

# Ministering Together

“News, comments and events of concern to the religious community”

**The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County**

**Summer Edition**

## Message from Interim Executive Director, Rev. Will McGarvey

Dear Friends,

This summer has been quite a mix of activities for me, as I imagine it has been for you. What a great season for vacations, the outdoors, youth camps, family barbecues, and even weddings. I was honored to perform the wedding for my brother and my new sister-in-law recently in a beautiful outdoor wedding. I've also been a part of the lives of my parishioners and members of the Council in meaningful ways.

Between my life at my church and the Interfaith Council it's been a full summer filled with Presbyterian Youth Triennium (5,000 teenagers at Purdue University with all of that humidity in Indiana), a wonderful vacation with Becky in Hawaii for the first time, and my continual struggle with allergies in different ways in different locales.

One of the new things going on at the Interfaith Council has been the Youth Council. We hosted a Spring Interfaith Youth Game Night that had more than 40 youth and leaders in attendance. Since then, we hosted our first Youth Council meeting and have set some dates for future Youth Council events, including:

- Youth Council Meeting on September 22nd at 5:00 pm.
- Interfaith Youth Game Night: Costumes optional – October 27th 5:00 to 8:00 pm at Our Saviors Lutheran Church Lafayette
- Interfaith Youth Camp the weekend of November 8-11
- Interfaith Youth Film Night on January 26th 5:00 to 8:00 pm with food.

Please encourage your youth ministries to save these dates and encourage those 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth with leadership skills to grow those skills by attending and contributing to the formation of the Interfaith Youth Council.

As a part of our ongoing restructuring, we are preparing to add more diverse voices to the Elected Council this fall at our Annual Meeting, which will be held Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 pm with a potluck dinner at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church (49 Knox Dr., Lafayette). Because the Council now elects its members each year we will present a slate of members of our congregations and agencies to serve as members of our Elected Council at this meeting to serve on different three-year terms. Council members can serve two consecutive terms before taking a one year sabbatical away from the Council. Of course, there will be nominations from the floor of the meeting, but if you would like to put your name forward for nomination please contact Council member Terry Clark at [terence.clark08@gmail.com](mailto:terence.clark08@gmail.com).

As always, the Interfaith Council sins on a regular basis by coveting your donations – both your individual donations and your congregation's regular support. Can you help us covet less by giving more?

As the Ministering Together newsletters have become a quarterly publication, do go to our website weekly for information on upcoming events at [www.interfaithccc.org](http://www.interfaithccc.org). Our next biggest events are hosted on the Home page, but if you are looking for ongoing service opportunities or Interfaith Speakers go to the Announcements link. If you are looking for upcoming events go to the Calendar Events (there's also a great list of Interfaith quotes on that link). As always, if you would like me to add your events or announcements to our more frequent eBlasts, please email me directly at [eye4cee@gmail.com](mailto:eye4cee@gmail.com).

*“We belong to each other.”*

*Will*

Rev. Will McGarvey  
Interim Executive Director

Youth making  
pizza at the  
Spring  
Interfaith  
Youth Game  
Night.



## ***"We Belong to Each Other"***

### **Religious and Cultural Observances**

#### **August 2013**

- 1 Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Jesus - **Orthodox Christian**  
**Lammas - Christian**  
**Lughnassad and Imbolc - Wicca/Pagan**  
**Northern and southern hemispheres**
- 3 Laylat al Kadr - **Islam**
- 6 Transfiguration of the Lord - **Orthodox Christian**
- 8-11 Eid al Fitr - **Islam**
- 15 • Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - **Catholic Christian**  
 • Dormition of the Theotokos - **Orthodox Christian**
- 21 Raksha Bandhan - **Hindu**
- 28 Krishna Janmashtami - **Hindu**
- 29 Beheading of John the Baptist - **Christian**

#### **September 2013**

- 1 Ecclesiastical Year begins - **Orthodox Christian**
- 5-6 Rosh Hashanah - **Jewish**
- 9 Ganesh Chaturthi - **Hindu**
- 10 Paryushana Parva - **Jain**
- 14 • Yom Kippur - **Jewish**  
 • Elevation of the Life Giving Cross - Holy Cross Day - **Christian**
- 19-25 Sukkot - **Jewish**
- 22 Equinox  
 Mabon - Wicca/Pagan northern hemisphere  
 Ostara - Wicca/Pagan southern hemisphere
- 26 Shemini Atzeret - **Jewish**
- 27 Simchat Torah - **Jewish**  
 Meskel - **Ethiopian Christian**
- 29 Michael and All Angels - **Christian**

#### **October 2013**

- 4 Saint Francis Day - **Catholic Christian**
- 5-13 Navaratri - **Hindu**
- 14 • Waqf al Arafah - Hajj Day - **Islam**  
 • Thanksgiving - Canada - **Interfaith**  
 • Dasera - **Hindu**
- 15-18 Eid al Adha - **Islam**
- 18 Saint Luke - Apostle and Evangelist - **Christian**
- 20 • Birth of the Báb - **Baha'i**  
 • Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth - **Sikh**
- 27 Reformation Day - **Protestant Christian**
- 31 All Hallows Eve - **Christian**

#### **November 2013**

- 1 • All Saints Day - **Christian**  
 • Samhain and Beltane - **Wicca/Pagan**  
**Northern and Southern hemispheres**
- 1-5 Deepavali - **Hindu**
- 2 All Soul's Day - **Catholic Christian**
- 3 • Diwali - Deepavali - **Hindu - Jain - Sikh**  
 • Jain New Year - **Jain**
- 4 Hijra - New Year - **Islam**
- 12 Birth of Baha'u'llah - **Bahai**
- 13 Ashura - **Islam**
- 4 Christ the King - **Christian**
- 14 Winter Lent begins to 12/25 - **Orthodox Christian**
- 17 Guru Nanak Dev Sahib birthday - **Sikh**
- 21 Yule - **Christian**
- 24 Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom - **Sikh**

## Chaplain's Corner

*Rev. Dr. Charles Tinsley*  
*Juvenile Detention Chaplain*

For some years now, it has not been uncommon to have someone walk up to me and ask, "Aren't you the chaplain from...? I was in the hall back in... You spoke to me in Byron..." "You may not remember me..." In most instances, although I generally do not recognize the now not-so-young-any-longer faces, when told names and circumstances, the memory is successfully jogged and activated.

Such kind sentiments (sometimes exaggerated) as, "You helped me during tough times in my life..." OR "I don't know what I would have done, if you hadn't been there for me..." OR "You made a huge contribution in my life..." are always appreciated when shared by former hurting, troubled and confused youth.

Interestingly enough though, this spring I had the opportunity to express my gratitude to two individuals who once provided me counsel, guidance and support in "institutional" settings about 50 years ago.

The first institution: the church. I was introduced to the Presbyterian Church in 1963 in Detroit. The socially, politically and theologically progressive pastor of the then Highland Park Presbyterian Church, the Reverend Maynard D. Smith, was a major influence on the dawning and developing theology and philosophy of a future Christian minister those many years ago. Lessons learned in the hearing of preached sermons steeped and based in thought, where social justice and religion met and interconnected, in a racially integrated church setting, were not soon (and have not been) forgotten.

Given the ethos of the times, the nature of what Rev. Smith espoused was radical, enough so, that when he "walked the talk" and went to Mississippi to assist African American citizens to register to vote, the white Northern pastor was threatened with death by the Ku Klux Klan. While in Mississippi and experiencing dreadful living conditions, he became ill, so ill he was unable to return to Highland Park.

I recently found his name on the minister membership rolls of the Presbytery of the Redwoods. Now living in retirement in Sonoma County, Rev. Smith recently received a telephone call from me. "You have absolutely no reason to remember me, but I do remember you..." We engaged in a delightful forty-five minute conversation. He was rather surprised how I remembered parts of his sermon delivered on Sunday, November 24, 1963. He was preaching as Lee Harvey Oswald was murdered in the basement of the Dallas City Jail...



At the end of our encounter over the phone, I thanked him for more than the memories. He expressed the desire to continue the conversation in the near future... I will enjoy that.

Second institution: the school. Although the church we attended included two racial groups among its congregants, the large inner-city school where I was enrolled, certainly did not. The all-Black (Negro or Colored, at the time) student body of 2,500 was taught by an incredibly dynamic predominantly African American, many HBCU educated, faculty, along with a small number of Jewish World War II veterans and some, as I recall, who had escaped the Nazis two and a half decades earlier.

Recently while in Louisville for a PCUSA consultation, I was introduced to a gentleman, a Vietnam War veteran who went on to become and to retire as an assistant superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools.

When I told him I am a very proud product of that system, he asked what schools I had attended, and he asked, "Who were the principals of those schools?" When I mentioned the name Norman Fuqua, I was told, "He is a member of my church. He's eighty-seven years old and I talk to him on the phone everyday!"

Remarkable technology, these cell phones! I was immediately put in touch with one to whom I had not spoken since the days when we marveled at Telstar!

"Mr. Fuqua, you have absolutely no reason in the world to remember me, but I do remember you..." The last time I recall speaking to him on a one-on-one basis, it did involve some trouble I had managed to get into... (Don't tell any of the kids with whom I work!)

Our phone conversation ended with expressions of thanks on my part to him for his efforts during a very difficult time and place, educationally and otherwise. And, I expressed my gratitude for his support and assistance. This conversation too will continue when I have the opportunity to travel back to Detroit in the near future.

Both Rev. Smith and Dr. Fuqua are now aware of the work I do. They also are aware that some of the things they said, taught and demonstrated were important educationally and theologically for me, during my formative years. Their thought, guidance and counsel were major influences on me when the very groundwork and foundations were laid for the development of critical thinking processes that continue to enrich and inform. As such, I identify them, among a number of vibrant and forceful people from my past, as significant contributors to this ministry, the way it is conducted and in part, for its interesting role in the lives of those now embraced and served.

## Your Words — *Windows on each other's lives of faith*

### ♦ Amer Araim

**President of the Islamic Community Outreach of California, member of Dar-UI-Islam Masjid**

#### **Ramadan the Month of Fasting, Giving, Sharing and Blessings**

The Muslim communities in the United States of America and all over the world began observing the month of Ramadan on Tuesday, July 9 after sighting the new moon. This is the greatest month of the year for Muslims because fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. The others are the Shahadah (confession of the faith), Salat (prayers), Zakat (alms-giving) and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca.). Allah (God) commanded Muslims to fast as stated in the Quran: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was to those before you (the followers of the monotheist faiths before Islam), that you may learn (taquwa)." The word taquwa represents many meanings including self-restraint, to ward off evil, or to protect oneself by constantly observing the commands of Allah (God.) In addition to fasting, Muslims perform extra night prayers during Ramadan, recite the Quran on daily basis, and provide more charity. Adult Muslims who are traveling or sick may break their fast, and compensate it later on. If any adult is not able to fast due to health concerns, and has the financial ability to do so, they must feed one poor fasting person for every day of the month. In addition, people are providing extra charity in Ramadan not only to compensate for their inability to fast but because it is the month of giving and sharing. Inviting friends to break the fast together is one of the traditions of Ramadan. Breaking the fast in a group, which is combined with group prayers are highly recommended for Muslims. Accordingly, masjids (the place of worship for Muslims, the word is derived from prostrating and used by Muslims rather than mosques) in the Bay area and everywhere organize breaking the fast dinner, and praying together in Ramadan.

Prophet Muhammad – Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) requested his companions to make supplication by asking Allah to bless them in the two months before Ramadan, and to enable them to reach Ramadan. Scholars interpreted that by stating that when we reach Ramadan, fast, and perform all other worships explained above, which are done during that month, there will be continuous blessings. On August 8 (subject to seeing the moon) Muslims will celebrate Eid Alfitr, the feast of breaking the fast. Muslim men, women and children will go to the masjids to perform the prayers of the feast of breaking the fast. It is a Sunnah (the tradition of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) that each family will pay the Zakat of breaking the fast. Originally families used to provide to the poor wheat, barley or dates. Now the practice is to give the equivalent of a meal for each member of the family including the unborn baby. When giving to the poor the equivalent of the cost of a meal it should be at the same cost of the meal of the donor.

The Muslim communities in the United States will

fast, perform their prayers, and thank Allah for enabling them to fast and to perform all other worships with full freedom, and while peace, prosperity and tranquility are prevailing in this country. In the meantime we will not forget those who are poor and suffering all over the world. No doubt, the Muslim world is passing through difficult times. The Palestinians are suffering from the Israeli occupation and other harsh measures including the threats of their expulsion from their homes. The Syrians are fasting while their homes are destroyed and about three millions are refugees due to the oppression and repression of their government. Egypt is passing through turmoil due to the military coup against the first democratically elected government in their history. Iraq is under the threat of renewed civil war due to the sectarian policies of its government. Pakistan is suffering from the drone attacks. I am sure that Muslims in our area and everywhere will remember them and pray to Allah to bring peace, justice and tranquility to these lands and all over the world. I hope that all people of faith will remember them too.

### ♦ Rabbi Raphael Asher

**Congregation B'nai Tikvah, Walnut Creek**

I am encouraged by all the energy that has been generated around the discussion and search for my successor. My sabbatical gave me a foretaste of the creative possibilities of my retirement and role as an "emeritus" and it gave many congregants an opportunity to explore the great, unknown potential of a synagogue in transition. I'm as excited as many of you are to see what the future has in store for B'nai Tikvah.

In the meantime I don't plan to regard the next 14 months as a lame-duck rabbinate. My sabbatical didn't just draw back my mental curtain on a few retirement projects but on unfinished business in the congregation and the greater community. There are subjects I want to teach, sermons I need to give and simchas to enjoy with children who were babies or not yet born when we started in 1981.

I didn't care to travel over the last 3 months, but my reading explorations took me to pre-war Eastern Europe, to the great Jewish writers and historians of the 20th century, and to a great curiosity about the changing relation of clergy and laity in the American faith communities. Conversations with other baby boomers in the rabbinate and in the congregation have verified a continuing flow of projects and ideas that can extend far beyond the stereotypical card table or golf course.

As we all contemplate the years to come we might spend some more time contemplating the relationship of Rabbi and Congregant in this country where, for better or for worse, clergy of all faiths are no longer demigods or tyrants. We can reflect as well upon the potential of accepting the Rabbi's humanity and the layperson's expanded responsibility for the Jewish future.

♦ **Top Five Regrets of the Dying**  
*Piece written by Bronnie Ware*  
*Women of St Luke, Walnut Creek*

For many years I worked in palliative care. My patients were those who had gone home to die. Some incredibly special times were shared. I was with them for the last three to twelve weeks of their lives. People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality. I learned never to underestimate someone's capacity for growth. Some changes were phenomenal. Each experienced a variety of emotions, as expected, denial, fear, anger, remorse, more denial and eventually acceptance. Every single patient found their peace before common themes surfaced again and again.

Here are the most common five:

**1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.**

This was the most common regret of all. When people realized that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people have not honored even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made. It is very important to try and honor at least some of your dreams along the way. From the moment that you lose your health, it is too late. Health brings a freedom very few realize, until they no longer have it.

**2. I wish I didn't work so hard.**

This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret. But as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence. By simplifying your lifestyle and making conscious choices along the way, it is possible to not need the income that you think you do. And by creating more space in your life, you become happier and more open to new opportunities, ones more suited to your new lifestyle.

**3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.**

Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. We cannot control the reactions of others. However, although people may initially react when you change the way you are by speaking honestly, in the end it raises the relationship to a whole new and healthier level. Either that or it releases the unhealthy relationship from your life. Either way, you win.

**4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.**

Often they would not truly realize the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort that they deserved. Everyone misses their friends when they are dying. It is common for anyone in a busy lifestyle to let friendships slip. But when you are faced with your approaching death, the physical details of life fall away. People do want to get their financial affairs in order if possible. But it is not money or status that holds the true importance for them. They want to get things in order more for the benefit of those they love. Usually though, they are too ill and weary to ever manage this task. It all comes down to love and relationships in the end. That is all that remains in the final weeks, love and relationships.

**5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.**

This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realize until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habit. The co-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and to their selves, that they were content. When deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again. When you are on your deathbed, what others think of you is a long way from your mind. How wonderful to be able to let go and smile again, long before you are dying.

Life is a choice. It is YOUR life. Choose consciously, choose wisely, choose honestly, choose happiness.

♦ **Rev. John Sutton**  
*St. Anselm's Episcopal Church, Lafayette*

**WHAT I BROUGHT HOME WITH ME FROM BOSTON**

I was moving slowly down the post-finish line chute when I saw the first blast a couple of hundred feet away. Twelve seconds later the second blast hit. My immediate concern was for my daughter Kate, who I knew would be nearby watching the finish. But since our hotel was on the side of Boylston where the blasts did not occur, I felt she would not have been on that side of the street. Still, I did not know.

The volunteers made us keep moving. Looking in the direction of the blasts, I saw no injuries. But I couldn't have because there were so many people between me and them. Emergency workers rushed to the scene.

It was several blocks before we could get out of the chute and onto the sidewalk. Then, with all of the rerouting of people to get emergency vehicles to the scene of the blasts, it took what must have been close to two miles to get back to my hotel. I asked a volunteer to call my daughter's cell phone; no

signal. Over the course of the walk, my legs regained some strength and my thinking became less foggy. Numbed fatigue gave way to extreme anxiety. When I opened the door to our hotel room Kate was there. She told me she had been across the street from the second bomb. I felt an overwhelming sense of relief that she was safe. It was quickly replaced by survivor's guilt. 'What right do I have to be happy when others have lost their loved ones?'

We watched the news until we had to turn it off, unable to see anymore of the looping video that captured both blasts.

I commented to our friend Angie, who was minutes away from finishing when the bombs exploded, how resilient the people of Boston were. She asked about the resiliency of the people on the other side of these attacks.

And I had to admit- she had a point.

She reminded me of a fact that few want to acknowledge- we are engaged in a war that we civilians by and large don't see, and worse, don't want to see.

It is a war largely hidden from the American people, where a young Afghani farmer/taxi driver is swept up in a dragnet of suspects and is tortured to death at Bagram Air Field because he took a toll from the wrong group of men one day. It is a war where a manned U.S. aircraft dropped bombs on an Afghan wedding party and killed 47 people. It is a war where suspected terrorists are held without being charged in perpetua.

And it is a war where bombings such as the ones that happened so near to me and my daughter, here and overseas, will make the war longer, not shorter, as all focus on how they have been violated and how resilient they are, rather than telling the whole story that needs to be told to stop the violence.

Several years ago, Al Qaeda's internet-based publication *Inspire* published a 'How To Guide' on making a bomb housed in a pressure cooker. We may never know if Tamerlan Tsarnaev used the guide to make his bomb. We do know that such publications are the means by which radical Islam recruits potential terrorists.

The latest issue of *Inspire* justifies attacks on American civilians because we are attacking Muslim civilians with drones. They state that since we as a democracy are allowing this, attacks on the American people are legitimate.

With all of our advanced technology, we have been sucked into a race to the moral bottom with terrorists, where every new threat makes us all too ready to sacrifice our freedoms before the altar of security. And we are in a war without an end-game.

Following a week when Congress could not muster enough votes to pass expanded background checks- even in the wake of 26 deaths at an elementary school, even when polls show 90% of Americans support such legislation, one wonders where the vision to see the way

to peace, and the courage to challenge fear will come from. The culture of violence, on both sides, is seductive and strong. It is as deeply embedded in the halls of power as it is in the cells of terror.

When my family is threatened, I look beyond the perpetrator to the environment that created the threat. You can't lock that up, and must seek to understand it in all of its complexity if it is ever to be defeated.

### ♦ Rev. Glenda Wilson *St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek*

We have been having a lot of trouble with our plumbing this week at church. The sewer, next to the fellowship hall bathroom started to leak and bubble. Apparently, the problem was roots. The roots of the surrounding trees move toward the water in the old clay pipes. The tentacles from the roots seek out the joints in the pipe, bury their way in and, in time, completely take over and clog up the pipe. What begins as a little thread-like root ends up growing into a living mass of tree roots that eventually take over the entire system.

Of course, all of this trouble is initially unseen, its hidden, underground. All looks well on the surface until the bubbling sewer explodes under the building pressure as the pipe loses its capacity to drain.

Interestingly enough, the Scripture has a lot to say about roots, particularly roots of bitterness that can grow in us and put us under a lot of emotional pressure. Oh, it does not take much for the tentacles to find a way into our lives... any crack will do. There are many opportunities for the roots of bitterness to grow, and its not obvious: a perceived betrayal from a friend, a disappointment with a colleague, an ungrateful family member, or an unexpected criticism... all can grow into a full blown resentment which can pretty much shut down our spiritual lives. "Watch out for a root of bitterness," Hebrews warn us.

Its impossible to live in the joy of God when weighed down by resentment. The writer of Hebrews, of course, knows this and, no doubt, most of us have experienced first hand, the choking effects of a root of bitterness.

Root problems have to be dealt with. Ignoring it will not make it go away. At church, we called the plumber and the pipe was cleaned out. The roots were cut out and removed, leaving the pipe clean. In our spiritual life, a cutting and cleansing is necessary, too.

Two things I have found helpful when dealing with the root of bitterness. First, there is something freeing about speaking truth to a situation. I think we compromise ourselves when we hold back on speaking what we believe is true. Truth begins to cut out the root of bitterness. Of course, it is not always possible to speak to speak to the one who has caused you pain, but when possible, take the risk, be courageous and speak what is true for you. Even if you are ignored or criticized at least you have been



## Your Words—*Continued*

true to yourself. “Speak the truth in love,” \*Scripture encourages us. Why? Because it saves us from unnecessary bitterness. Relationships based upon honesty have a strong foundation and can withstand a lot. Relationships based on superficial “niceness” crumble when the going gets rough.

Secondly, keep practicing forgiveness, which is really a letting go of hurt, resentment, expectation and an insistence of living in the past. Forgiveness, difficult as it is, is cleansing and freeing. It’s possibly the most difficult of all the spiritual disciplines but, the benefits are life changing. We are free. Joy is restored and we are no longer beholding another. There is nothing more tiring than carrying around the baggage of past hurts. With the help of the Holy Spirit, may God continue to help us grow in grace, be real, learn to speak our truth freely in love and compassion, and be filled with the joy of the Lord.

♦ **Rev. Andrew Carlson**  
*Community Minister at MDUUC, Walnut Creek*

### Dying Well

First a few brief words of introduction. I am the Reverend Andrew Carlson, and I am privileged to serve MDUUC as a community minister. I also serve as the Acute Care Chaplain for Kaiser Hospital here in Walnut Creek. While my work at the hospital is my primary, full-time position, my association with church is deeply important to my ministry. It is that association which keeps me connected with my faith, which gives me opportunities to participate in aspects of ministry that I have few opportunities to engage in at the hospital, which keeps me spiritually charged and refreshed, and which from gives me an opportunity to share my occasional reflections on hospital ministry.

I recently participated in the Final Gifts seminar that was offered by the church as a way to closely examine end-of-life issues and concerns. Part of my reflections involved the notion of a ‘good death,’ and I will share them here in a little more depth. As a hospital chaplain, a significant piece of my work involves supporting patients, their families, and sometimes the hospital staff, at the time of death. Over time I am coming to see that the deaths that I remember as ‘good’ are those that are freest from trauma. Much of this is beyond our control, but there are things that each of us can do as we consider our own deaths to ease the trauma on ourselves and our loved ones.

**The first and most important step** is simply being willing to engage with the notion that we, each of us, will die. Our society makes it very convenient to live in denial of this fact, but the unpleasant truth is that, like credit card bill, the emotional work we defer will eventually come due – with interest, in the form of shock and trauma.

**Second**, accepting and engaging with the truth of

our eventual deaths gives one the freedom to consider how you might like your death to look: What kinds of life-preserving interventions are you comfortable with? Would you want to be home, or in a hospital, or at a hospice facility such as the Bruns House? Who would you want with you? Are there any people you need to forgive, amends you make, or resentments you need to release before you die? How do you want our senses engaged – music, art flowers, cooking smells?

**Third**, there are a number of documents you can use to help make your wishes known (living wills, Advance Directives, designation of a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care) but as important as these documents are the conversations they can open up between you and your loved ones, conversations that it is important to return to over time. These conversations can not only help ease the trauma of your passing, but can open up the opportunity for your death to potentially be as beautiful and significant as your birth was. All it takes is surrender to truth of you mortality, and the good communication with those closest to your heart.

♦ **David Takahashi Morris**  
*Mt Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, Walnut Creek*

The bombing at the Boston Marathon has brought us once again face-to-face with the reality of violence that can be so horribly distort our lives. As so often happens, within hours of the explosions public speculations about the perpetrators, their motives, their link to “terrorism,” and the punishments they deserved were prominent themes of the news coverage.

But there were other voices, and one in particular noted something I hope many of us will take to heart. A comedian and writer whose work I don’t know, Patton Oswalt, noted that footage of explosion and its aftermath shows many people running toward the danger to help, and imagined saying to the attacker or attackers: “The good outnumber you, and we always will.”

We have seen this again and again. In the aftermath of every act of hate, every public display of disregard for life, we see dozens, hundreds, thousands of acts of courage, compassion, and solidarity with suffering. We see people giving care and support

to the grieving and the hurt; we see those who are not afraid to share the sorrow and loss, shock and pain of the victims and their families and friends. Those are the voices and the choices we should most notice: the people who bind the wounds, protect the endangered, and comfort the broken-hearted.

Those whose task it is to identify and apprehend the perpetrators of evil deeds must focus their attention on them, and I wish them all speed and success, and safety as well. But first in mind are those

## Your Words—*Continued*

who were harmed, and those whose hearts have opened to them.

Leslie spoke a few weeks ago about how to respond to evil, and here we have an example and an opportunity. The antidotes to evil are love, compassion, and care. In reaction to this event, and to the daily – hourly – events of violence and hatred that too often mar our world, let us grieve with survivors, honor those who heal the wounded, and find some way in our own vicinity to increase the love and kindness and beauty of human relationships. Anger is fear in disguise. Love is stronger.

### ♦ Rev. Hubert Ivery

**St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Orinda**

### Reflections on the Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman Case

Many people are saddened by the outcome to the Trayvon Martin Case. I count myself among those who do not believe that justice was served.

I believe that Trayvon Martin was the real victim in this case and not Zimmerman. But we know from past experiences that in strongly biased social and judicial contexts, there is often juxtaposition with respect to victims and perpetrators. For example, rape victims frequently find themselves being told that they were at fault because they in some way encouraged the rapist. Notice that the conversation also changes. Instead of talking about whether or not the rapes actually happened, the focus is now on whether or not a person dressed in a provocative manner. The rapist is off the hook for the rape itself. Why does this happen? It is because of inherent bias with respect to inaccurate beliefs about the sexual wiles of women in a way that allow men to minimize responsibility for their own actions. In Trayvon's case racial bias is the culprit. In a similar way as to that of rape victims, what happened to Trayvon could only happen within a negatively racially charged environment where there is considerable racial bias.

I am reminded of a basketball game I once played at a college in Marshall, Texas. The game environment was notoriously hostile. It was a small space and almost inaudibly noisy. These conditions made for an extremely difficult place to play. The basketball goals were held in place by weighted containers in the back. Because the gym was so small and had limited capacity, students were allowed to sit on the back of the backboard and rim support structure. On occasion, the people sitting behind the goals, in full view of everybody, would shake the structure so that our shooters would miss! At this game, the referees were unabashedly biased, often making highly questionable calls and ignoring fouls. No one was willing to intervene appropriately on our behalf. Typically African Americans feel this way in American society, particularly Black males.

The Court Room is just one among many places where People of Color, either consciously or unconsciously,

It seems that none of the participants are on their side. The referee refuses to call obvious infractions. Even obvious facts can, and often are made to work against them. You are left with the feeling that whatever has happened, you are ultimately responsible and therefore should be held accountable. The integrity of the person designated to work on your behalf may have been compromised, because there is no immunity against the viral nature of racial bias. The degree to which we feel we belong to a certain group matters. Racial bias is a kind of virus, an emotional-social infection that affects one's ability to make moral choices, especially in the face of social pressure where you are expected to act in appropriately biased ways. Indeed racial bias must be treated like a transmittable social disease. It affects our behavior. Left untreated it can threaten the very fabric of a modern healthy and just society. Most, if not all of us, because we live in America, are infected with this virus; however, in some cases the virus may be dormant.

What can Christians do about this? The first thing to understand is that God calls us to a society of love and community. These cannot be substituted for politeness, nicety, or respectful behavior. True love and community is a commitment to "being." This must be the standard by which Christian behavior is measured. We need to become aware of racially biased feelings as they emerge in our lives in real-time. Feelings of racial bias need to become visible. Often such feelings will first become evident in our bodies. Our bodies do not betray our true feelings. We will often feel uneasy, threatened, or tense in situations with persons whose racial background differs from ours. These experiences may be accompanied by feelings such as fear, hatred, dislike, competition, aggression, or resentment. Sometimes feelings of racial bias are not easy to identify or admit. Denial is a powerful defense mechanism. Sometimes people can overcompensate hence there can be emergent feelings of guilt, sympathy, or a blind sense of support. These feelings must be owned for what they are: negative emotionally charged feelings based on social learning.

Once we become aware of such feelings and hold them under the light of Christian love, the hard work begins. There are many ways by which we can overcome problems or issues that have taken root in our lives. There is the radical instantaneous process where in one broad sweep one feels a tumultuous shifting of energy and a refreshing and renewing sense of balance and freedom. One feels rescued by God and restored through Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. The struggle of keeping racial bias is fought by keeping true to Christian Love and being vigilant against anything or anyone that seeks to undermine this new state of one's being. Such a process is facilitated by the degree to which we are able to completely let go of our false or inadequate belief system. A second way involves a slower and more methodical process through which each emotional stone and accompanying



## Your Words—*Continued*

thought is turned over and examined. Each is processed and released and replaced by new more appropriate responses. The experience of change and renewal is experienced more incrementally, piece by piece, until a critical mass of the stones have been processed. The experience of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit at work is just as real. Always it is love and community towards which reconciliation is sought.

Being a good Christian does not stop with our own personal growth. In fact, our personal spiritual growth is tied to the degree to which we are able to stand with integrity in the world. Being a good Christian also means that we have a role to play in helping others grow in the larger community as we spread the love of God as exemplified in Jesus Christ. The church becomes a vehicle through which the collective wellbeing of communities across our nation and beyond is fostered. Wellbeing by definition includes the absence of racial bias, which leads to systemic racial discrimination and injustice. The eradication of racial bias will require more attention and more vigorous action on our part. We cannot expect that it will go away on its own. Nor can we delude ourselves that it does not exist. Christ is calling each of us to action around this issue for it represents a clear and present danger to our spiritual and moral integrity as individuals and as a society.

### ◆ Rabbi Raphael Asher *Congregation B'nai Tikvah, Walnut Creek*

In the weeks leading up to the latest Supreme Court decisions, I was struck by the sign of one protestor in Washington. Standing opposite the cruder slogans of the Religious Right, her placard had a drawing of the dome of the Capitol with the caption: "This is not your Church."

The issues of Gay Rights and Gay Marriage remind us that our Constitution, our courts and Congress are not religious institutions. In this country every religious passion is welcomed and tolerated, but none can legislate our collective civil morality. Civil morality in America is inherently a work in progress and progress has been achieved, sometimes painfully, over the last 237 years.

Jewish morality is also a work in progress as the Torah, unlike the 10 Commandments, was not intended to be immutably "carved in stone." Not only Reform Judaism, but even the most orthodox revere the Torah as a living document always revealing new interpretations for unanticipated applications. Talmudic minds of all persuasions have always been highly respected in articulating and navigating these applications.

So we as Jews can defer to constitutional minds to navigate the waters of American law and legal precedents to keep this great country's principles afloat. American judges may be flesh and blood but their procedures and deliberations are sanctioned by a civil belief in the rule of Law.

The multiple deliberations on Prop 8 have now reached a happy plateau. My heart as a proud American is with the LGBT couples whose human strivings have now been

more fully acknowledged. But it only confuses the issue for rabbis or any clergy to officiate at those civil ceremonies. When the Religious Rights will one day understand that our country's institutions are not their church, they must also be assured that our country guarantees their freedom to their religious beliefs. Rabbis, ministers, and priests on the steps of City Hall only cloud the issue.

In the flood of emotion surrounding gay marriage none of these subtleties is easy to absorb. I'm, therefore, particularly pleased that Brian Goldman, who helped author the brief for the pivotal ruling of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, will be with us to clarify the legal process by which Prop 8 was overruled.

## Coming Events

### ■ Bay Area FamilyFest Food Drive

**Bay Area FamilyFest**, has found a new home on Labor Day Weekend, **Aug. 31-Sept. 2** in beautiful, tree-lined Waterfront Park in the East Bay Regional Park District's Martinez Regional Shoreline. FamilyFest features entertainment, kid's activities, sports games, bounces and jumpers, free face painting & balloon hats, spin art, Radio Disney Road Crew and Kid's Town America. They have vendor booths for arts & crafts, commercial, home-based businesses and non-profit organizations, an eclectic food court, Zip Line and 20 other rides.

**FamilyFest is open from 10am to 6pm on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday of Labor Day Weekend. Admission is \$6 per person but if you who brings a can of food you will receive \$1 off admission (\$1 per person maximum).**

### ■ Understanding PTSD

The Veterans Ministry of the Church of the Resurrection invites you to a screening of **WARTORN 1861-2010** followed by a discussion and Q&A led by Joanne Sorkin and Starlyn Lara. Dr. Sorkin is a physician with the US Public Health Service. Since 2008, she has been assigned to Travis Air Force Base providing psychiatric care to active duty personnel, retirees and their families. Ms. Lara is the Women Veterans Coordinator at Swords to Plowshares and a 12-year combat veteran of the US Army. For more information contact Margaret—Mary Staller at [mbspcg@astound.net](mailto:mbspcg@astound.net) or Pete McCorkell at [erie\\_fan@comcast.net](mailto:erie_fan@comcast.net)

**When: Sept 12, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: Church of the Resurrection  
399 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill CA**

"Post traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) is a relatively recent term, but the problem of lingering psychic injury resulting from exposure to combat and other aspects of military life has been recognized for at least 3,000 years. **WARTORN 1861-2010** is a documentary film exploring the impact of PTSD on warriors and their families from the Civil War through the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

# Interfaith Youth Council of the ICCCC

## Fall Festival!

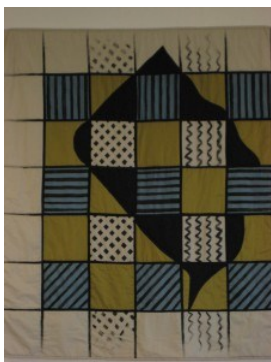
Costume optional  
Game Night with a  
Latin Flair!

Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 8:00 pm.  
Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Fellowship Hall  
(lower parking lot) • 1035 Carol Lane,  
Lafayette • Youth Leaders RSVP for your  
group by emailing [eye4cee@gmail.com](mailto:eye4cee@gmail.com).



*Abigail Tuning leading a game at our Spring Game Night*

Taco and Burrito Bars • Make piñatas and papier maché masks • Dunk for apples • Carve Jack-o-Lanterns • Meet teens from other Interfaith congregations • Play large group games • Learn and participate in a skit • Play card games • Campfire with s'mores • Songs • Break the Piñatas!



This event is for 6-12<sup>th</sup> graders. The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County has a new Youth and Young Adult Leadership Initiative that is bringing together High School teens from different faith communities and empowering them to lead events for each other. **The Interfaith Youth Council gets to plan these events.** To join the Youth Council call I4C Exec. Dir. Rev. Will McGarvey at 925.597.9797. Our next Youth Council meeting will be Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 pm to plan our Interfaith Youth Camp (for 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders) on the weekend of November 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>! Registration forms will be available soon.

# PEACE FORUM 2013

## *Paths to Peace:* Building Compassion and Commitment for Transformation

A local program dedicated to the  
**UN International Day of Peace**

**Pacific School of Religion**  
(Pending)

**Sunday, September 8, 1:15pm—6:00pm**

### Keynote Speeches:

***"Swords into Plowshares, Enemies into Friends"***

Professor David McGaffey

***"Compassion is the Key to Peace"***

Yogacharya Ellen Grace O'Brian

### Panel 1 Topics:

"Avoiding Violence: Values &  
Practices to Change Organizational  
& National Behaviors"

"Conflict Resolution:  
Practice and Principles"

"United Nations:  
Hopes and Realities About Peace"

\*Topics subject to change

### Panel 2 Topics:

"Quest for Personal Peace &  
World Peace—Women's Role"

"Voices of Youth and Mobilizing  
Their Passion for Peace"

"Replacing Aggression with  
Compassion: A Psychological  
and Spiritual Approach"

**Breakout group discussion with the speakers.**

### Organized By:

AHIMSA, InterConsultUS, Pacifica Institute—East Bay Chapter,  
Positive Peace Warrior Network, The Shift Network, Inc.,  
Universal Peace Federation,  
United Nations Assoc.—USA East Bay,  
Women's Interfaith Circle of Service—URI-CC



### Keynote Speakers

\* Ellen Grace O'Brian  
*Center for Spiritual  
Enlightenment*

\* David C. McGaffey  
*InterConsultUS*

### Sponsors:

Geeta Society, Bay Area Family Church,  
Women's Federation for World Peace

### Supporters:

Carry the Vision, East Bay Church of Religious Science,  
Interfaith Center at the Presidio, Interfaith Chaplaincy Institute,  
Oakland Peace Ambassadors, Principled Academy,  
Restorative Justice of Oakland Youth, Suscol Intertribal Council,  
United Religions Initiative, URI—North America, The Interfaith Observer,  
Young Spirit Foundation, United Religions Initiative

*As of June 27, 2013*

**Join Peace Forum 2013 as a Sponsor and Supporter:** Mark: markdenni@yahoo.com • Tomiko: tomikonojima@gmail.com

## Coming Events

*continued...*

### ■ **Interfaith Ministry & Chaplaincy: An Introduction**

Saturday, September 21, 2013  
10:30am - 12:30pm

An Interfaith perspective is one of mutual respect and harmonious living among people of all faith traditions. It provides a roadmap for navigating the boundaries between people, religions, and cultures, helping to bridge the religious schisms that divide our world.

What is Interfaith? Am I a spiritual leader? What is ministry? What is chaplaincy?

Join us for a 2 hour introductory immersion where we will consider these questions together. Through brief presentations by faculty and alumni, you will learn more about Interfaith theology, the Interfaith movement, and vocational opportunities calling you to serve and grow as a spiritual leader, chaplain or Interfaith minister.

Information about The Chaplaincy Institute's Interfaith Studies program and our community of Interfaith ministers, spiritual directors & chaplains will be provided.

**Location:** Easton Hall - Library, 2451 Ridge Road - Berkeley, CA Fee: By Donation (Suggested \$25, but no one turned away for lack of funds)

Registration necessary, as space is limited.

510.843.1422 [chioffice@chaplaincyinstitute.org](mailto:chioffice@chaplaincyinstitute.org)

### ■ **Fall Ordination Ceremony & Celebration**

Saturday, September 21, 2013

Doors open at 2 pm / Ceremony begins at 2:30 pm

A reception immediately follows.

The ChI Interfaith Community will ordain seven interfaith ministers. More details to come.

RSVP now!

By email: [chioffice@chaplaincyinstitute.org](mailto:chioffice@chaplaincyinstitute.org)

By Phone: 510.843.1422

New Location: All Soul's Episcopal Church  
2220 Cedar Street, Berkeley, CA

### ■ **Service of Installation at Danville Congregational Church**

The Service of Installation for our new senior minister, Rev. Dr. Anton DeWet:

Sunday, August 25, 2013  
4:00 pm

Danville Congregational Church  
989 San Ramon Valley Boulevard, Danville

A reception will follow. Children are welcome — childcare provided. Clergy are invited to robe and process — wear red stoles/according to your faith tradition.

### ■ **Notice of Medical Discovery Tour to Palestine**

This information is addressed to persons in the Bay Area who have a concern about the unresolved crisis between Israel and Palestine. Now we have some disturbing information from a friend of ours who has recently been here from Bethlehem where she currently lives.

Christy Reiners has been a Walnut Creek resident for many years and now spends half of each year in Bethlehem with her organization "In His Steps" taking people on tours of the Holy Land where Jesus preached and traveled..

It has been discovered that young girls 14 and 15 years of age in the villages around Bethlehem are found to be victims of late stage breast cancer. Christy has been asked by President Mahmoud Abbas and Zafar Al'Nobani, Head of Humanitarian Assistance in the Office of the P.A., and Bethlehem University to come to the U.S. to gather a group of concerned people including doctors, medical technicians and Data Researchers as well as interested supporters to come to the Holy Land to observe the situation and to help formulate a plan that could address the problem in a sustainable way. At present there is no equipment to diagnose women out in the villages and the hospitals do not have equipment or facilities to treat cancer, so patients have to be sent out of the country for expensive treatment that is not covered by medical insurance. Dr. Paul Hofmann has been meeting with us. He is with the MedShare International, a non-profit organization that recycles hospital equipment and dated equipment from medical manufacturers for use in crisis situations overseas. Orinda Community Church had a Forum in June where Christy Reiners and Dr. Paul Hofmann spoke and created a concern about the medical situation in Palestine.

Some of the members of Orinda Community Church are now planning a Medical Discovery Tour to the Holy Land to assess the situation and make some recommendations for a sustainable way to address the problem and to help alleviate the crisis over there.

**The Tour is scheduled for this Fall, October 11 to 21 and will be under the auspices of "In His Steps" Pathways to Peace, which is a 501c-3 organization.**

My question to the Interfaith Community is — are there persons or groups that would be interested in a trip of discovery of this kind? It is intended as an Interfaith Endeavor so we would like to have the information distributed to Churches, Synagogues and Mosques as well as to Medical personnel.

If you have some names or groups from your associates, would you be willing to share them with us? There will be several meetings this summer to make plans and to establish the itinerary, schedule flights,



## Coming Events

*continued...*

and prepare entry visas, but time is short and we need to gather interested persons soon.

If you know of individuals who would like to know more about the situation and the trip, they may contact us by email at [elkwalk@comcast.net](mailto:elkwalk@comcast.net) or call (925) 254-8754

Peace, Shalom and Salaam,  
Joy Elkinton-Walker and Carl Walker

### ■ **Contra Costa CROP Hunger Walk 2013** **October 20, 2013** **Walnut Creek Civic Park**

**Mark your personal and Church calendars for October 20, 2013 at 1 p.m.** for this year's annual Contra Costa CROP Hunger Walk—2013. The registration and the walk will begin at 1 p.m. at the Gazebo at Civic Center Park in Walnut Creek. The funds raised through our local walk will go to the **Winter Nights Shelter of Contra Costa** and other international hunger-fighting agencies, such as Church World Services (CWS).

Each congregation is asked to identify a liaison to the Crop Hunger Walk committee. This person will receive up to date information on the Walk and the packets for distribution in August and September. Committee members will be contacting congregations in the coming weeks. Or you may contact Anne Crisp at 925-356-8822 for information.

The Contra Costa Crop Hunger Walk is a 5K community event that raises funds to fight hunger. Funding both local and global hunger fighting development efforts, CROP helps to provide tools of hope that empower people to meet their own needs- from seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans. For more information on the services provided by Church World Services, please visit online at [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org).

This year sponsorships are being offered to help to underwrite the cost of the Contra Costa CROP Hunger Walk. Sponsorships from \$100 to \$1000 are offered to businesses. For more information contact Anne Crisp at [annecrisp@yahoo.com](mailto:annecrisp@yahoo.com) or by phone 925-356-8822.

Rev. Vy Nguyen, CWS Associate Regional Director, is available to speak before congregations about the Crop Hunger Walk and the great need for Church World Services programs. Contact him at [VyNguyen@churchworldservices.org](mailto:VyNguyen@churchworldservices.org) or by phone at 510-848-7024.

### **Homeless Veterans in Need of Housing**

Shelter, Inc. of Contra Costa County provides supportive services for veterans in need of housing. [www.shelterincofccc.org](http://www.shelterincofccc.org), (925) 957-7579  
Contra Costa County Homeless Services  
(800) 799-6599

### ■ **ZimbabWE CARE Family Festival**



If you have a heart to share please join us for **ZimbabWE CARE Family Festival** benefiting JF Kapnek Pediatric AIDS fund Zimbabwe.

On **Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>** 12-3pm at Lafayette -Orinda Presbyterian Church (49 Knox Drive, Lafayette), Bay Area kids will get a taste of Africa! Bring your entire family to play, learn and **experience authentic African culture**. Learn an African dance! Taste Zimbabwean food! We'll have something for everyone: African music, games, crafts, cuisine, face painting, and a few surprises. **Kids helping Kids**....We'll be building toys to send to The JF Kapnek Preschools in Zimbabwe, serving orphans and children affected by AIDS. We will also be collecting **USED** preschool toys for The Kapnek Preschools. We hope to see you and your family at this little festival with a huge heart! **FREE ENTRY!** Food available to purchase!

■ **The Board of the Interfaith Council** is happy to acknowledge the following friends who are serving as liaisons to the Council for their own congregations and organizations: Steve Mason, from St. Timothy's in Danville, Tra Boxer, from Unity Center of Walnut Creek, David Marshak, from Congregation B'nai Shalom, Syed Zaidi from the Islamic Center Zahar of Pleasanton, Holliday Breugimann, from Danville Christian Science Church, Valerie Cookson, from St. Mark's Lutheran in Pleasant Hill, Jan Warren from Lafayette Christian Church, Muhammed Jawaid from San Ramon Valley Islamic Center, Doug Leich from Danville Congregational Church, Trinkia Wassik, from First Church of Christ Scientist and Sally and Rodger Powers from St. Joan of Arc.

We look forward to acknowledging more liaisons from our member organizations. Please let us know who you are."



**Have you checked out our website lately? I4C events get listed on the Home page, ongoing opportunities for service or speakers can be found on the Announcements page, and our chronological community events are listed on the Calendar Events page.**

## Social Justice Alliance Of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

***All are welcome at the September 11 SOJA Meeting  
7:00 pm, WC United Methodist Church, Wesley Room***

### SOJA Members and Their ACTION Agenda

*Health Care, Immigration, CROP Walk, Nuclear Weapons, MLK Celebration, SOAW, and Winter Nights Shelter were among the topics discussed.*

**Single Payer Health Care.** SOJA co-sponsored two local health care events in July: The “*Health Care Movie*” at the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center; and the Celebration of the Birthday of Medicare, with presentations by **Dr. Paul Song MD**, a nationally known member of Physicians for a National Health Care Program, and **Dave Jones**, the State Insurance Commissioner. **Pat Snyder**, SOJA’s Health Care Chair, coordinated the arrangements for our group.

**School of the Americas Watch.** The Latin American Military Training Review Act was introduced in the House of Representatives on August 2. Congress Member **George Miller** and **Barbara Lee** were two of the original 37 co-sponsors of the bill, which was carried by Representative **Jim McGovern**. SOA graduates are currently on trial in Guatemala and Argentina and are responsible for the recent violence against the Lenca community of Honduras.

**Immigration.** **Dean and Chris Coons** joined the leadership team which planned and conducted an Immigration Forum at Christ the King Parish the end of July. The panel of speakers included **Sheriff Livingston’s** office, Congress Member **George Miller’s** office, an immigration attorney, the victim of an ICE raid, and **Bob Lane**, advocate, and **Rev. Debby Lee**, who opened and closed the program with prayer. Facilitating the panel of speakers was **Michael Fischer**. Seventy-five people attended.

**Rev. Debby Lee** reminded us that Prayer Vigils are held every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday at the West County Detention Center in Richmond from 11 a.m. until noon, where prayers, music, and testimonials are shared.

**Commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.** SOJA members **Natalie Russell** and **Gwen Watson** will be part of the commemoration at the Lawrence Livermore Lab. Daniel Ellsberg and a Nagasaki resident who lived through the bombing will speak.

**MLK Celebration.** **Natalie Russell**, who chairs the Martin Luther King Celebration each year for SOJA, is ready to hold a kickoff meeting to plan the 2014 MLK Celebration in Walnut Creek. **Natalie** will report on the details in the near future.

**Winter Nights Shelter.** The agenda items on the August Homeless Summit Agenda were: Scheduling Plan for the October 2013 to May 2014, which was approved by the Interfaith Council’s Executive Board, will be finalized. **Sue Phalen**, Winter Nights Scheduler, noted that the only two-week block that remains open is 11/18-12/2. **Jo Kerner** reported that a \$20,000 grant was received from the Leshner Foundation. An audit of the shelter’s financial records has been proposed and estimates are being submitted. **Ann Crisp** conducted a workshop to assemble the CROP Hunger Walk packets that will be distributed to congregations for the October 20 event. The 2013-14 Shelter Budget will be submitted for approval. **Diana Keller**, a graduate of the Lutheran Seminary, will join our Traveling Tutors this session. And **Linden Brentano**, a Campolinda girl scout, will build a mobile bookcase for the shelter’s books and materials.

- **Gwen Watson**



## ♦ First Summer Interfaith Potluck Picnic a Success



Interfaith Potluck Picnic July 28th at Rankin Park, Martinez



Kosher hamburgers and hotdogs.

### Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County's 2nd Annual:

## *The Making a Difference Awards*



**We know how much each congregation – and their members – contribute to the work of the Interfaith Council. We would not be able to do our work together without each and every one of them. So this year, as we prepare for the Annual Meeting on November 3rd, we ask each congregation and agency of the Council to nominate their own “Making a Difference” awardee, which will be honored with a printed Certificate, and on our website.**

The Elected Council of the ICCCC has established a two-tiered recognition program called “Making a Difference.” We invite all of our member congregations and agencies to nominate a person of excellence whose service to the interfaith community (in leadership, service, encouragement, and/or participation) is “Making a

Difference” within and outside your particular congregation or agency. (Please refrain from nominating members of the Elected Council or I4C staff.)

We invite all congregations and agencies connected with ICCCC to submit the name and a paragraph describing the service of their nominee. We will recognize all nominees in a list of names and congregation/agency on our website and on our mailed newsletter. Submissions will need to be received by October 15th.

A sub-committee of the Executive Committee will make a recommendation of which individual will receive the Annual ICCCC “Making a Difference Award” of the whole Interfaith Council at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 3rd at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church (49 Knox Dr., Lafayette). The evening begins with a true potluck begins at 6:00 pm, and the main event begins at 7:00 pm. We hope all our “Difference Makers” will be able to be in attendance to receive their Certificate.

**Please send your nominees to [eye4cee@gmail.com](mailto:eye4cee@gmail.com).**

# The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

1543 Sunnyvale Avenue  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

<http://interfaithccc.org>

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### **Please send copy marked to the attention of:**

**Interfaith Council Newsletter, 1543 Sunnyvale Avenue, Ste. 103 Walnut Creek, CA 94597-1903**

**PH: (925) 933-6030**

**FAX: (925) 952-4554**

**E Mail: [eye4cee@aol.com](mailto:eye4cee@aol.com)**

Ministering Together is published four times a year by the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, a non-profit organization. For up to date information, visit [www.interfaithccc.org](http://www.interfaithccc.org).

■ The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County depends on contributions from member congregations and individuals who support our mission of promoting interfaith understanding. To make a tax deductible donation, please make your check to Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and mail it to our office at 1543 Sunnyvale Avenue, Suite 103; Walnut Creek, CA 94597. For credit card donations, please visit our web site: <http://interfaithccc.org>. Thank you!

#### **THANK YOU CORNER:**

The Interfaith Council would like to send our sincere Thanks to our mail-out coordinators, Dick & Lenita Shumaker for their hard work & dedication all of these years.

The Interfaith Council is blessed to have dedicated volunteers who come together to collate, fold, sticker and label our newsletter in preparation for mailing. If you are interested in being part of this joyous band or in being the mail out coordinator, call Jessica at (925) 933-6030.

#### **PLEASE PRAY FOR (in our rotating circle of prayer):**

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Brentwood • Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Concord • Ik Onkar Peace Foundation, Dublin • Orinda Community Church (UCC), Orinda • St. Peter Martyr Catholic Church, Pittsburg • Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Pleasant Hill. Prayers for all students as they return to school • For the Sikh Gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin on the one year anniversary of the shooting there • For those that experience Islamaphobia • For the new Interfaith Youth Council • Congregations going through clergy transitions. The kind-hearted souls who deliver Meals on Wheels. Those seeking employment.