

The Nightly News

An occasional publication of the San Francisco Night Ministry

Volume 9 Number 1

June 2008

Lighten the dark-



...rekindle the hope

Larry Dannenberg, Editor

OPEN CATHEDRAL LAUNCHES ON EASTER

On Easter Sunday, Reverend Lyle Beckman, Night Minister, and Episcopal Deacon Vicki Gray held the first Open Cathedral ever in San Francisco by convening a worship service in the small park at Leavenworth and McAllister Streets. On a bright Easter Sunday beneath the maple trees 25 people gathered to worship before a small cross on a portable altar covered with white cloth. The congregation included all races and ages and was a cross section of Tenderloin street people including the homeless, mentally ill, junkies, the intoxicated and drugged.



Prayers were prayed, scripture read, and hymns were sung and the Reverend Beckman preached an Easter sermon that touched on the bathing of feet and how difficult it is to keep your feet clean, dry and warm when you are out on the street. Worshippers then took communion together and shared in a post-worship snack that included hot cross buns donated by St. James Episcopal Church.

San Francisco's new Open Cathedral is patterned after Boston's Common Cathedral founded by Episcopal Priest Debbie Little which attracts over eighty people every Sunday all year, no matter the weather, to the Boston Commons.

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Open Cathedral

Every Sunday

Open Air Holy Communion

Music and Prayer

Under God's Blue Heaven

We gather together

We worship God

We honor each other

2:00 PM

The Park at Leavenworth @
McAllister

Near United Nations Plaza

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Rob Rhudy In Memoriam

The Night Ministry family was saddened this past year by the passing from this life of the Rev. Rob Rhudy on August 22, 2007. Rob was secretary of the Governing Board and represented St. Aidan's Episcopal Church. He was always active in the Night Ministry, having served 25 years as an assistant Night Minister. He was a friend and guiding light to all who knew him and embodied the spirit of the Night Ministry.



Norma Hopfer, retired school teacher, member of St. Paulus Lutheran and a long time avid supporter of the Night Ministry passed away this past August. Her spirit, faith and love for people was an example for all.

Night Ministry Fellowship Announced

The San Francisco Night Ministry is pleased to announce the recipient of the first of three available Night Ministry Fellowships. She is the Rev. Deacon Diana Wheeler, a fifth generation San Franciscan who has spent over 18 years in various ministries including children's ministry, child development, healing ministries, and hospital chaplaincy.

Ordained a permanent deacon in the Episcopal Church, Diocese of California in 2003, Diana will continue to serve as parish deacon for St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, as director of Aidan's Way After School Community, and as chaplain for their MIAS group (Mental Illness Awareness and Support).

In 2006, she received a certificate in spiritual direction from the Spiritual Director's Institute at Mercy Center, Burlingame. Her specialty is companioning persons who are marginalized by society on their spiritual journeys.

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Lyle Beckman Installed

Lyle Beckman was installed as the fourth Night Minister of San Francisco on May 20, 2007 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco. Presiding at the service and officiating at the installation was the Rev. David Mullen, Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Rev. Victoria Gray, assistant Night Minister, gave the sermon. Music was provided by Rodney Gehrke, director of music at St. Mark's, and a combined choir from several Lutheran churches.

. We thank St. Mark's Lutheran Church and all who participated in this joyous event for enabling such a wonderful beginning to Lyle's ministry!

Bishop David Mullen
with Rev. Rod Seeger.



Lyle Beckman and
former asst. Night
Minister, Bea Chun



Former Night Minister
Don Fox and John
Prescott with Vanessa



Tim Huyler, board
treasurer, Pastor &
Mrs. Dan Solberg of
St. Paulus and Pastor
David Rohrer, retired
Lutheran Pastor.



Greetings From the Governing Board President

Dear Supporters of the Night Ministry:

The motto of the Night Ministry is "Lighten the darkness . . . rekindle the hope." For 44 years our ministers have walked San Francisco's streets every night, a holy and enlightening presence that for not a few has meant the difference between life and death. We are now very fortunate to be led by the Reverend Lyle Beckman, a Lutheran Pastor highly experienced in both parish and urban ministries. Our telephone Crisis Line Counselors, who now number more than 40, continue to be ably led by Franciscan Minister Provincial Br. Jude Hill, leader of all Episcopal Franciscans in the Western Hemisphere. These trained volunteers listen to thousands of callers each year, some in severe need. The Night Ministry remains the only non-governmental source of help on our streets between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. We have only been able to accomplish this remarkable record because of your continuous and steadfast help.

All of us on the Board of Governors are therefore very pleased to announce that before the end of 2008, we not only will have a fulltime Associate Night Minister to assist the Reverend Beckman, but three new Night Ministry Fellows who also will be out talking to people on the street four or five nights a week, ably supported on their nights off by our corps of Assistant Night Ministers. We are also very pleased to announce that the first Night Ministry Fellow is the Rev. Deacon Diane Wheeler of St. Aidan's Episcopal Church. All the Fellows will be ordained clergy. All will be committed to the remarkable work of the Night Ministry.

This long effort has not been easy. To say nothing of the many nights our clergy have spent in some of the city's toughest neighborhoods, from its founding by the local Council of Churches, to the middle years when the organization often struggled to pay a single Night Minister, financing the Night Ministry has been challenging. There were many times when the Governing Board could not see a way forward and discussion turned to how long the ministry could continue,

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Tom Robertson
President of the Governing Board



Annual Benefit

Saturday October 4, 2008

The annual Night Ministry benefit will again be held at the St. Mark's Urban life center on Saturday, October 4. We are pleased to announce that Wesla Whitfield and Mike Greensill along with Donna Sachet are returning to provide the entertainment and excitement for the evening. Save the date and plan to attend!!



Lyle Beckman and President Pam Hamel present Donna Sachet with the 2007 Chuck Lewis award for her outstanding and long time support of the Night Ministry at last year's benefit.

Sandy Manson and Casey Hamel, silent auction stars.



Tim Huyler, Beverly Barrows and John Macdonald at the registration table.



Jordan Ward and Vicki Gray.



More on Open Cathedral

By Lyle Beckman

Oftentimes at night, as we talk with people about matters of faith and life, they ask if something like Night Ministry is available to them during the day. Of course we tell them that there are many congregations and programs and organizations available to them. We make hundreds of referrals and introductions each year that connect people to the help that they need, and to the nurturing communities of faith that can welcome and care for them. Indeed, we see Night Ministry as an extension of all of the ministries that happen all over San Francisco and beyond, each and every day of the year. But some people feel uncomfortable in settings that are too structured; others are afraid to venture too far into unknown places; and still others are too aware of the reactions they get to their own illnesses, behaviors and looks. Yet their longing for community and spiritual direction and worship remained strong. They articulated a need for prayer, celebration, and public witness to God's love. They articulated a need to gather together and pray for the city, to raise up concerns of the streets, and to bring alive a presence of hope and faith and hospitality. They expressed a desire for the Eucharist and for ritual.

Night Ministry has now responded to that need. On Easter morning, March 23, 2008 **Open Cathedral** was born.

Each Sunday afternoon at 2:00 a simple altar is set up near the corner of Leavenworth and McAllister Streets, by United Nations Plaza. Night Ministry staff and volunteers comb the area making invitations to everyone to gather for worship. Most sit on the grass, others roam. Many stand at the edges watching curiously, waiting for the right time to join in. Singing, praying, dialogue style sermons and occasional testimonies of faith are a great witness to the many who pass by. The greeting of peace has become a lovely time when strangers from many areas of life, come together in peace and love. Communion is a special time - hands held out to receive the love that God has to offer under the bread and cup, or to be held in a blessing, or to be anointed for healing. God is indeed with us, under the open sky, in the middle of the city at **Open Cathedral**.

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Our Little Orange Absolution Machines

Vicki Gray

The real purpose of Mayor Newsom's little orange "homeless meters" is not to address the needs of the homeless or those who seek to serve them – the \$5,000 a year they take in annually in other cities is not going to do it. It is rather an attempt, as the mayor readily admits, to dry up the "market" for panhandling by convincing passersby that dropping a coin in a faceless, voiceless machine is a worthy substitute for a one-on-one inter-action with one of the thousands of homeless and/or jobless on our streets, most of whom are seeking with their outstretched hands merely to supplement the pittance they receive in government assistance. This is but another attempt to sweep the human refuse of an uncaring society out of sight and out of mind.

The mayor says he wants – through these machines – to educate us about homelessness. I'm not precisely sure how that might work. Were we, however, to pause long enough to have a meaningful conversation with the next panhandler we encounter, we might truly educate ourselves about the crisis on our streets. And, were we to look into the eyes beyond the outstretched hand, we might see the face of God. More importantly, that person might see in us that same face of God in whose image we are all made

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Assistant Night Ministers

the Rev. Andreas Pielhoop - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

the Rev. Victoria Gray - Episcopal Church

the Rev. Dr. Wilfried Glabach - United Church of Christ

the Rev. Berni Fricke - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Br. Jude Hill - Episcopal Franciscan Friar

the Rev. Sylvia Mueller - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Don't Forget - Save The Date

October 4, 2008

Letter From The Night Minister

Without prayer, passion may become restless, manic activity. Without prayer, wisdom is empty and becomes mere intellectualizing, the spinning of conceptual wheels to no particular end. Without prayer, for example, theology may be about God but seldom draws us farther into God. Without prayer, justice is doomed to disillusionment because we are unable to see beyond what they can see and all we see is injustice.

Carter Hayward

Often, people who have been to the Holy Land talk excitedly about the dramatic difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is vibrant and alive, with blue waters netting 2,000 tons of fish per year. On its shores are lush farmlands and active communities.

The Dead Sea, on the other hand, is 25% salt and minerals, as compared with only 3% in our oceans. Its shores are barren desert without cities, and there seems to be no life in it. This is a parable. The secret of life in the Sea of Galilee is that it is constantly receiving and giving, with the Jordan River entering at the north and exiting the south. There is constant turnover of fresh water. The Dead Sea is dead because it keeps its water (much evaporates) and there is no giving.

For the liturgical churches, summer is a “green time”. Vestments and paraments are green to remind us of the growth and new life that can spring forth when our lives, spiritual and in every other way, are nurtured by God’s love. Through prayer and meditation, study of our scriptures and gathering in community, we can be fed, renewed, and refreshed. Through prayer and meditation we can be drawn to a deeper understanding of who we are in relationship to both God and our neighbor. Through Prayer and meditation, we can understand more clearly God’s call for us as individuals, as a congregation, as a society. Through Prayer and meditation we can see the power of God’s love changing lives all around us. Through Prayer and meditation we can come alive in God again.

As we approach summertime and take our walk through the long “green season” of the Church, I invite you to explore anew the discipline of prayer and to listen with the ears of faith where God is leading you in your life of service to God and to others. I ask your prayers for the people we serve, both in the middle of the night and on Sunday afternoons, who reach out to us for a word of comfort and hope. I welcome your prayers for our Governing Board, volunteers and ministerial staff who give so freely of themselves and greatly enhance the vision and outreach of Night Ministry.

May we all find refreshment, growth and life in God’s love in the days ahead.

God’s peace be with you,

Lyle J Beckman

Night Minister

Members of the Governing Board

Marian Brischle (St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal)

Barry Clagett (Old First Presbyterian)

Larry Dannenberg (St. Paulus Lutheran)

Rev. Wilfried E. Glabach (First Congregational)

Peter Goss (First Congregational)

Pam Hamel (St. Vincent de Paul Catholic)

Tim Huyler (St. Paulus Lutheran)

Charles Jacobs (St. Mark’s Lutheran)

John Macdonald (St. Dunstan’s Catholic)

Tom Robertson (St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal)

Jeanne S. Robinson (St. Aidan’s Episcopal)

Jeremy Russell (Crisis Line Counselor)

Marilyn St. Germain-Hall (St. Aidan’s Episcopal)

Open Cathedral Launches

Cont. From Page 1

What has been striking about San Francisco's newest "Church" is the interest of those sleeping on the park lawn and many passersby and their thirst for worship in the midst of the noise, drugs, boredom, and general hopelessness of the Tenderloin. The service was punctuated from time to time by the roar of cars and motorcycles and by sirens. Comments, none-the-less, have been very positive with many worshippers saying how much they appreciate this effort. All were orderly, if a bit restless, and quiet. San Francisco's Open Cathedral is also an example of how a few people who had been listening to discussions in various corners of San Francisco's Christian community decided to start a new institution without planning, resources, or anything approaching the trappings of the organized church. .

Night Ministry Fellowship

Cont. From Page 2

Responding to her appointment Diana said, *"It is my hope that during my time with the Night Ministry, I am able to offer some of the skills that I have gained during my years of ministry. I have extensive experience working with volunteer staff and dealing with the joys and stresses of fund-raising. I have had the privilege to act as mentor to students from the School for Deacons and CDSP (Church Divinity School of the Pacific). I have been blessed with being able to be in relationship with many people, young and old, who live under very stressful circumstances. I am delighted to have this opportunity to serve the people of San Francisco as a symbol of God's inclusive love for them."*

I look forward to learning from the many gifted ministers of the San Francisco Night Ministry. Participating in the Open Cathedral, walking the neighborhoods at night and listening to what is in people's hearts will provide many moments of learning and blessing for me. I am grateful for the gift of new adventure. It is a chance to be a part of Christ's healing presence in the world."

The Rev. Wheeler began her work with Night Ministry June 1. Interviews are currently being held for the other two Night Ministry Fellowships.

President's Letter

Cont. From Page 3

But the Board and the Night Ministers were stalwart, and somehow help always arrived in time.

Now the Night Ministry is in a period of expansion. It is not beyond foreseeable possibility that we will have ten clergy out on our streets on a single night, each assigned permanently to a neighborhood, and 80 volunteer Crisis Line Counselors, with two answering the phones every night of the year. This last goal is important so that few, if any, callers will be told that they must wait or even call back later.

All this, and we recently founded the San Francisco Open Cathedral, a 2 p.m. service **every Sunday** in the park at McAllister and Leavenworth, where we minister to street people, many of whom are addicted and/or mentally ill.

So thank you from all of us on the Board for your wonderful support for so many years. We are not a parish church and do not have a self-selected funding base. We are rather an extension of every congregation in San Francisco as an expression of selfless Christian charity. We depend on you, and we thank you.

Please also remember that we raise nearly one quarter of our budget at the benefit we hold each fall. As indicated elsewhere in the newsletter, this year's event will be on Saturday evening, October 4th, again at St. Mark's Urban Life Center.

Night Ministry Book Reprinted

Due to popular demand, Regina Books of Claremont, California has reprinted **I'm Listening as Fast as I can: The Night Ministry in San Francisco**, written by our first Night Minister, the Rev. Donald E. Stuart. The book is a wonderful glimpse into the life of San Francisco from 1964 to 1976, and into the life of one man who is still admired and spoken of fondly by people he ministered to so beautifully. About the book, Judith Favor said: *Rich in detail, Don Stuart's "I'm Listening as Fast as I can" is the compelling story of a pastor who risks personal safety to minister among the lost, the least, and the lonely on the streets of San Francisco. The shadows of the city come alive under Don's pen, aching with authenticity. This is a poignant narrative of faith, hope, and love in the city by the bay."*

Please write or e-mail Night Ministry to order a copy of this book. A \$ 20.00 donation includes postage and handling.

More Open Cathedral

Cont. From Page 4

After a final Benediction, a simple meal is set on the altar and shared with anyone who wishes to eat. Time is also spent doing what we do at night - listening, praying, offering pastoral care, referring people to programs and just being there with them.

Attendance varies from 15 to 50 people each Sunday, while meals served can number from 30 to 70. Many who attend **Open Cathedral** have been "away from" the church for a long time, but they are responding to the hospitality and are becoming "regular" participants. And we are hopeful for the future. **Open Cathedral** has met a need for some of the people we meet at night, and has helped us to respond to their needs and grow in our outreach at that same time.

The real "good news" of **Open Cathedral** is the eternal passion of God for all people. Our goal is to offer hospitality to everyone who gathers, and through that hospitality, to let God do the work that only God can do - with and through and for everyone no matter who we are.

Little Orange Machine

Cont. From Page 4

If we want to deal with the causes and not just the symptoms of our homeless problem, there are three things we might do: 1) Write the mayor and other local, state, and national officials and insist that they get serious about addressing the problem; 2) Give directly to the private charity of your choice - like the Episcopal Sanctuary, Glide Memorial, St. Anthony's, Martin de Porres, the Salvation Army, or the San Francisco Night Ministry, with which I work, that nightly seeks to offer hope in the midst of hopelessness; and 3) Crack our Bibles to Matthew 25: 34-40 and take it to heart.

Until we do - all three - those little orange meters will remain - as they are intended to be - nothing more than absolution machines...dispensing cheap absolution for the profound guilt we all share and are reluctant to face. Their message? "Insert a quarter. Your sins of omission are forgiven. Go your blissful, guilt-free way."

Statistical Report—2007

Category	CLC Total	NM Total	Grand Total
Gender			
Female	2348	1959	4307
Male	1751	6468	8219
Transgender	71	75	146
Group			
Adult	4155	8409	12564
Teen	15	87	102
Child	0	6	6
Hang-up	429	128	557
Religious/Spiritual	602	4606	5208
Moral/Ethical	269	1988	2257
Lonely	1461	2989	4450
Depressed	1035	1569	2604
Anxious/Frightened	571	2004	2575
Psychiatric	455	746	1201
Grief	154	429	593
Suicidal	153	223	376
Homicidal	6	25	31
Criminal	35	263	298
Relationship/Family	1164	3446	4610
Abuse:			
Physical	48	94	142
Psychological	89	108	197
Sexual	44	73	117
Domestic Violence	29	31	60
Addiction:			
Drugs	50	447	497
Alcohol	45	672	717
Sexual:			
Orientation	57	82	139
Dysfunction	11	42	53
Other:			
Runaway	2	49	51
Medical/Health	582	1520	2102
HIV / AIDS	17	74	91
Legal	56	312	368
Job / Vocation	236	2432	2668
Financial	207	1438	1644
Money:			
Request	7	1066	1073
Filled	0	54	54
Food:			
Request	3	1435	1438
Referred / Filled	1	1259	1260
Housing:			
Issue	89	1121	1210
Request	15	77	92
Referred / Filled	10	50	60
Transportation	16	216	232
Information	159	1765	1924
Other:	53	83	136

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Lighten the darkness



rekindle the hope



The Rev. Lyle Beckman, The Night Minister

**Crises Line Counselors
Honored**

. The Crises Line Counselors held their annual Advent party on the first Friday of December at the Bay School penthouse in the Presidio. Refreshments and background entertainment were provided by the governing board. The CLCs were provided with certificates in recognition of their volunteer service for the year.



Gordon Schaeffer displays his award for 40 years of volunteer service.



Mr. & Mrs. Barry Clagett with Chuck Lewis



Rev. Margaret Milton and Rev. Wilfried Glabach



Br. Jude Hill, Pam Hamel and Lyle Beckman presenting the awards.