

## Black poet to give readings tonight

"America has called itself the promised land—and themselves God's chosen people. This is where we come in, Black people. God's chosen people have always had to suffer—to endure—to overcome. We have suffered and America has been rewarded. This is a foul equation."

These are the words of poet Nikki Giovanni from "Reflections on April 4, 1968." Giovanni will read and comment on her works tonight at 8 p.m. in the Nebraska Union.

Regarded as one of America's leading black poets Giovanni has printed essays and poems in such publications as *Essence*, *Negro Digest/Black World*, *Journal of Black Poetry*, and *Encore*. She is currently working on the editorial staff at *Encore*.

Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tenn. and grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was graduated with honors from Fisk University where she helped found a SNCC chapter.

In 1972 she was presented an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Wilburforce University.

She has toured Europe and Africa, taught, lectured and written.

Among her books are *Black Feeling*, *Black Talk* (1968), *Re:Creation* (1971), and *Black Judgment* (1968). An album, *Truth is on Its Way* (1971), uses her poetry with a background of gospel singing.

Giovanni regards her poetry as an exploration of black consciousness. Black music often plays a central role. In a

section of "The Geni in a Jar" (from *Re:Creation*) she writes:

*take the air and weave the sky  
around the Black loom around the  
Black loom*

*make the sky sing a Black song sing a  
blue song*

*sing my song make the sky sing a  
Black song*

*from the Black loom from the Black  
loom*

*careful baby  
don't prick your finger*

An informal discussion with Giovanni is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. at the Culture Center, 16th and "Y" streets. This event is sponsored by the Nebraska Union Black Activities, and Talks and Topics Committees.

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St. Mark's on the Campus at 13th and R streets.

## St. Mark's ministers beyond UNL perimeters

By Rebecca Brito

St. Mark's on the Campus is, a flyer proclaims, an institution of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska. It is one of eight ministries, sponsored by various denominations, included in the UNL campus church directory.

"(St. Mark's) concern will be to minister to the University community," continues the flyer, quoting the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

But the brochure goes on to stress that St. Mark's strives to minister to a broad base of people in a Christian community, and the center's staff echoed this goal.

"We are organized much like any parish church," Vicar Ron Wiley said. "We are primarily a worship community, and our congregation includes many nonstudents."

St. Mark's offers a traditional schedule of services—including Folk Mass twice a month—as well as church school classes and youth groups.

Wiley compared his pastorate with those that might be found in an inner city area.

"The University is kind of like a ghetto," he said. "So we try to expose our student parishioners to a variety of experience, and appeal to a broad spectrum of age groups in order to widen that experience."

As part of this effort, St. Mark's holds some weekday services throughout the year, as well as special services such as late night Lenten season masses.

Brent Bohlke, chaplain at the center and a Ph.D. candidate at UNL, outlined some other programs St. Mark's offers.

Study and meditation groups, classes in church doctrine and a choir are organized by the center's staff and parishioners, Bohlke said.

"And we have social action groups," he said, citing St. Mark's Project, which collects food for distribution to people in need.

Both Bohlke and Wiley also are involved actively in individual counseling.

In addition to the programs organized from within St. Mark's, the church building is open for use by any University group not involved in fund raising, Wiley said.

Organizations such as Free University, the High School Equivalency Program, Prayer and Praise and a food coop have used, and continue to use, the center's facilities.

"In fact, there is such a variety of groups meeting here, it becomes difficult to talk about a sense of community," Bohlke said.

"But that creates a diversity in our ministry which we feel is healthy," he continued.

"It (the diversity) enables us to carry on a ministry which is both objective and subjective," Wiley added.

St. Mark's on the Campus is funded by the state diocese of the Episcopal Church, and by pledges from the congregation. Bohlke and Wiley agreed there has been little trouble procuring funds for the center.

"Of course, we must continually justify the programs we have," Bohlke said, "but that's both inevitable and essential."

Wiley said St. Mark's also is on good terms with the UNL administration.

"We are affected by University policy," he said. "However, there have been no real problems in communication. We go through the channels—it's a fairly formal relationship."

Asked whether they though general

religious activity was increasing, both hesitated to comment. Bohlke said he thought it dangerous to "project new trends in religious activity."

"There's been a definite pulling in of social action," he said, "and more visibility of new searches for something or other."

"But it's hard to tell if it's happening, or if it just looks like it's happening (religious revival)," he said. "It may just be a fragmentation of spiritual direction."

"It's human nature, you know, to look for easy answers to the problems

of religious life," he added.

Wiley expressed doubt about the futures of many now-popular religious movements.

"The charismatic movement (speaking in tongues, etc.) may have more long term effects than some of the others," he said.

"As for the Eastern religions—they may provide insights, as the Native American Church has done but, in the long run, I believe Western Christianity will prove to make the most sense in our culture," he said.

# religion