



THE COMMON MINISTRY AT WSU

A Safe Space for Spiritual Development

Fall 2014

From the President of the Council

Dear Friends,

This Holiday Season, we send our appreciation to you, our friends and donors. We are especially grateful for your support during this year of change and transition.

The Presbyterian Synod of Alaska-Northwest sold the Interfaith House (K-House) building this spring. We spent the months of March and April assisting building tenants in relocating; in donating most of our kitchen, dining and lounge area furnishings; and in moving our Common Ministry office to our new location in the Community Congregation United Church of Christ (CCUCC).

Yes, we have a new Director of the Common Ministry—Rev. Jessica Stokes. She arrived September 1st and has been very busy ever since establishing connections throughout the university and the community. It is wonderful to have the Director with strong background and enthusiasm to lead our mission.

The Common Ministry at WSU has provided service and ministry to the WSU community and beyond for 50 years!! WOW! We plan to celebrate this milestone during our annual dinner auction on March 29, 2015, at Banyan's On the Ridge (Pullman). We invite you to join us.

We do have challenges facing us, particularly financial ones. We must increase current forms of financial support as well as locate new ones as the last of our major funding organizations will cease their financial support in the spring of 2015. Your support is vital to continued success of our mission.

We have enclosed donation information with this newsletter. Your pledge of support in the form of a check, gift of stock, and/or inclusion in your estate planning, is gratefully appreciated. We thank you for being a partner in ministry.

In thanks and peace,

Sue Durrant—President of The Common Ministry Council

Interfaith Mythbusters!

This is a weekly event every Thursday in which students and community members gather to share dinner and dialogue. Our student and community representation includes Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, Atheist, Baha'i, Jewish, and Agnostic thought. We hit the ground running this fall with our exciting assortment of topics! Our topics: Welcome Back BBQ; September 11 Peace Dialogue/Remembrance; Ethics and Morality from an Atheist's perspective; Islam Myth-busting; Hindu Myth-busting; Christian Myth-busting; Fate; Miracles; Allhallowtide; Religious Freedom; The Sacredness of Food; Thanksgiving Fellowship; Green Planet-The Sacredness of Land. That is 14 unique nights that we enjoyed! We also had a special Halloween and Thanksgiving events to celebrate together.

Why is interfaith work/dialogue important to you?

“Interfaith means throwing away your preset ideas on a lot of things and entering a new environment, new friendship as a blank paper. Plus, our new director Jessica is so passionate about everyone, and that definitely has brought the whole group closer than ever!”

-Zhen Cai, Mythbusters Student

Save the Date!

Our 2015 Annual Dinner Auction will be on Sunday, March 29, with the fabulous auctioneer, Austin Booker.

Tickets will go on sale in March, 2015.

To donate items or to help find donations, please contact the Interfaith House office.

The students that come together are a unique group; Mythbusters is the only WSU registered student group that is interfaith. Religious tolerance is practiced each week as we learn and discover together. We are truly thankful for these students that give us weekly hope of reconciliation and peace! If you are interested in providing dinner to our Mythbusters one Thursday this upcoming spring, please email Jessica at director@interfaith-house.com.

Jessica Stokes—Director of the Common Ministry



2014 Fall Retreat at the Monastery of St. Gertrude

Student Spotlight! Meet One of Our Mythbusters!

Name: Zach C.

Hometown: Walla Walla, WA

Year: Freshman

Major: Neuroscience & Psychology

Religion: Atheist

- Why is interfaith dialogue important to you?

Interfaith dialogue gives faces to different religions. Instead of reading about different religions, I'm able to have in depth conversations with people about what their religion means to them.

-Of the topics at Mythbusters this fall, do you have a favorite?

I was able to listen to a fellow member talk about Hinduism. I learned a lot about Hindu history and teachings that I had never known about. before.

-What has been your favorite class this semester?

My favorite class so far has been Chinese 101. It's difficult, but I have learned how to say and write a variety of sentences in Chinese.

Favorite place to relax in Pullman?

I love going to Tokyo Seoul, they make the best sushi I have ever had in my life!

Our Mythbusters are thankful for....

Pets; a job that is enjoyed; family; trips; Google; supportive professors; WSU student services; friends; coffee; food; cute animals; breaks; art
....what are you thankful for?



Mythbusters Thanksgiving Feast 2014

2014–2015 Common Ministry Council Members:

Nicholas Cerruti—United Methodist

Chad Cook—At Large

Emi Dickens, Vice President—Presbyterian

Sue Durrant, President—Episcopal

Wes Howell—At Large

Roy Johnson—American Baptist

Chip Laird, Past President—United Church of Christ

Shane Moore—United Methodist

Nancy Nydegger—United Church of Christ

Maarika Vercamer—Student Representative

Brad Vonhof—At Large

Staff Members:

Jessica Stokes—Common Ministry Director

Lisa Soranaka—Office Manager



2014 Fall Retreat at the Monastery of St. Gertrude

Annual Fall Retreat at the Monastery of St. Gertrude

Despite Halloween and a home football game, eleven folks (nine students, Emi Dickens, and Jessica Stokes) retreated to St. Gertrude's Monastery the weekend of October 31-Nov 2. St. Gertrude's is a Benedictine monastery, located in Idaho, where nuns warmly welcomed us. Students participated in prayer services, mass, reflections, recreational activities, and meals at the monastery. While on a tour, we learned about the history and self-sufficiency of the monastery. The students marveled at the fact that the nuns have been completely self-reliant since the early 1900's; everything from a beauty parlor to a book binder are nestled on the property. We had the wonderful treat of hearing the Palouse Choral Society perform "Brahms German Requiem" on Saturday night in the sanctuary. What a stellar concert! It was a sacred time, indeed; we were even lead by candlelight to the concert in reverence for All Saint's Day. There was ongoing discussion around All Saint's Day and All Soul's day, as these liturgical events coincided with our retreat. This was an important discussion for the students as much of the dialogue at the monastery that weekend involved All Saint's Day. We also looked closely at specific teachings on "letting go" and self-love as taught by Thomas Merton

(Trappist Monk) and Monk Thich Nhat Hanh (Vietnamese Zen Buddhist Monk). Reflection and meditation aside, there was also plenty of relaxing and laughs had. It was a joy to retreat away from the Halloween antics of campus and "just be". The fresh air and awe-filled view atop the hiking trail offered respite to our students. We are very grateful for our dear friends at St. Gertrude's Monastery.

Jessica Stokes—Director of the Common Ministry

Why is interfaith work/dialogue important to you?

"Interfaith work/dialogue is important to me because I believe that there is some kind of validity in everyone's experience. There is something to learn from everyone and every religion. Even if I don't agree with some part of another religion, or even if that religion is directly at odds with mine, I can then learn why the other person believes what he or she believes. I can also be challenged about my own beliefs which helps shape and strengthen my own faith"

-Nathan 'nato' Shiu

Did you know you can make a gift of stocks? Please contact the Common Ministry office for more information

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of the Common Ministry,

It is with great honor that I join your community! Since becoming Director of the Common Ministry in September, I have been embraced and supported by everyone, and for that I would like to extend my thanks. We find ourselves in an exciting, new chapter of the Common Ministry; providing a “safe space for spiritual development” remains our purpose as we interact with many students, organizations, WSU faculty and staff, and our Pullman-Moscow residents. It is an exciting time to be a part of interfaith work! We find that our global context is shrinking. We now interact with far more different and diverse groups of people than ever before. Thankfully, cultures can no longer avoid each other, and the Common Ministry celebrates and embraces all. In short, the world is catching up to our work, here, in Pullman, WA.

We have settled into our new home at Community Congregational United Church of Christ (CCUCC). We are thankful for this new setting at CCUCC! Our efforts can now be solidified towards the goal of robust student programming and community work. This has been a busy autumn, consisting of 14 Interfaith Mythbusters meals and dialogues. We also had a wonderful Fall Retreat at St. Gertrude’s Monastery where we focused on presence. These two pertinent programs are joined with our larger communal presence in Pullman. The Common Ministry was involved in justice-filled dialogue across the WSU campus and other local groups. This involvement has included: the WSU Center for Civic Engagement, the Gender Identity/ Expression and Sexual Orientation Resource Center at WSU, Palouse Poverty Task Force, the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Pullman, WSU Office of the Dean of Students, planning for 2015’s Roger Williams Symposium, and local communities of faith. We established a graduate student group that meets bi-monthly so that more students can have a “safe space for spiritual development.”

As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary this spring, we celebrate the work of the Common Ministry, while excitedly anticipating this fresh new era of our ministry. I hope you will join our community in this confident, invigorating new chapter through your continued support and involvement.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jessica Stokes



Why is interfaith work/dialogue important to you?

“Because it gives me a greater understanding and tolerance to people which is an important step for peace in the world! “

-Hanieh Hashemian



THE COMMON MINISTRY AT WSU

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Have a blessed holiday season!

Keep in Touch!

To be kept up-to-date on the latest happenings at the Interfaith House, "Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/InterfaithHouseWSU, and Follow us on Twitter @CommonMinistry

Contact us by telephone at (509) 332-2611 or Email at office@interfaith-house.com.

Come by and see us in our office in the CCUCC at 525 NE Campus St, Pullman, WA 99163

Our mailing address is PO Box 1138, Pullman, WA 99163

Be sure to check out our website: www.interfaith-house.com!

To update your contact information / be removed from this mailing list / stop receiving multiples copies / receive your newsletter electronically, please contact the Interfaith House with all relevant contact information.