



Newsletter

October 2005

Dignity/Seattle Liturgy

Reminder

**Liturgy is at 6:00 p.m. every 2nd Sunday: October 9, November 13
Ravenna United Methodist Church 5751-33rd Ave NE Seattle**

President's Annual Report

Presented at Annual Membership Meeting, Sept. 24, 2005
By Jim Weston

This has been a difficult year for Dignity/Seattle. We continued to have very minimal support from our membership (36 at present) at our services and socials. Our number continues to remain at this level, basically, because those from the area who contact DignityUSA are assigned to us. Also, having no yearly amount of dues specified helps persons who want to affiliate.

Positions on the local board had to be changed when our president abruptly resigned at the end of September, 2004. This was precipitated by a newly-formed policy of DignityUSA regarding presiders at liturgies/services with which he didn't agree. The board reconfigured with a new person (a former president) who was willing to finish out his term as "acting president." Fortunately someone from the chapter joined the board to bring it back to its former number.

Because the person who resigned was a priest and presided at our liturgies, we lost a priest. We also lost our other priest/presider because of the implications of the new DignityUSA policy regarding presiders. As a consequence, the board was forced to reduce the Sunday service to just once a month. We were able at that point to renegotiate our contract with Ravenna United Methodist Church for a monthly rent of \$75.00.

Fortunately, just at the end of the Lenten season someone else surfaced who was willing to help us out. This person is from the American Catholic Church—not officially recognized by Rome. He is an excellent presider and homilist. He presides for us now on a regular basis.

We have continued with the one service a month and receive adequate contributions from those in attendance at our Sunday services. We have also been the recipients of two generous checks from a donor who had

met one of our members. Socially, though, our potlucks and other things had to be discontinued due to lack of attendance.

Despite all of this we rallied in June to realize one of the most successful fundraisers we have ever had with our Pride Week Pancake Breakfast/Raffle. Our customary workers came through again, along with other members and former members whom we hadn't seen for a long time.

This brings us to the present. I think that we are at a real turning point in the local chapter. If we aren't able to revitalize, I see us dying out within the year. My open letter to the membership in the September issue of the *Newsletter* explains my reasons for this observation, along with some brief history of the chapter. [Ed. Note: To read Jim's letter online, go to <<http://www.dignityseattle.org/>> and click "Newsletters."]

Death is part of life as we profess in our Christian faith. It's part of what is called the "circle of life." Time will tell if we are able to rekindle interest and vitality. New leaders with new ideas and energy will need to come forth to replace those who have burned out or have decided to devote their energy to something else. Let's see what's coming.

Dignity/Vancouver BC/Dignite

Dignity/Vancouver BC

604/432-1230

Sunday, Oct. 16th. 5:00 p.m. Preparing dinner at Diamond Centre. Contact Vince W. for more info: 604/325-1554.

Friday, Oct. 21st. 7:30 p.m. Liturgy & worship at Vincent W's. 604/325-1554.

Saturday, Oct. 29th. 7:30 p.m. Potluck supper at Dennis L-H's. 604/430-3466.

Facing the Fear of Death Seminar, Friday, Oct. 14. Page 2.

Sister Jeannine Gramick in Seattle Nov. 1. (and Olympia, Oct. 29 and Portland, Oct 30) Page 3.

No Dues Policy: Membership in Dignity/Seattle and DignityUSA is free. Join today!

Dignity/Seattle's Annual Membership Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2005

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. at Ravenna United Methodist Church. Prayer was said. Quorum was present.

Treasurer's report: (Delia Vita)

To be published in next issue.]

Secretary's report: (Denise Arceneaux)

Usual activities except for work on the vote to reduce the no. of board members required from 7 to 5 as proposed by Paula Lavallee and approved by the board. She also proposed changes in the wording of the by-laws to reflect changes on the national level, such as the "no dues requirement," which were also accepted by the membership and incorporated into the by-laws.

Liturgy Committee: (Denise Arceneaux)

As is already known, two presidors have left since last year and we have gained one – Rev. Philip Knowles of the Catholic American Church. Now, we are only meeting once a month as opposed to once a week. Since Linda Hapenstall is unable to preside for us in the near future due to schedule conflicts and prior commitments, there has been a suggestion, with the board's approval, that Pastor Crystal of RUMC be invited to preside alone in some form of liturgy during one of our monthly meetings. Comments about including her on our list of potential presidors are encouraged and should be directed to Denise at <denarcen01@hotmail.com>.

President's Report: (Jim Weston)

- See report on front page.
- Jim asked for comments from the membership on his report especially with regard to our declining membership and participation at liturgy. A discussion ensued upon this topic.

Results of Election:

The following members elected to the Board are:

Steve Kearney

Delia Vita

Denise Arceneaux (Write-in)

Paula Lavallee (Write-in)

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise Arceneaux, Secretary

Facing the Fear of Death

Friday, October 14th, 8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Swedish Medical Center, Providence Campus,
500-17th Ave S, Seattle

This interactive seminar is designed to help participants face and address their fears about death, and then integrate their concept of death with contemporary spiritualities. Community members, health care professionals, spiritual leaders and volunteers are all warmly invited to attend. Keynote speaker Sheldon Solomon, Ph.D. is professor of Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies at Skidmore College. An experimental social psychologist, Sheldon's work on death awareness has been supported by the National Science Foundation and Ernest Becker Foundation. Featured presenter, Marcus Borg, Ph.D. is Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University. John Wynn, M.D. and Jamal Rahman, M.A. will also be seminar presenters.

Registration is required: please go to: <http://www.multifaith.org/New/2005SCDseminar.pdf> for a seminar brochure and registration form. Fee is \$75. For further information, please contact Joan Wahlmeier at 206.386.3030 x44524 or joan.wahlmeier@swedish.org. Co-sponsored by Swedish Medical Center Department of Spiritual Care, 206.386.2082, and Multifaith Works 206.324.1520.

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Editor's clarification: In the August 2005 issue of this *Newsletter*, I published a piece titled, "A Mother Speaks." The author's name was unavailable at press time. Since its publication here, I was informed that the author was Sharon Underwood of Hartford, VT. The article originally appeared in April 2000 in the Valley News, White River Junction, VT.



Coming To:

Olympia, Sat. Oct. 29th

Portland, Sun. Oct 30th

Seattle, Tues. Nov. 1st

A film: In Good Conscience

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, a Catholic nun, has paid a heavy price for her 30-plus years ministry to abolish discrimination against lesbian and gay people, to promote reconciliation and dialogue between them and church hierarchy, and to amend Catholicism's hostility and neglect toward gay and lesbian Catholics. She has improved thousands of lives--healing people and families fractured by fear, misunderstanding and hate.

Ordered by the Vatican to abandon her pastoral ministry to the lesbian and gay community and then silenced by her religious order from discussing why, she responded: *"I choose not to collaborate in my own oppression by restricting a basic human right, ... To me this is a matter of conscience."*

In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith is a remarkable cinema verite portrait tracking this gentle revolutionary as she takes on the Vatican with humility and humor. We travel with Sister Jeannine throughout the US and even to Rome, the historical seat of the Catholic Church, as she bravely continues to speak out about the injustices and discrimination faced by the GLBT community.

Showings of 90 minute film and 30 minute discussion with Sr. Jeannine Gramick in:

- **OLYMPIA:** First Christian Church, 701 Franklin St (downtown)
Saturday, October 29th, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Contact Barb Monda 360/866-1378
- **PORTLAND:** Journey/Koinonia Catholic Community at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1432 SW 13th Ave
Sunday, October 30th, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Contact Nancy Bannister 503/292-8188
- **SEATTLE:** First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Ave (at Seneca)
Tuesday, November 1st, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)
Contact Louise McAllister 206/367-1089

Suggested offering: \$5 - \$10. No one turned away. Refreshments follow presentation.

Sponsored by: Call To Action Western Washington and The St. Joan of Arc Trust

Endorsed by: PFLAG of Seattle, PFLAG of Bellevue, PFLAG of Olympia, Multifaith Works of Seattle, Triangles of Olympia and Dignity/Seattle.