

VOICES

for the Land & People

Alerting, informing & calling to action – people of faith in defense of Creation

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Summer 2006



Benefit concert is Oct. 15

Offering helps meet winter farmers' market expenses

“Caring for Creation” is the theme of this year’s Lighthouse Singers benefit concert for Churches’ Center for Land and People set for Sunday, Oct. 15.

Holy Wisdom Monastery, formerly the St. Benedict Center, in Middleton, Wis., again

provides the setting for the concert, which begins at 3 p.m. Wisconsin Public Radio program host Jonathan



Overby, with Michael Hillestad accompanying, leads the 18-member choral ensemble. They also perform solo vocals and instrumentals from traditional music in Latin, Italian and African dialects to modern selections.

Lighthouse musicians come from Madison, Monroe, Stoughton and Sun Prairie, Wis. They’re accustomed to “singing for a good cause,” such as for Harvest of Hope – the crisis farm fund that partners with Churches’ Center for Land and People.

“This talented choral group has lifted their voices in song for our missions for 2 years in a row,” said CCLP director Tony Ends. “Fall is a beautiful time of year to hear them perform at the beautiful grounds of

the former St. Benedict Center.

“This year’s concert again helps us care for Creation with projects to increase Earth stewardship, justice, community and spirituality. Please join us for an afternoon that will make a big difference in the lives of many farm families this winter,” Ends said.

Accompanying the concert is the first of 40 Harvest of Hope winter farmers’ markets already scheduled in the tri-state for 2006-2007. Farmers will sell their own products – cheeses, meats, jams, milk soap, woolen goods, syrups – with 10 percent of proceeds to benefit farmers in emergencies.

The market runs from noon to 3 p.m., suspends for the concert, and resumes for 1 hour, following the Lighthouse Singers’ performance. Both are open to the public. People of all faiths are welcome. An offering will be taken for CCLP’s winter market project.

Overby is creator, executive producer and host of a statewide Saturday night radio program called Higher Ground, a blend of conversation, music, drama and poetry. He was music director for Madison Campus Ministry, based at UW Madison from 1987-94. Overby’s concert work spans 26 years of vocal performance in the United States, Japan, Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, and Poland.

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Without sound plan farm crisis won't end

Public help needed to craft comprehensive solutions

Next year marks Churches’ Center for Land and People’s 20th year of service to the tri-state. Our founders acted with compassion to the tragic 1980s farm crisis.

That crisis drove hundreds of thousands of farm families off the land. In just one decade, U.S. farm population plunged from 6 million to just under 3 million.

Families who’d been encouraged and goaded into expansions during the 1970s went through foreclosure, forced auction and bankruptcy, as land values suddenly plummeted. Farm equity evaporated. Rising interest rates crushed thousands.

CCLP brought rural people together ecumenically with caring clergy for networking, solace and support. It

gave voice to their needs. Where are we now – nearly 20 years later?

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Screenings of *The Great Warming* scheduled

New film on global warming examines scientific evidence, spotlights interfaith efforts

What does global warming have to do with farming? Why should people of faith care about climate change? Is there anything one person, even one small group of people, can do to reverse these trends? How long do we have to act before it is too late to stop climatic change?

Churches' Center for Land and People is partnering with other non-profit organizations beginning in August to sponsor screenings of *The Great Warming*.

The Great Warming is a new 85-minute documentary film produced over 6 years and just released this summer. It examines evidence that human activities are provoking an unprecedented era of atmospheric warming and climatic events: more drought, wildfires and flooding, polar melting, more powerful storms and more variable weather.

Narrated by Alanis Morissette and Keanu Reeves, this movie also showcases initiatives that can reverse trends toward permanent damage to our planet. Its scenes also document the emerging voice of America's faith community urging action on climate change.

"Canadian producer of this film Karen Coshof has asked us to hold these screenings in the tri-state before national distribution of this film begins this fall," said Tony Ends, director of Churches' Center for Land and People.

"Filmed around the world, *The Great Warming* captures the growing groundswell of public concern about climate change to present an accurate picture of the challenges facing our Created world," Ends said.

"We're asking people from all faiths and walks of life to come watch this film with us. Network locally on this issue. Help us inform local communities about the vital importance of acting together to address climate change. The film provides direction for each of us to become part of the solution, rather than the problem."

Donations will be requested – but not required – during local screenings of this film. Proceeds will help local non-profit groups address climate change. Fifty percent of contributions from film showings will also help promote theatrical viewing of *The Great Warming* in its nationwide publicity campaign this fall.

Farm and food production in the United States and the world run on fossil fuels. In the United States alone, 14

percent of all fossil fuel consumption is directly related to the food production system. About 8 percent of global warming has been directly attributed to agriculture.

Scheduled Screenings of The Great Warming

Aug. 16 –AMCORE Bank, Monroe, Wis.

Sept. 21 - St. Rita's Catholic Church, Milwaukee

Sept. 26 - Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

Oct. 3 – Our Savior Lutheran, Milwaukee, Wis.

Sept 29 - Madison Mennonite Community at Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ, Madison

Your church *this fall*? Contact us!

Feb. 1, 2007 - Rural Life Gathering, Shalom Retreat Center, Dubuque

For details, contact Tony Ends at scotchhillfarm@wekz.net or 608 897-4288 (farm office); 831-9319 (CCLP - Wednesdays)

Every farmer, everywhere is feeling the effect of this dependence on fossil fuel – not just in the heating up of our atmosphere and climatic change, but also in farm production and transportation price increases.

Gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, propane gas, natural gas, which power ever larger, more concentrated, more specialized farming operations, have all doubled, tripled, quadrupled in price in just the past 5 years.

Every industrialized farm production expense – machinery and parts, fertilizer manufacture and transport largely from the Gulf Coast, petroleum-based chemicals, long supply and delivery chains for every aspect of food and farming, grain drying, and on and on – it all depends on fossil fuels.

"We view a continued crisis over farming and food in our heartland, nation and world and an ever-pressing moral need for we the people and the church– not the government – to address it," Ends said. "There's a vacuum of leadership and an awful silence on these issues. The Great Warming breaks that silence. Come watch this film with us; break that silence together."

Chris Gordon of Landseer Communications in New York, which is coordinating U.S. promotion of *The Great Warming*, said 40 Congressmen have helped sponsor showings of this film in districts across 30 states. About 200 churches – from both mainline and evangelical denominations – have hosted screenings since July.

Both Northland Church in Orlando, Fla., and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., are set to host screenings of this film in September, Gordon said.

2006-2007 winter farmers market benefits set

Tri-state church sales for farm emergency benefits rise to 40 in 4th year

We can talk about economic justice, something both Old and New Testaments command of us, all day long. Until we actually put our money on the table, however, justice will never happen, and our faith is just so much noise. For American farmers, whose numbers continue to fall largely because of low prices they receive and high production costs they pay, our action is vital.

Congregations that have opened up their fellowship halls to local farmers in the coming winter are putting justice into action. Harvest of Hope Winter Farmers Market Benefit Sales for farm crisis funding will grow from 9 in Iowa and 15 in Wisconsin last winter to 40 in the tri-state this winter.

“This is the first time we’ve been able to schedule these events before the end of summer,” said Tony Ends, who held the first 3 markets in December 2003. “We have the committed, hard work of Jim Earles in Iowa and Roger Williams in Wisconsin to thank for this growth. The Sisters of Charity and Franciscans of La Crosse funded a part-time position for 1 year, which allowed us to hire Jim in Iowa. Roger generously donated many, many hours in his first year of retirement from UW Madison to coordinate the Wisconsin markets and set up all the coming sales with churches. We’re so grateful to them.

“Now we can focus on getting out advance publicity to ensure strong turnouts for our farm vendors. We’re still looking for farmers and small farm cooperatives to sell what they produce or make at these events. We’re still working to build a Harvest of Hope emergency fund like Wisconsin’s for Iowa and Illinois farmers from donations farmers make out of sale proceeds,” Ends said.

“Yet despite our limited funds for this project, it keeps growing stronger. We’re helping people of faith across three states live what they believe about fairness in food transactions with food growers and producers. A lot of farm families are being helped in the process.”

Jim Earles is now scheduling farmers to sell at markets in Iowa (563 588-2935 iowaharvestofhope@yahoo.com). In Wisconsin and Illinois, contact **Tony Ends** of Brodhead, Wis. 608 897-4288 scotthillfarm@wekz.net. Roger will not be coordinating the Wisconsin markets this year. All farmers who sell at these markets must sign a farm vendor accord **before** participating in benefit markets.

Winter farmers’ market churches hosting ‘06-‘07 crisis fund benefit sales

Kick-off market and benefit concert of this project

- **Oct. 15** Holy Wisdom Monastery, *Middleton, Wis.* (formerly, the St. Benedict Center)

Wisconsin winter farmers market benefit sales

- **Nov. 4**, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, *Beloit, WI.*
- **Nov. 11** Lake Edge ELCA Church *Madison, WI*
- **Nov. 11** Trinity ELCA Lutheran Church, *Eau Claire, WI*
- **Dec. 2** Presbyterian Church of West Salem, *WI.*
- **Dec. 6** Midvale Community Lutheran Church, *Madison*
- **Dec. 9** Unitarian Universalist Church, *Eau Claire, WI*
- **Jan. 13** Lake Street United Methodist, *Eau Claire, WI*
- **Jan. 13** St. Matthias Catholic Church, *Milwaukee, WI.*
- **Jan. 20** Ebenezer United Church of Christ, *Sheboygan*
- **Jan. 27** St. Gregory the Great Catholic, *Milwaukee, WI*
- **Feb. 10** First United Methodist Church, *Waupaca, WI.*
- **Feb. 10** St. Raymond’s Catholic Church, *Fall Creek, WI*
- **Feb. 17** St. Rita Catholic Church, *West Allis, WI.*
- **Feb. 10** Trinity Episcopal Church, *Janesville, WI.*
- **Feb. 24** Hudson United Methodist Church, *Hudson, WI*
- **March 3** St. Mary’s Catholic Church, *Oshkosh, WI.*
- **March 10** Hope United Methodist Church, *Eau Claire*
- **March 11** Lake Edge United Church of Christ, *Madison*
- **March 17** Olivet Congregational UCC, *Columbus, WI.*
- **March 31** St. Matthew Catholic Church, *Oak Creek, WI*
- **April 4** First ELCA Lutheran, *Eau Claire, WI*

Iowa winter farmers market benefit sales dates

- **Nov. 4**, Unity of Cedar Rapids, *IA*
 - **Nov. 17** St. Henry’s Catholic Church, *Marshalltown, IA*
 - **Dec. 1** Family Life Center, *Solon, IA*
 - **Dec. 2** St. Timothy’s Episcopal, *West Des Moines, IA*
 - **Dec. 9** Cathedral of St. Raphael, *Dubuque, IA*
 - **Dec. 15** Collegiate United Methodist Church, *Ames, IA*
 - **Jan. 5** Zion Lutheran, *Davenport, IA*
 - **Jan. 20** church location to be announced, *Dubuque, IA* (with *Weston Price seminar, Bell Tower Theater, Jan. 19-20*)
 - **Jan. 27** St. Stephen’s Lutheran, *Cedar Rapids, IA*
 - **Feb. 2** Cathedral of St. Raphael, *Dubuque, IA* (with *Rural Life Gathering, Feb. 1 & 2*)
 - **Feb. 9** Zion Lutheran Church, *Davenport, IA*
 - **Feb. 10** St. Timothy’s Episcopal, *West Des Moines, IA*
 - **Feb. 17** Christ Episcopal Church, *Burlington, IA*
 - **March 3** Collegiate United Methodist Church, *Ames, IA*
- Sales plans are also being made for St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa; Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dubuque; and St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church ELCA, Dubuque*
- Watch the fall issue of Voices for details.*

Illinois winter farmers market benefit sales dates

- Being planned at St. Benedict’s in *Chicago, Ill.*

Farm vendors pay no fee. However, they must agree to mark up their products 10 percent for the day and donate this money to the Harvest of Hope farm crisis fund.

Without sound plan, farm crisis won't end

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Since 1986 and up until the last Census of Agriculture in 2002 farm proprietorship fell in:

- **Iowa** from 115,891 to 92,066 – another loss of 23,825 farmers or about *21 percent*;
- **Illinois** from 99,781 to 78,410 – 20,371 more farms gone, about *20 percent*
- **Wisconsin** from 87,899 to about 77,000, another 10,899 lost farmers, about *12 percent*.

Falling farm populations continue to break the spirits of farmers and ruin rural Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin communities. Contemporary farming trends and public policies perpetuate unjust economic practices and undermine Earth stewardship. The farm crisis persists, and dramatic fuel price increases, spiraling production costs and rising interest rates forebode another crash.

America's farming depends on fossil fuel, and fossil fuel reserves are running out. Our food supply depends on fossil fuel, too, traveling an average 2,000 miles from field to plate. How secure is this food system? When farms net an average \$7,500 per year after depreciation, how secure, how fair is this system to farm families?

Crisis over farming and food in our heartland, nation and world will continue. We the people – not the government, we the church – entrusted with care for Creation, must address these challenges. Our food security, public health, the viability and sustainability of a fragile Earth depend on us.

Churches' Center for Land and People has reaffirmed its commitment to our mission with practical projects to:

Churches' Center for Land and People
4200 County Highway M
Middleton, WI 53562

Address Service Requested

(a) help train and place farm apprentices in organic and sustainable agricultural practices on religious properties, and (b) bring farm families and urban consumers together for winter farmers' markets benefit sales for crisis funding in parish halls of congregations and churches.

Without strategic planning to address rural needs, however, our impact on a widening economic farm crisis will fail. Our ecumenical board of directors, representing 8 denominations and 15 judicatories in the tri-state has begun to work on such a plan. We seek your advice, input and support.

- As caring people of God, as people charged in God's garden "to till it and keep it," to serve and protect the Earth, what should be our collective response to farm needs today?
- How can we envision together economic justice, earth stewardship, community and spirituality for farming people and the land and food security for urban consumers?
- How can we work together to fulfill this mission in more comprehensive and effective ways?

Our region, our world, consumers and farmers alike need us to carve out a new identity for Churches' Center for Land and People. Help us craft our messages and lay the groundwork for bolder approaches, stronger resources, more positive and aggressive change. Time to act on some issues is running out.

We need your volunteer participation in planning and your monetary donations to carrying out our projects. These contributions help document regional support and confidence in our work to prospective funders, partners and foundations. Please help us lay the groundwork for successful strategies to put an end to the U.S. farm crisis over the next 20 years.

- **Tony Ends, CCLP Director and farmer**
www.cclpmidwest.org / 608 831-9319

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