in Bolivarian Venezuela

Cory Fischer-Hoffman, Graduate Student in Latin American Studies (recently lived more than six months in Venezuela)

April 30

The Fossil Marine Mammals of Peru: A New Exhibition for KC and New Paradigm of Science from Peru

Craig Sandell, Executive Director of Santayana Institute (Lawrence and Lima, Peru)

May 7

Planning Meeting

Open to Forum attendees and others. Presenters and topics are suggested and selected for fall semester 2008. Lunch is served.

2009 Theologian in Residence

The 2009 Theologian in Residence will be Harvard University theologian Dr. Peter Gomes, regarded as one of America's most distinguished preachers. The 2008 Theologian in Residence was Dr. Bart Ehrman, Chair of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. ECM co-sponsored his appearances in Lawrence and Topeka.