



NAEIS E-Newsletter

Transition Issue - June, 2009

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This is the last E-Newsletter coming from the National Office of NAEIS located in Tacoma, Washington. Please read the articles from President Dan Krutz and Chair of Transition Team, Scott Anderson.

-Jan Leng
Membership Officer

→ A Defining Moment for NAEIS

The current situation of NAEIS reminds me of the experience of many in our region in the recent years. Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, and three weeks later Hurricane Rita struck West of New Orleans and decimated much of Southwest Louisiana and Southeast Texas. Churches were hit hard, and no faith communities were spared from the devastation. Only a few weeks after the storm the clergy of my tradition were called together for a retreat with a consultant to help us sort out our feelings about what had happened and to think together about what the future might hold. We were asked to think personally too about our lives and ministries. We were asked what changes we might need to make. I can remember saying to the group that I felt the need to reinvent myself and lead the reinvention of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference. It was a defining moment in my life personally and professionally.

The ecumenical and interfaith community may not have been hit by a hurricane, but the combined forces of the economy, the society and culture and the changing understanding of faith based organizations and what the public and our constituencies want from them, have challenged the entire NAEIS community. Some of you may already be well on the way to responding to these forces and are making positive and hopeful responses. Others may feel overwhelmed or puzzled or frighteningly alone as you grapple with what to do. Can we, do we need to reinvent ourselves and guide the transformation of the organizations in which we share leadership?

Elsewhere in this newsletter Scott Anderson of the

Wisconsin Council of Churches writes about NAEIS IN TRANSITION. Scott is serving as the chair of the Transition Committee on the NAEIS board; he outlines a number of changes occurring within NAEIS that we hope you will support and participate in as much as you are able. The NAEIS connection for years has been Jan Leng. Her service as our National Membership Officer concludes the end of this month, and the board is taking on the responsibilities of the position Jan has held. We are grateful for Jan's dedicated service to the ecumenical and interfaith community. Please do extend your thanks to her as she concludes her work with NAEIS.

The NAEIS board will gather in retreat at Holy Trinity Spiritual Center in Baltimore in October, and we hope from that retreat to present a plan and course of action for NAEIS for your consideration at our Annual NAEIS Retreat at the same location, March 16-19, 2010. I do not know what the future holds, but I am excited to work with the board and you to see if we can reinvent NAEIS to serve each other and the ecumenical and interfaith community for the future.

Dan Krutz, President
NAEIS Board of Directors

NAEIS In Transition

In March, the NAEIS Board of Directors decided to enter into a time of transition and re-visioning as we consider the long term direction of the Association.

First, because of our challenging financial situation, the Board decided to say good-bye to our able National Membership Officer Janet Leng. Jan has provided many years of service to both the Board and the membership of NAEIS. She will finish her work with us on June 30.

Second, the Board decided to enter into a transitional period of 18 months, where individual Board members and several affiliated ecumenical agencies will pick up various responsibilities on behalf of the NAEIS membership:

- The NAEIS mailing address, phone and fax contact will be moved to the offices of the Washington Association of Churches, effective July 1. NAEIS Board member Alice Woldt will be handling all incoming mail and serve as the contact person for phone and fax inquiries.
- Staff at the Louisiana Interchurch Conference will route NAEIS email with a new e-mail address for NAEIS in July and serve as registrar for the NAEIS Spring, 2010 retreat near Baltimore. Rev. Dan Krutz, current NAEIS President, is Director of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference;
- Staff at the Wisconsin Council of Churches will take over responsibility for managing the NAEIS data base

and e-news distribution. NAEIS Board member Scott Anderson will be coordinating the production of the NAEIS e-newsletter

· Ammon Ripple, intern with Michael Kinnamon at the National Council of Churches in New York City, will manage the NAEIS website over the next year.

The NAEIS Board will be meeting in early October for a planning retreat to look at the longer term issues facing NAEIS, the needs of our membership, and new opportunities before us. A long range strategic vision will be shared with the broader membership at our spring, 2010 gathering in Baltimore.

New contact information for NAEIS is as follows:

Mailling Address: NAEIS
P. O. Box 95949
Seattle, WA 98145
Phone: 206.625.9790, x12
FAX: 206.625.9791
E-Mail: info@naeis.org
Website: www.naeis.org

Good Bye and Thank You

I have enjoyed working with all of you over the past ten years as Membership Officer. It has been difficult to watch the organization dwindle in size as former NAEIS members retired and their successors did not always see the advantage of membership in NAEIS. It is my hope that the Board will be able to vision an organization that will again provide the support, mentoring, and networking as well as providing professional services to the members that was once the most valuable part of NAEIS. NAEIS, over the years, has provided for me wonderful mentors in Dorothy Rose, Dorothy Berry, Kathleen Hurty, Margaret Koehler and many others. I would wish the same for those who are new or relatively new to the ecumenical/interreligious world.

The State Executives have developed their own support network and meet separately from NAEIS each year. It is my hope that NAEIS will become that same kind of support group for the local and regional executives who are heavily involved in the grassroots ministry of ecumenism and interfaith relations in their respective communities. They need that same kind of support system among colleagues that the state executives have.

If NAEIS ever comes back to the Northwest, I hope I will be able to attend to renew friendships. In the meantime, I will watch with interest to see what happens to NAEIS in the future. May God's Shalom be yours in these turbulent times.

Jan Leng

→ New Leadership at Associated Ministries - Tacoma

The Reverend David T. Alger, Executive Director of Associated Ministries of Tacoma-Pierce County, Washington retires June 30, 2009 after 30 years of ministry in this community. He has built the agency from 2.5 staff to a current level of 26 staff with multiple programs. His presence has changed the face of Tacoma-Pierce County dramatically and has built a community that is humane, compassionate and just.

Succeeding David Alger is The Reverend Christopher Morton, previously the Director of Organizational Development for the Minnesota Council of Churches. Chris begins his duties on July 1, 2009 and will build on David's legacy. Chris can be reached at chrism@associatedministries.org. Congratulations to both of you.

Good Bye and Thank You

Peace,
Jan Leng
NAEIS