

SPIRITUALITY

Helen Peterson honored

The Church of the Four Winds honored Dr. Helen L. Peterson earlier this year for her work in founding the ministry of Four Winds and seeking to educate all people about the issues of Native Americans.

The Church of the Four Winds was founded by a small group of Episcopal native people in 1985. The initial grant for the ministry was secured from the Episcopal Church USA with Peterson's advocacy. She was chairwoman of the Province Eight Episcopal Committee and part of the National Board of Indian Ministry for the Episcopal Church.

Peterson is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux tribe of Pine Ridge, S.D. She has lived most of her life in the West, with the exception of a stint in Washington, D.C., during the 1950s. Peterson has lived in Portland and worked with the Pacific Northwest tribes for the past 20 years. Her distinguished career includes advocacy on issues for native people such as termination, restoration, recognition, tribal government sovereignty, treaty rights, religious freedom, health and human rights, and education. Peterson has a keen understanding of the need for all people to be aware and knowledgeable of the government-to-government status of tribes. Peterson was quoted extensively in the recent book about the fight for the return of the Black Hills: *Black Hills, White Justice*.



Dr. Helen L. Peterson

Excerpted from Portland Indian News

Call for nonjudgmental response to AIDS

A new document on AIDS issued by national religious leaders calls for tolerance, compassion, justice, and comprehensive prevention efforts. Known as "A Commitment on HIV/AIDS by People of Faith...The Council Call," the declaration was drafted by the Council of National Religious AIDS Networks, which is composed of leaders of AIDS service groups associated with several religious bodies. "The Council Call" has won endorsements from individuals, religious leaders and organizations.

"This pledge will give every concerned person of faith in the United States an opportunity to 'sign on the dotted line' and commit to a compassionate, nonjudgmental response to HIV disease and AIDS," said the Rev. Kenneth South, executive director of AIDS National Interfaith Network, which convened the council. By calling on all believers in the United States to confront "racism, classism, ageism, sexism and homophobia," and labeling bigotry and intolerance as sins, the document adopts positions that are not often heard from faith groups.

On Dec. 1, World AIDS Day, "The Council Call" was officially signed by selected religious leaders at a public ceremony at the United Nations to celebrate the endorsements received. AIDS National Interfaith Network encouraged all houses of worship to toll their bells 14 times at 1:40 pm on that day, in commemoration of the 14 years of the AIDS epidemic in the United States. Jewish congregations and communities sounded the shofar as part of this nationwide effort.

The eight-point declaration—available in English and Spanish versions—calls on all believers in the United States to adopt its commitment "to develop comprehensive AIDS-prevention programs for our youth and adults" and to seek ways to eliminate barriers to prevention, such as poverty. From the very beginning, the faith community in the United States has been involved in the AIDS epidemic: providing assistance in the form of pastoral counseling, home care, housing, meals, and transportation to those infected with or af-

ected by HIV and AIDS. Today, nearly 50 percent of all community-based AIDS service organizations are rooted in faith communities.

In 1988, AIDS National Interfaith Network, a private, nonprofit national association of AIDS ministries, was founded to ensure that people with HIV and AIDS receive compassionate, nonjudgmental care, support and assistance. Last May, the organization established the Council of National Religious AIDS Networks to increase collaboration among religious AIDS networks.

Episcopal ministry established for sexual minorities

At its yearly convention, held Nov. 17 to 19, the Episcopal Diocese of Western Oregon voted to establish a Diocese Commission for Ministry to gay men and lesbians. The resolution was presented by the Columbia-Willamette Chapter of Integrity, which is the lesbian and gay organization of the Episcopal church. Although the resolution was amended on the floor of the convention, it passed, by a significant majority, in a form pleasing to members of Integrity. The resolution states that the Bishop shall appoint members to the commission, and that the commission will work toward establishing a broadly representative membership of people from the diocese interested in the church's ministry to gay men and lesbians. Integrity anticipates that several of its members will be appointed to serve on the commission, which will begin its work early in 1995.

Commitment ceremonies now available nationwide

Based in Woodstock, Vt., the three-year-old organization Pride, Love and Union Services, offers help to couples wanting to arrange and produce their wedding ceremonies.

The company provides a guide to commitment ceremonies which includes such information as sample ceremony certificates, planning checklists, referrals to local gay- and lesbian-owned or supportive businesses and services, sample vows, and retail information on wedding bands and same-sex cake toppers.

Address inquiries to: Pride, Love and Union Services, PO Box 283, Woodstock VT 05091; (603) 448-3754 or fax (603) 448-4076.

New Thought

The God Connection Center for New Thought Christianity has just turned two years old. The God Connection was founded in 1992 by the Revs. Berdell Moffett and Casey Chaney. The center is founded on New Thought principles which do not define God for the individual, instead encouraging each individual to define God for herself or himself. The basic Christian philosophy of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is studied and applied to all of life's challenges. The center honors diversity, and the congregation is approximately 60 percent gay and lesbian—the balance are very supportive.

Moffett and Chaney are life partners who have been together for 12 years. They have been out of the closet everywhere, for years, even as public school teachers. Aside from their usual ministerial duties, Moffett and Chaney work to help other gay men and lesbians come out, believing that coming out is the main key to nullifying the efforts of organizations like the Oregon Citizens Alliance.

Worship services are 10 am Sunday at Westgate Plaza, Suite 105, 3900 SW Cedar Hills Blvd., in Beaverton and 7:30 pm Wednesday at Metropolitan Family Services, 2200 NE 24th Ave., in Portland.

Compiled by the Rev. Matthew Nelson, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

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For information or to make an appointment for The Triangle Project, a gay and lesbian specific program, call the Intake Coordinator at 224-0075

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**A Potter's House
 Christmas Eve**

Gays and Lesbians Worshipping Together

Candlelight Praise and Worship
 Message "Twas the Night Before Christmas"
 9:00 p.m. December 24th*


New Year's Eve Worship
 11:00 p.m. December 31st*

3830 S.E. 62nd Ave.
 (between Powell & Foster)

* No Christmas Day/New Year's Day Service

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DECEMBER 24, 11PM
UNIVERSITY PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 4775 N. LOMBARD ST. ~ PORTLAND

This service is sponsored by Metanoia Peace Community United Methodist Church, University Park United Methodist Church, and Shalom Ministries.
 For more information, call 281-3697 or 289-7843.