

The Nightly News

An occasional publication of the San Francisco Night Ministry

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Lighten the darkness



...rekindle the hope

Lyle Beckman is New Night Minister

Pastor Beckman is not a newcomer to the work of the San Francisco Night Ministry. For over three years he had served as an Assistant Night Minister, covering the neighborhoods and meeting the people to whom Don Fox, Chuck Lewis and Don Stuart ministered so well before him. Even while Don Fox was preparing for retirement, Pastor Beckman was being introduced as his successor - "the new guy" - making the transition much easier for everyone.

Installation Set For May 20

Lyle Beckman will be installed as Night Minister on Sunday, May 20, 4:00 P.M. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell (at Franklin Street), San Francisco. Bishop David Mullen of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the E.L.C.A will preside.

All are invited to attend and help celebrate this new beginning of the Night Ministry. Clergy are invited to participate in the procession. Please vest as is appropriate for your tradition.

Larry Dannenberg, Editor

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Lyle is a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and is serving the Night Ministry under a Special Call from the Sierra Pacific Synod. His roots are in the Midwest - born in Nebraska and raised in Minnesota. He attended college in Indiana and graduated from Christ Seminary - Seminex, St. Louis, Missouri. His ministry however, took him first to the East Coast. He served congregations in Union City and North Bergen, New Jersey and in Hartford and Bridgeport, Connecticut. These "urban" multi-cultural congregations provided opportunities to acquire a wide variety of experiences that would be useful in the work of the Night Ministry. They included Police and Fire Department Chaplain, VA Hospital Chaplain, Mental Health Clinic Chaplain, Jail Chaplain and Gang Intervention Coordinator. In addition, he has served on Boards that work on behalf of people with AIDS, the developmentally disabled, and those struggling with poverty.

Like the Night Ministers before him Pastor Beckman is a night owl, and has adapted well to the hours of the ministry. He is an avid hiker, stamp collector, lover of choral music, and a National Park enthusiast.



The Rev. Lyle Beckman

Sunday, May 20, 2007 4:00 P.M.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

1111 O'Farrell

2006 Benefit Another Great Event

The 2006 annual Fall benefit was again held at the Urban Life Center of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. A full house had a great evening of bidding, eating, laughing and listening to great music. The headliners again were Wesla Whitfield and Mike Greensill with Donna Sachet doing the MC work. Along with all the fun we raised a record amount for the work of the Night Ministry. This event is our primary fund raising event and the support from those who attend is vital to the work that is done.

Pam Hamel and Tom Robertson co-chaired the event and Susan Burt and Marian Brischle put together the auction.

The 2007 Fall Benefit is set for Saturday, October 6 with the same cast. Wesla, Mike, and Donna have all agreed to return and the Night Ministry is grateful. It will be held, again, at St. Mark's only this time with more room. St. Mark's has completed their remodeling so there is new space and no construction barriers.

Plan now and we will see you in October!



Mark Leno, San Francisco State Assemblyman, Donna Sachet, and Tom Robertson Night Ministry Vice President.



Wesla Whitfield Receives the 2006 Chuck Lewis Award

Wesla Whitfield was presented the 2006 Chuck Lewis Award at the Fall Benefit. This award is given annually to an individual who has provided outstanding service to the Night Ministry. Wesla, along with husband and accompanist Mike Greensill, has supported the Night Ministry for many years and has given many benefit performances.

Wesla and Mike have been great citizens of San Francisco as they also support many other charitable organizations. Watch the papers and catch a performance the next time they are on stage.

Wesla and Mike



Lively Bidding at the Silent Auction



Action at the Live Auction



Bernie Fricke, Assistant Night Minister, serving the public



Greetings From the Governing Board President

Greetings Friends!

On behalf of the Governing Board of the San Francisco Night Ministry, Easter Season blessings to you! Thank you for all of your past and continued support of our service to those in crisis in the middle of the night. Spring-time seems perfect for filling you in on some highlights of our work in supporting this vibrant and important ministry.

As you may know, December 2006 marked the retirement of Rev. Don Fox, after eleven years of service to the Night Ministry. The Crisis Line Counselors celebrated Don's service at our Advent Party with a horde of gifts Brother Jude found with the theme of airships or dirigibles (Don's a very learned historian and now, an artifact collector!) The governing board honored Don with a dinner in January. He is sorely missed, but he appears to be sinking into retirement mode without too much problem!

That leads to our big news that at the beginning of 2007, Rev. Lyle Beckman took over as the Night Minister, after serving as an assistant night minister for over three years. We are going to celebrate his investiture with an Installation Ceremony on Sunday, May 20, 2007, at the newly renovated St. Mark's Lutheran Church, here in the city. The ceremony begins at 4 PM and all are invited to come celebrate with us.

We have been working hard at our long range plans for the Night Ministry. In the beginning of 2006, we implemented our goal of putting two night ministers on the streets, three nights a week. We aim for more!

Finally, please mark your calendars for our annual Benefit on Saturday, October 6th, at St. Mark's. The ever-popular Wesla Whitfield and Mike Greensill have graciously agreed to entertain us again, with Donna Sachet joining us as M.C. This evening will not only be enjoyable, but it's our prime vehicle for raising funds for our operation. In addition, it's a time of getting our host of supporters together for an evening of community and fun!

Thank you for your continued, open-hearted support! We pray for our benefactors every day.

Blessings,

Pamela O. Hamel

President, Governing Board

Good Morning, Berlin

On February 5th Pam and Tom, president and vice president of the board of the Night Ministry, Lyle and Don (current and former night ministers), Wilfried and Richard (assistant night ministers) met with a delegation from the German Bundestag Berlin, the German Parliament and two vice consuls from the German Consulate General in San Francisco.

The delegation was a group of ten members of the Berlin parliament and delegates of the ministry of economics. The guests were involved in the work of the German Federal Budget committee of the Bundestag.

The group was very interested in the work of the San Francisco Night Ministry. We had a very interesting discussion about the insights of the night ministry and the social situation in the city. The members of the Parliament learned a lot about the work and compared the German welfare system with the realities here in this country. The members of the Parliament were very impressed about the work and engagement of the Night Ministry.

It was an enlightening discussion and we were very grateful for their visit. Thank you to the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Herrn Rolf Schütte, for initiating this visit.

Auf Wiedersehen!



2006 Training Class

Crises Line Counselors are well trained and keep abreast of new developments. Every year they attend 4 Friday night pot-lucks for discussions and to hear highly qualified speakers discuss issues of concern. They also attend one full day of training each year led by a professional in a field related to the situations the volunteers encounter.

Message from Br. Jude Hill, Coordinator of Crisis Line Counselors

People often say to me when I am giving a talk about Night Ministry, "Aren't you afraid being out there alone?" I always say, "I am not alone." They then say, "You mean God is with you?" I say "well yes, God is, but that is not what I mean". Because while I am out on the streets, wandering up and down the places where people hang out, going into bars and coffee shops and all-night stores I don't feel alone.... because I have a partner, and that partner is sitting in the office answering the phones. I always think that the role of the Crisis Line Counselor in the office is a hidden role. Each night one or two of our almost forty counselors sign in at 9:30 pm and are on the front line of the ministry we carry out. These trained counselors answer the phones and offer a listening ear to the thousands of people who phone each year, most from the Bay Area but many from other states as far as New York and Hawaii and we have even had calls from Europe!

So who is this loyal band of people? Our Crisis Line Counselors are ordinary people just like you who commit to working one evening a month from 9:30 pm to 2:00 am answering the phones [some work two or three nights a week and we take people home at the end of their shift if they don't have transport]. Some are nurses, some are bank managers, some are priests, some are therapists, some are teachers, biologists, lecturers, home-makers and from every profession, walk of life, and socio-economic groups.....some are Presbyterians, Methodists, some UCC, some Lutheran, some Episcopalian, some Roman Catholic and some hold no faith tradition at all but believe in the work we are doing.

All the people who come to work with us know what it is like to need a listening ear, because that is the human condition into which we are all born. All of us at some time or other have been in that place where we just needed to talk to someone. And those of us who have been there know that at those times the night is the most difficult time to bear and the time when there are very few 'ears' around willing to listen. We train all our counselors to work on our crisis line, we train them to listen with the whole of their being so as to know how to best help the person calling. They are trained to deal with every inevitability, including suicide. The Crisis Line Counselor and the Night Minister on the streets work as a team and support and help each other when the going gets tough. None is better than the other—both are unique and vital parts of the Night Ministry.

Who becomes a Crisis Line Counselor? People just like YOU! Why not come along and see if this is Ministry you are being called to? We have an open evening to hear about our work and training taking place in San Francisco in May. Call me or send me an e-mail for details: 415-861-7951 or e-mail: jude-hillssf@aol.com.

Next training sessions are scheduled for May 1, 8, and 15 (Tuesdays); September 7, 14, and 21 (Fridays); and November 2, 9, and 16 (Fridays).

Don Fox Retirement

On February 4, 2007, the Night Ministry Governing Board honored Don Fox with a retirement dinner held in the penthouse of the Bay School in the Presidio. In recognition of 11 years of service and leadership, the Board presented Don with a certificate for a trip to Germany and a ride on a real live Zeppelin, one of his life-long dreams. With this and a packet of Rick Steve's guide books, Don can start planning a proper retirement.

Don plans to retreat for about 6 months and will then make himself available again to help the Night Ministry as an assistant Night Minister and in other ways. We wish him the best of retirement.

Barry Clagett and Don
Enjoy the
Festivities



Pam Hamel
& John
Macdonald



Chuck Lewis,
Pam Dannenberg,
Sandy Manson,
Barry Clagett



Marian Brischle
Tom Robertson
Susan Burt



Letter From The Night Minister

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The great American poet, educator and historian Dr. Maya Angelou often includes in her speeches or presentations some interesting thoughts on this quote: **"I am a human being. Nothing human can be alien to me."**

This quote comes from Terence (Publius Terentius Afer) whom Ms. Angelou describes in this way: "He was an African slave. Sold to a Roman Senator, educated and later freed by that Senator, he became the most popular playwright in Rome. Six of his plays have come down to us from 154 B.C. This man, not born white, not born free, nor with any chance of ever achieving citizenship said; "I am a human being. Nothing can be alien to me."

This is an attitude to which we should aspire. It means that no matter what terrible crimes we see committed by others, we can never say, "Oh, I couldn't do that." Not if a human being did it. Rather, you must say, "I mean never to do that. I intend to use all my energies constructively as opposed to destructively. Ms. Angelou says, "If a human being did it, I have within myself all the components to do the same thing. And let me not separate myself from that human being, or pretend to separate myself."

This helps illustrate to a degree the work of the Night Ministry. There is no human experience or condition that cannot be fully shared with us. All people are met with compassionate, non-judgmental response. In that moment, we are one with another.

The other side to this, Ms. Angelou goes on to point out, is that when human beings do great things, such as create beautiful works of music, poetry or art, or show inspiring acts of courage or self-giving love, they must recognize that within themselves comes the possibility of doing the same thing.

Likewise, our goal is to "lighten the darkness.....rekindle the hope". Or as Terence said, "While there is life, there is hope".

Reflecting on these thoughts of Ms. Angelou reminds me that for our sake, Jesus did not spurn anything human, giving up godly glory to become as human as we are human. Jesus lived the human experience with all its joys and sorrows. Jesus even took on our sin, in death on a cross. Jesus dared to love all human beings in spite of their imperfections. And more than this; when we look upon our Savior and see this great sacrifice of love, we must not say, 'I could never do that'. For God gives us the possibility, by our own baptism into Christ, to live our lives like Jesus, and to see Christ in one another.

Recently the Christian Church Year brought us through Holy Week with its many liturgies and varied moods, and its invitation to intense devotion to Jesus, reminding us of the suffering and death that lead to our salvation. Now, we are in the Easter Season which culminates in the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus, making it possible for us to live new and resurrected lives. This new life is now. It takes shape in how we live; in our intent to use our energies constructively; and in our resolve to never harm another human being. This wonderful new life is expressed in our daily words and deeds that share the love that God has for all people.

May this Easter Season be a time that stirs your faith, inspires you to devotion to Christ, and moves you to service and witness in the name of Jesus

Lyle Beckman

Members of the Governing Board

Marian Brischle (St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal)

Susan Burt (Grace Episcopal Cathedral)

Barry Clagett (Old First Presbyterian)

Larry Dannenberg (St. Paulus Lutheran)

Rev. Wilfried E. Glabach (First Congregational)

Pam Hamel (St. Vincent de Paul Catholic)

Tim Huyler (St. Paulus Lutheran)

John Macdonald (St. Dunstan's Catholic)

Sandy J. Manson (Grace Episcopal Cathedral)

Rev. Rob Rhudy (St. Aidan's Episcopal)

Tom Robertson (St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal)

Jeremy Russell (Crisis Line Counselor)

San Francisco Night Ministry

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The Rev. Lyle Beckman, The Night Minister

New Staff Person

Beverly Barrows is now serving as the Administrative Assistant for the Night Ministry. This is a new and much needed position. She is helping with many of the details that must be done during the day such as financial administration and communication with supporters. One of her primary projects will be to update and maintain the directory of contacts and service providers used by the night ministers and crisis line counselors. She is normally available during regular business hours at 415 441-0125



Tim Huyler, Beverly Barrows and John Macdonald
at the Fall Benefit check-in table



Rev. Wilfried Glabach, Rev. Richard Park, and Rev.
Lyle Beckman at Don's Retirement Party

Lighten the darkness



rekindle the hope



After the Ball
Marian Brischle and Tom Robertson