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NEWS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Minnesota Council of Churches
February 1, 2012



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Get involved: Adult forums, guest preaching, volunteer opportunities, and advocacy training.

Stay in touch with the [Minnesota Council of](#)

Welcoming Refugees in Mankato

Churches and individuals in the Mankato area will soon have new opportunities to welcome their refugee neighbors. MCC Refugee Services is partnering with MRCI to fill a gap in services available to refugees in Mankato. The Mankato Refugee Services Program is honored to receive the overwhelming support of service providers, property owners, public officials, religious leaders, school officials, business representatives, and individual community members in the Mankato area. MCC is now hiring for an Associate Director of the Mankato Refugee Services Program (see below).

Minnesota Idea Open Challenge III:

Working Together Across Cultures and Faiths

What is your best idea to build bonds and work together across cultures and faiths in your community? The MN Idea Open wants your best idea. Minnesotans are known for their loyalty and tight-knit relationships. However, our signature traits also mean we are not as welcoming or open to others as we are to those within our own circles. In a changing state that has become more diverse in cultures and faiths, these tendencies become even more pronounced and it is increasingly important for us to find ways to get along.

Start brainstorming now and submit your best idea starting February 28. The three best ideas each receive a \$15,000 grant for implementation. Additionally, the individuals with the winning ideas each receive a \$500 cash prize for their efforts.

Visit www.MNIdeaOpen.org to sign up for updates and connect on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). The Idea Open Challenge III: Working Together Across Cultures and Faiths is made possible by [Minnesota Community Foundation](#) and [One Nation](#).

Upcoming Events

Faith Action Vigil on Immigration

Sunday, February 5; 2:30 PM

Ramsey County Adult Detention Center, 425 Grove Street, St. Paul MN

Praying for the transformation of the immigration system is one way to take action. This month's Immigration Faith Action Vigil will be hosted by St. Joan of Arc along the theme of "We are not alone. We are one human family and we are all immigrants. We come here today following in the footsteps of so many loved ones from so many nations." For more information or to sign up to "lead" or "host" a vigil contact the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration at interfaithcoalitionimmigration@gmail.com

[Churches](#) on Facebook.



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Energy Stewardship Webinar

Friday, February 10, at noon, Central Time

God gave us creation as a gift and we are called to be good stewards of that gift. When we create energy, we are often consuming gas, coal or oil—all finite resources. How can we preserve these resources for future generations? One tool currently being used is the Smart Grid. Learn more about how this emerging technology can save energy in our personal, work and faith lives by participating in a webinar on. First in a series of energy ethics webinars hosted by the National Council of Churches. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Help Spread the Love on Valentine's Day!

Tuesday, February 14, 2012; 9:30 AM (welcome & overview) 10:00-11:00 AM (deliver valentines)

Room 300 South, State Office Building Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul
Love Minnesota's children? Protect them from toxic chemicals in toys, shampoo and other products. [Join the Minnesota Council of Churches and the Healthy Legacy Coalition on Valentine's Day at the Minnesota Capitol!](#) We will be talking to state lawmakers about how they can protect children's health by supporting state policy that identifies toxic chemicals in children's bubble bath, toys, and other products. Parents, joined by their children, will travel through the Capitol and deliver handmade Valentine messages to state lawmakers. [RSVP today!](#)

How Can Our Religious Institutions and Leaders Reduce Partisan Animosity and Arrogance?

**Thursday, February 16, 2012, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
Humphrey Center, 301 19th Ave S, Minneapolis**

Much has been claimed and charged about the influence of faith and religion in dividing Americans and Minnesotans over the great political and cultural debates of our time. Given that love for fellow humans and humility before a higher power are central tenets of almost all faiths, how can our religious institutions and leaders help reduce animosity — and arrogance — in our polarized electorate? Leading the conversation will be two distinguished national religious leaders who call Minnesota home: the Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin, MCC Executive Director and immediate past-president of the National Council of Churches, and Pastor Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals and the recently retired pastor of Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie.

The event is free and open to the public, but [registration is appreciated](#). Or call Britt Drake at (612) 338-3605. This fourth annual Brandl lecture is sponsored by the Caux Round Table, Center of the American Experiment, Growth & Justice, Citizens League, Minnesota Free Market Institute, Minnesota Council of Churches, and Transform Minnesota.

Protecting Dignity, Ending Slavery

Monday, February 27, 6:30 p.m., Presbyterian Church of the Apostles, Burnsville

A brand new [issues paper by Minnesota's Joint Religious Legislative Coalition](#) reveals that human trafficking is a critical social justice issue, including in Minnesota where available data indicates that Minneapolis is the eighth worst city in the United States for trafficking of juveniles. Minnesota law enforcement says that sex trafficking of girls is happening in every city and every county in the state. Learn more about the issue and local efforts to combat this modern form of slavery by attending this [panel discussion](#). Co-sponsored by JRLC.

Advocate

Donations Needed for New Refugees

Refugees arriving for the first time in Minnesota can find it difficult to fall asleep in such an unfamiliar place. You can help make a refugee's first night in Minnesota restful by donating new and gently used *twin* bed sheets and pillows to MCC Refugee Services. Would you consider going through your linen closet or picking up a sheet set or a few pillows to share the next time you're at the store? Donations can be brought to the MN Church Center anytime during business hours. Contact Green at 612.230.3249 or at green.bouzard@mnchurches.org for more information.

Resources

Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast

Daily email messages will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 22, and continue through Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012.

"One of the smartest things I've done in my 85 years."

"My electric bill dropped \$78 monthly on average."

Last year over 6,000 people participated in the [ecumenical Lenten carbon fast](#). Beginning Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, participants will receive a daily email with the day's suggested carbon-reducing activity. Each daily email will also have a section suggesting a weekly focus for the congregation. No one is expected to be able to do everything suggested; but serious consideration of each day's activity can raise people's awareness, inviting them to think more carefully about how their day to day living impacts the environment and make the changes they can.

Employment

Associate Director, Mankato Refugee Services Program

Full-time, Regular, Exempt: The Associate Director position will provide leadership and supervision for the Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC) Mankato Refugee Services Office and be a part of the MCC Refugee Services Management Team. The Associate Director position will be divided to include both direct programming responsibilities and management duties, with primary focus on Management while carrying a caseload, as needed. Benefits include: medical, dental, life, long-term disability insurance; pension; paid vacation and medical leave. [Applications accepted](#) until 5 PM on February 8, 2012.

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More than 1 million people of faith strengthening communities.