

Alliance of Communities
Transforming Syracuse



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From the ACTS President



I've been busy making plans for a family trip next summer. We'll fly to the West Coast for my son and daughter-in-law's second annual wedding ceremony (a story for another day), then drive cross-country back to Syracuse. Half the fun (at least) of any trip lies in the dreaming—imagining—planning, and this trip is no exception. Do I look for the quickest or shortest route home? Do I seek out the cheapest route (budget motels, overnight stays with family and friends, etc.)? Do I try to maximize the number of national parks and other attractions I can squeeze into our itinerary ... even if it makes for a more circuitous, time-consuming and costly path home?

It didn't take long to realize that we can't do everything we'd like, in view of available resources (time and money). If we take the northern route home, we can visit Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons, and maybe even Glacier, Mount Rushmore, the Badlands and Wounded Knee ... but not Joshua Tree, the Grand Canyon, Zion, Arches, Mesa Verde or Petrified Forest (and vice versa). Which route makes more sense? Which one holds greater appeal—not just to me but to the entire family? Plotting the way home is not a simple equation. It is, first and foremost, an exercise in imagination.

That same pattern—with the whole being greater than the sum of the parts—was obvious this past summer, when I visited a number of different ACTS' congregations and their weekly worship services. There were any number of clear differences: differences in holy scripture ... style of music ... prayer and liturgy ... preaching style and role of the clergy ... congregational size and composition ... worship structure, flow and focus. But truthfully, those were all reflections of a grander and more encompassing formulation: how it is that each congregation (and faith tradition) understands—portrays—imagines the sacred, along with its relationship (and the relationship of the world as a whole) to the sacred. I can safely say that, regardless of the nuances, each congregation saw or envisioned itself as part of a greater (and timeless and ultimately prevailing) story. The weekly gathering for worship was nothing less than an opportunity to remind themselves of that grand story and their part in it, as well as to celebrate their intimate connection to the Source of the story ... to be reminded of life's sacredness and how to live in a way honoring and enhancing that sacredness.

I don't mean to downplay or ignore the theological, spiritual and ethical differences among our various faith traditions and communities. Those differences are profound in every sense of the word—both in terms of scope and significance. But those same differences add a richness to our understanding of what it means to be human ... our understanding of the divine ... our understanding of what it takes to live together in community. If we focus solely on the differences (however interesting or odd they might seem), our shared work for social justice will be reduced to the least common denominator in which we only take up issues on which we all can totally agree 100% (no doubt, a very short list). But when we take time to listen to—and value—our neighbors' sacred stories, not only does our own sacred story become clearer and more precious but we become much more ready and willing to join in common cause for the common good around a wide range of critical issues.

Craig French, President

District Attorney Candidates' Forum



Photo courtesy of Calypso Rae Photography

The Interdenominational Ministry Alliance (IMA) and ACTS hosted a District Attorney Candidate's Forum at the Southwest Community Center on October 22nd. All candidates attended including William Fitzpatrick, incumbent and Republican; Chuck Keller, Democrat; and Gary Lavine, Conservative Party nominee. Questions were posed by Robin Bronstein, of ACTS and Rev. Erik Eure of the Promise Land Church and Rev. Derek Galloway of The Connected Church of Syracuse. Audience members posed questions about criminal justice reforms, police conduct and relationships,

diversion programs and overall operation of the DA Office. The District Attorney race is an important one for Onondaga County. Please be sure to cast your vote for the candidate you believe will best support criminal justice reform.

ACTS End of the Year Appeal

ACTS has made a great deal of progress as a vital social justice organization this year. Due to the commitment and hard work of Craig French, President; Peter Sarver, Executive Director; Linda Malik, our Community Organizer; officers, Board and Leadership Council members as well as other volunteers and allies in the community, we have accomplished a great deal including the following:

- Implementation of our Power Up 2019 Plan guided by last year's Lifecycle Assessment and strategic planning
- Awarded a Catholic Campaign for Human Dignity Grant (CCHD)
- Hired a part-time Community Organizer, part-time Office Manager and advisors to assist with capacity building and structural racism work
- Expanded individual and organizational membership
- Engaged 5 members/officers to attend Faith in Action Regional Training in Pennsylvania

- Held a series of training sessions with Faith in Action support to identify issues and launch research groups and co-sponsored a recent District Attorney Forum
- Published a monthly E-Newsletter
- Continued to be a strong voice in a number of community issues including: Community Grid option for I-81, equity in education, criminal justice reform, violence prevention, urban job opportunities and racial equity

ACTS will launch an end of year appeal the first week in December. We are looking for your continued support to further strengthen and build our organization. Plans for 2020 include hiring a second Community Organizer to specifically focus on engaging those most impacted by racial and social injustices. ACTS would also like to expand its work with advisors to continue capacity building and structural racism work. We are counting on your support and we thank you for thinking of ACTS when planning end of year giving.

Your Vote Counts! - Community Organizer Update



The work of justice means we must have leaders that represent ALL of us. By the time you read this, we will be only days away from Election Day. The good news is we have early voting now, a very important change that NYS has taken far too long to adopt. Deeply popular elsewhere in the US, this simple initiative can be a driver of stronger engagement at the polls where it can be difficult for every constituent to vote on a single day. Every vote truly does matter and this constitutional right should be made easy for ALL.

New on the ballot will be a referendum on redistricting in Syracuse. For too long, districts have been manipulated on partisan lines, gerrymandered, which often favors one group over another. Susan Lerner of Common Cause New York spoke before the Syracuse Common Council about why "creating independent commissions to determine non-partisan district lines improves transparency and eliminates the temptation of partisan gerrymandering." She added "if Syracuse created an independent commission it would be the first city east of the Mississippi to do so." Based on census data on population changes in a region, lawmakers last made redistricting changes in 2002. Voting yes on the proposed referendum means you are asking for objectivity on redistricting and a change in the charter before redistricting happens next.

ACTS and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA) held a District Attorney Forum at the Southwest Community Center on October 22nd. The District Attorney holds much sway on how the criminal justice system operates. Being informed of who is running and each candidate's perspective and individual policies helps us be an informed electorate by knowing what is at stake for each of us and our community. ACTS is a non-partisan organization and we do not recommend candidates, but we can assist in providing the opportunity to learn about issues and candidates. Be sure that your voice is heard on this critical race.

See you at the polls...

Linda Malik, ACTS Organizer

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What's Up with I-81?

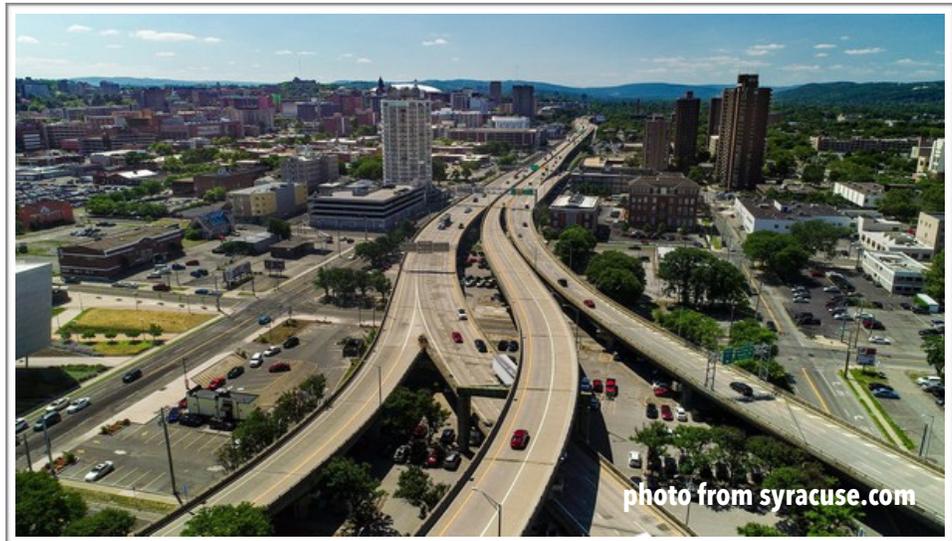
While it seems like the community discussions around the best replacement alternative for I-81 have gone on forever, that is because it has been many years in the making...and more delays are on the way. We now believe that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will not be released till the first quarter of 2020.

Actually that is not such a bad thing because this current period has been used as a pre-DEIS time when various adjustments and adaptations to the 15,000 page document are being made. That means we getting closer [believe it or not] to the publication of the DEIS. Once officially rolled out, there will be a public comment period before it becomes the Final

Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and sent off to the feds.

ACTS and Moving People have been encouraging folks to comment on the preferred Community Grid alternative since that is what most likely will be approved by the feds, after all is said and done. For more information Query "i81opportunities"; Go to <https://www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities/>; Click on

"presentation" under Public Information Meeting held June 18, 2019; and listen to 20 minute talk by Mark Frechette, DOT Project Director.



We are available to congregational groups and other parties in the community to provide updates on how we can avoid the binary problem of "winners & losers" when it comes to the best possible replacement alternative for the I-81. Contact Peter Sarver at petersarveracts@gmail.com for more information.

Bring your questions to a conversation with your fellow citizens from the suburbs and the city to see if we can define a new perspective where there is a sense of win-win for all stakeholders!

Wednesday, November 6th, 7:00 PM - Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church, 5299 Jamesville Rd., Dewitt. The conversation will be facilitated by Peter Sarver, Executive Director of ACTS and Convener for Moving People Transportation Coalition. Other knowledgeable persons will be available as resources.

ACTS Organizational Calendar – November 2019

ACTS Equity in Education - Monday, November 4th, 6:30 PM at Living Water COGIC, 121 Huron St., Syracuse

ACTS Financial Sustainability Committee - Tuesday, November 5th, 8:30 AM at First UU

ACTS Youth Council - Saturday, November 9th, 5:00 - 6:30 PM at Temple Concord

Spring Banquet Committee Meeting - Tuesday, November 13th, 5:30 PM at Temple Concord

ACTS Special Event with Patrick Johnson - Structural Racism and Cultural Bias (Part 1) - Monday, November 18th at Hopps Memorial CME Church, 1110 S. State St. Dinner for everyone and Leadership Council Meeting at 5:00 PM, program from 6:00 - 9:00 PM.

ACTS Special Event with Patrick Johnson - Structural Racism and Cultural Bias (Part 2) - Thursday, November 21st at Hopps Memorial CME Church, 1110 S. State St. Dinner for everyone and Board Meeting at 5:00 PM, program from 6:00 - 9:00 PM.

ACTS Youth Council - Wednesday, November 20th, 6:00 - 7:30 PM at Temple Concord

November Newsletter Items Due - Tuesday, November 20th. Please email all submissions to lindamulvey@acts-syracuse.org

ACTS Race Matters Book Club - Monday, November 25th, 7:00 PM. Featuring "The Color of Law" by Richard Rothstein, location TBA.

Research in Action Committee - Tuesday, November 26th, 5:30 PM at Temple Concord

ACTS Leadership Council Annual Meeting - Monday, January 13th, 7:00 PM, location TBA.

SAVE the DATE - ACTS Spring Banquet

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

ACTS Youth Council Update

Youth Council members continue to focus on education with more discussion about what our College and Career Centers will entail. These discussions helped us bring together our thoughts on the school system and what these centers will offer. We will visit Cicero-North Syracuse High School on October 28th to see a College and Career Center in action. This will help us envision what we want our center to look like in order for it to be successful. We will also be interviewing a Henninger alumnus who attended Henninger when the school had a College and Career Center. These are our first steps in achieving our ultimate goal of having a College and Career Center within each of our five city high schools.

We also continue to focus on ways to recruit more members to the Youth Council. We've begun the presentation we'll be using to inform the students about the Youth Council and what membership means. We will be going to four sites: Peace Inc., Boys & Girls Club, Southwest Community Center and Hillside Work and Scholarship. For more information, contact us at actsyouthcouncil@gmail.com



OG's Against Violence Holds First Violence Reduction Expo

Congratulations to Clifford Ryan and the Board of OGs Against Violence on a powerful, first Violence Reduction Expo held on October 19th. The community event was held at SALTSpace and brought together anti-violence groups and featured resources for violence prevention. A Gifford Foundation "What If" grant and Molina Health Care provided funding and support for the expo.



ACTS Community Calendar of Local Events - November 2019

Early Voting in NY Continues – Friday, November 1st – Sunday, November 3rd. See times and locations on page 9.

Hello, Building Company Theater Presents: Fragile White Guy – Friday, November 1st, 8:00 PM at Wunderbar, 201 South West St. Syracuse. *Fragile White Guy*, inspired by the teachings of James Baldwin and by the work of Dr. Robin DiAngelo in her book "White Fragility – Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism".

ELECTION DAY – Tuesday, November 5th. Polls open 6:00 AM – 9:00 PM.

Conversations For Win-Win With The I-81 Replacement Alternative – Wednesday, November 6th, 7:00 PM – Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church, 5299 Jamesville Rd., Dewitt. Facilitated by Peter Sarver, Executive Director of ACTS and Convener for Moving People Transportation Coalition.

Jowonio School 50th Dinner & Anniversary Celebration – Friday, November 8th, 6:00 – 9:00 PM at Traditions at the Links, 5900 N. Burdick St. East Syracuse. Tickets are available at www.jowonio.org

At Eternity's Gates: Christian Faith and Medical Decisions at the End-of-Life – Wednesday, November 13th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Spiritual Renewal Center, 1342 Lancaster St. Syracuse. Interactive seminar by Kathy Faber-Langendoen, MD. More information at spiritualrenewalcenter.com Fee: \$20, or whatever you can afford.

I-81 Project in Syracuse: Economic Equity/Inclusion - Friday, November 15th, 12:00-1:30 PM at the Syracuse Center of Excellence 727 East Washington Street, Room 203. Speaker: Aggie Lane, Urban Jobs Task Force will discuss what economic equity/inclusion on the I-81 project would look like.

White Privilege Symposium Tools for Creating a Just Future for All – Friday & Saturday, November 15 – 16th at Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Ave. Rochester, NY. Register at <https://cvent.me/vQBBw>. Program features Dr. Yusef Salaam, Dr. Jacqueline Battalora and Dr. Bettina L. Love.

100 Black Men of Syracuse 12th Annual Banquet - The Future is Now – Saturday, November 16th, 6:15 – 8:15 PM at the ONCenter. Purchase tickets @bit.ly/blkmensyr

3rd Annual Fr. Mychal Judge Memorial Lecture Series: Sponsored by All Saints LGBTQ+ Taskforce, Tuesday, November 19th, 7:00 PM at All Saints Church. Prof. Maria T. Brown, Ph.D., LMSW and Assistant Research Professor at SU will give a talk titled: "The Need for Safe-Spaces: Exploring the Experiences of homeless LGBTQ Youth." **All Saints Church is wheelchair accessible; event is free and open to the Public. For more info contact Peter Daino at 315-378-2583 or peterdaino53@gmail.com .**

L'Arche 45th Anniversary Party – Thursday, November 21st, 6:00 – 9:00 PM, Barbagallo's Restaurant - 6344 E Molloy Rd, East Syracuse. Call L'Arche for tickets [\$45] at (315) 479-8088. Dinner, live music and dancing!

SAVE THE DATE:

- **St. Lucy's Elegant Pasta Dinner**, Thursday, December 5th
- **Syracuse Peace Council's 49th Annual Plowshares Craftsfair and Winter Peace Festival** Saturday and Sunday, December 7th & 8th at Nottingham High School
- **400 Years of Inequality: An Observance for a Just Future** – Sunday, December 15th, time and location TBA. Sponsored by Hopps Memorial CME Church and the CNY Poor People's Campaign.

Early Voting in Onondaga County

Yes! Early voting is now an option throughout New York! This means that you can choose to vote at designated locations from October 26th through Sunday, November 3rd – you are not limited to voting on November 5th. Votes can be cast on the weekends and a variety of times and locations are open to you (see below for remaining early voting opportunities). Questions about early voting can be directed to the Onondaga County Board of Elections at (315)435-8683 or the State Board of Elections at (518) 474-1953 or www.elections.ny.gov

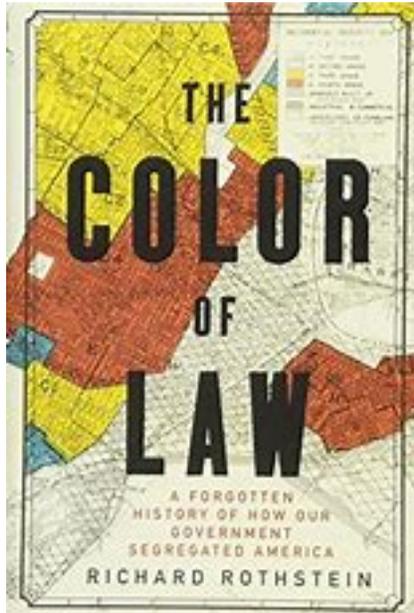
Date	Time	Locations
Friday, November 1 st	7:00 AM – 3:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay Town Courtroom (rear entrance) • Dewitt Town Hall Courtroom • LaFayette Fire Station #1 (rear entrance) • Magnarelli Community Center at McChesney Park • Southwest Community Center • Van Buren Town Hall
Saturday, November 2 nd	9:00 AM – 2:00 PM	
Sunday, November 3 rd	9:00 AM – 2:00 PM	

400 Years of Inequity – An Observance for a Just Future



Hopps Memorial CME Church and the **CNY Poor People’s Campaign** sponsored **400 Year of Inequity - An Observance for a Just Future** at Hopps CME Church on October 20th. The event was well attended by a diverse group of people all coming together to learn about our history of enslavement and oppression and the destructive impact it continues to have on today’s society. It included a panel discussion with opportunities for those attending to ask questions of panelists. Additional sessions are planned with the next one scheduled for December 15th. Stay tuned for details; all are welcome to attend.

“Race Matters” Book Club



“The Color of Law – a Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America” will be the read for the November 25th gathering of the ACTS “Race Matters” Book Club. The 7:00 PM session will be held at a congregation TBD. Social scientist/author Richard Rothstein was in Syracuse on September 17th for a talk sponsored by Legal Services of CNY. “The Color of Law” has been the topic of LSCNY’s Summer Reading project. A “Housing Segregation Timeline” can be downloaded at <https://www.lscny.org/app/uploads/2019/08/The-Color-of-Law-Timeline.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&Id=f38e1313-b5c9-4bb7-bc40-1f7994c52476>

Rothstein told the Syracuse audience that our community was no different than many throughout the USA where the public & private sectors colluded in excluding persons of color from the suburbs and locking them into pockets of urban concentrated poverty. He heralded “segregated housing” as the lead for a new Civil Rights Movement emerging across the country.

Rothstein is a Distinguished Fellow of the Economic Policy Institute and an Emeritus Senior Fellow of the Thurgood Marshall Institute at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Living in California, he is a Senior Fellow at the Haas Institute at the University of California at Berkeley. The NYT Book Review called his book “a powerful and disturbing history of residential segregation in America ... While the road forward is far from clear, there is no better history of this troubled journey.”

We all know [or should know] that Syracuse is one of the most segregated communities in the country. It is at the core of our public education problems. It is one of the key reasons for the persistence of poverty here. Please join the book club for a dynamic discussion of what has been and what we should do about it...to reclaim social justice in housing!

SAVE the DATE - ACTS Spring Banquet

Tuesday, April 21, 2020