



Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

April 2012

Vol. 40, No. 6

Goal:
Sharing together,
One God —
One Community

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

April Dinner Meeting

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Faith United Methodist Church

811 N. Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, NY

Dinner 6:30pm

Program 7:30pm

"Wisdom Tales"

presented by the Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area

Mussarat Chaudhry will receive IFC's Robert & Dorothy Ludwig Interfaith Award.

Dinner is \$12, payable at the door. Program only is free.

If you require a vegetarian or kosher meal, please let us know when you make your reservation. Reservations due to the IFC office by Friday, April 13. 370-2150 or schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING:

Thursday, May 10, 2012

Dominican Retreat and Conference Center

1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, NY

Dinner 6:30pm; Program, 7:30 pm

Joanne Tobiason , discussing the Working Group on Girls, patterned after the United Nations

IFC's Annual Report will be given. IFC's Community Service Award to be presented.



From your co-president...

Living Prayer of Compassion

The following is from ***With Open Hands***, by Henri J. M. Nouwen:

"When you pray, you discover not only yourself and God, but also your neighbor. For in prayer you profess not only that people are people and God is God, but also, that your neighbor is your sister or brother living alongside you. For the same conversion that brings you to the painful knowledge of your wounded human nature also brings you to the joyful recognition that you are not alone, but that being human means being together.

"At precisely this point, compassion is born. This compassion is not covered with the word 'pity,' nor by the word 'sympathy.'" Pity connotes too much distance. Sympathy implies an exclusive nearness. Compassion goes beyond distance and exclusiveness. Compassion grows with the inner recognition that your neighbor shares your humanity with you. This partnership cuts through all walls which might have kept you separate. Across all barriers of land and language, wealth and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, we are one, created from the same dust, subject to the same laws and destined for the same end.

"With this compassion you can say, 'In the face of the oppressed I recognize my own face and in the hands of the oppressor I recognize my own hands. Their flesh is my flesh; their blood is my blood; their pain is my pain; their smile is my smile. Their ability to torture me is in me, too; their capacity to forgive I find also in myself. There is nothing in me that does not belong to them too. There is nothing in them that does not belong to me too. In my heart I know their yearnings for love, and down to my entrails I can feel their cruelty. In another's eyes I see my plea for forgiveness, and in a hardened frown, I see my own refusal. When someone murders, I know that I too could have done that, and when someone gives birth, I know that I am capable of that as well. In the depths of my being, I meet my fellows human beings with whom I share love and hate, life and death.'

"Compassion is daring to acknowledge our mutual destiny so that we might move forward, all together, into the land which God is showing us. Compassion also means sharing in joy, which can be just as important as sharing in pain. To give others the chance to be completely happy, to let their joy blossom to the full. We offer real comfort and support when we can say from our hearts: 'That's really good for you,' or 'I'm glad to see you made it.'

"But this compassion is more than a shared slavery with the same fear and the same sighs of relief and more than a shared joy. For if your compassion is born of prayer, it is born of your meeting with God who is also the God of all people. At the moment that you fully realize that the God who loves you unconditionally loves all your fellow human beings with the same love, a new way of living opens itself to you. For you come to see with new eyes those who live beside you in this world. You realize that they, too, have no reason to fear, that they, too, do not have to hide behind a hedge, that they, too, need no weapons to be human. You see that the inner garden of love which has remained unattended for so long is also meant for them.

"Conversion to God, therefore, means a simultaneous conversion to the other persons who live with you on this earth ... and so compassion removes all pretensions, just as it removes false modesty. It invites you to understand everything and everyone, to see yourself and others in the light of God and to joyfully tell everyone you meet that there is no reason to fear; the land is free to be cultivated and to yield a rich harvest." [pages 88-91]

As we move through sacred seasons in our varying yet similar faiths, may we invite such compassion to live within us. Shalom, Salaam, the peace which passes understanding. *Bob Long*



From your co-president...

Dear Friends,

Our March 14th interfaith dialogue dinner at Immaculate Conception Church in Glenville was a tremendous success. Co-sponsored with the church's Amazing God Team, the evening drew over 130 participants, 80 of whom came for dinner, catered by Kazeez's in Albany. Rabbi Beverly Magidson, Rev. James Kane and Imam Djafer Sebkhawui each spoke approximately 15 minutes on *Jesus as Viewed by the Three Abrahamic Faiths*. Questions followed. We are indebted to Maryann Haskell, head of the Amazing God Team; the Rosary Altar Society and Betty Parks and members of the Nurse/Health Ministry for setting up the hall and providing desserts and the Youth Ministry for helping to serve. Would that more of our dinners would have such an impact on attendance and participation.

Our program on April 18th at Faith United Methodist Church is also very interesting and should garner your full support because *it features our youth, the next generation of interfaith peacekeepers*. If you have never heard the teen-agers from The Children at the Well then you are in for a treat. Trained by professional story-tellers, they tell faith-related stories that provoke tears and laughter. They are looking for support from us. Don't let them down. Also, be on hand to see Dr. Mussarat Chaudhry of the Islamic Center receive the Dorothy and Robert Ludwig Interfaith Award. See the Newsletter's first page for details.

These coming weeks will be celebrated with intense fervor by Christians and Jews alike. Jews commemorate the eight days of Passover in memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. This is highlighted by the opening Seders, or ritual family dinners. Christians will recall the institution of the Eucharist (HolyThursday), crucifixion and death (Good Friday) and resurrection (Easter) of Jesus Christ. The Triduum is the pinnacle of the liturgical year.

The recent articles by Carl Strock in the Daily Gazette should cause deep concern in our religious communities. This writer has crossed the line in responsible journalism and has made a direct attack on the Jewish faith. The state of Israel and concern for its policies are a different matter and should not be lumped with one's religious beliefs. There will be more said on this situation later, but our Interfaith Community should stand in support of our Jewish friends and neighbors. We must avoid any impending violence and religious bullying at any cost.

Peace and blessings to all, **Audrey Hughes**



Audrey Hughes, co-president of IFC, attended a Sunday church service recently at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Scotia, during which she accepted a \$400 check from Pastor Dennis R. Meyer in memory of the late Marilyn Berrigan of that congregation. At Marilyn's request, the church distributed monies from her estate to various non-profit organizations. Marilyn was a long-time member of IFC, a SICM delegate and was former president of Church Women United. IFC will use this generous gift to help defray the cost of underwriting a part-time chaplain at Sunnyview Hospital. Our current chaplain there is Rabbi Robert Kasman.

Upcoming events of interest

"The Continuing Challenge of Dr. Martin Luther King's Vision for Today's World" - presented by the Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King Lecture Series. Bishop Howard J. Hubbard will speak on Thursday, April 12 at 7pm in the Alumni Recreation Center at Siena College, Route 9, Loudonville. This is a free event.

"Rhythms for RISSE -- World Music Concert, and Silent Auction in support of RISSE" A special concert of music from Africa, Asia and the Middle East will be held at the Massry Center at the College of St. Rose, 1002 Madison Avenue, Albany, on Friday, April 13, beginning at 7:00 pm. This exciting event is offered as a fund raiser for Refugee and Immigrant Support Services housed at Emmaus United Methodist Church, Albany. Services provided assist children, youth and adults in making a smooth transition from many places and cultures, assisting with access, providing concrete skills and offering support as necessary adjustments are made. A silent auction will precede the concert. Tickets: \$5.00 with student ID; \$10.00 General Admission. For more information contact: vista.strose.edu.

Interfaith Engagements at Union College Union College is hosting a series of lecturers this spring and all are related to the diversity emphasis on Religion and Spirituality.

April 17: **Diana Eck**, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies and Fredric Wertham Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Member of the Faculty of Divinity at Harvard, will offer a lecture at 5:30 pm in the Nott Memorial on "Islam and Islamophobia." Ms. Eck is the 2012 Wold Lecturer at Union College.

April 24: **Eboo Patel**, Founder and Director of the Interfaith Youth Core, member of President Obama's inaugural Advisory Council of the White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, will offer a lecture on "Acts of Faith: Interfaith Leadership in a Time of Global Religious Crisis" at 5:30 pm in Memorial Chapel. Mr. Patel is a part of the 2012 Presidential Forum on Diversity Speaker Series.

May 3: **Paul Bauman**, Editor of Commonweal Magazine, will offer a lecture at 6:00 pm in the Nott Memorial. The title of the talk is not yet finalized, but he will be addressing religion in the public square. Mr. Bauman is one of the speakers for the class "Religion in the Public Square: Religion, Community Service and the State". He is here by invitation of the Catholic Chaplain, Religious Studies and the Office of Religion and Spiritual Life.

May 14: **Jay Michaelson**, author of God vs Gay: The Religious Case for Equality, will offer a lecture of the same name in the Nott Memorial at 5:30 pm. Mr. Michaelson is here by invitation of the Jewish Chaplain and the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life as well as several other student groups.

"May Friendship Day" Church Women United's May Friendship Day will be celebrated on Friday, May 4, beginning at 9:30 am, at Burnt Hills United Methodist Church, Route 50, Burnt Hills. The program will be "Sights and Sounds of Harmony – Listening to My Sisters." Questions/ Need more information: call Sandy Gardner, 882-9515.

"Meaningful Prayer: Linguistic Beauty of Prayer" - presented by the Islamic Center of the Capital District, 21 Lansing Road N., Schenectady. AbdulNasir Jangda will present a weekend seminar Friday, May 4, 7-10pm; Saturday, May 5, 10am-6pm and Sunday, May 6, 10am-6pm. Cost is \$85 for the weekend. Visit www.iccdny.org for more information.

"Travelers to the Heavenly Jerusalem: The Healing Power of Art and Beauty" - presented by the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center, 1945 Union Street, Niskayuna on Wednesday, May 9 from 7-9pm and repeated on Thursday, May 10 from 10am-12pm. Join artist and author Bro. Mickey McGrath as he shares his paintings and the stories behind them—stories of healing and reconciliation. Cost is \$15. Reservations may be made at 393-4169.

Share your news with Interfaith Community...

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Congratulations to community activist Marie Gorman who was named one of the 15 Capital Region's 2012 Jefferson Awards finalists for giving time, energy, expertise to enhance the lives of others. Embodying a "call to action for volunteers," the Jefferson Awards were founded in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr and Sam Beard to reflect the spirit of excellence in America. One of the finalists will be selected to represent this area at a June ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Our love and support to Elyne Schulte who recently moved into The Avenue Nursing Home.

Our love and support to the family and friends of Rita Clayman upon her death.

Share Your News with Interfaith Individuals, congregations and community groups are asked to share their news with Interfaith: notices and articles, awards, birthdates, special anniversaries, deaths, hospitalizations or illness. It is wonderful to share good, as well as sad, news – especially because it opens the way for the healing love among us to flow like refreshing streams.

Received in March

Individual membership renewals: Kathleen Duff, Phyllis Boyd

Institutional membership renewals: First Reformed Church—Schenectady

New membership: Virginia Manning

Response to Winter appeal: Congregation Agudat Achim

Memorials: given by Helga Schroeter in memory of Bob Long's mother, Geneva

Her Final Gift Backed by the magnificent gift of her courageous life, Mary McLeod Bethune offered a verbal expression of her vision and life-gift near the end of her life. She said, "I leave you love. I leave you hope. I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another. I leave you respect for the use of power. I leave you faith. I leave you racial dignity." May we do the same.

The Interfaith Community is seeking two representatives of your congregation to be present at monthly gatherings. Gatherings are held at differing congregations in the Schenectady Area. Each gathering begins with a common meal and is followed by a relevant presentation. Representatives from congregations gain insight into interfaith engagement, communicate with their congregations the interfaith experience of today and share your congregation's interfaith/multi-faith values and experiences with the greater Interfaith Community. For further information, call Pastor Bob Long, President of Interfaith, 372-1083. To register for the April Gathering call the Interfaith Office at 370-2150 by April 13 and provide the names of those who will be attending.

Interfaith Calendar for April 2012

- 1 Palm Sunday – **Christian** -- Celebration of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The day begins Holy Week. It is observed by worship celebrations and parades using palm branches.
Ramanavami – **Hindu** -- Celebration of the birth of Lord Rama, hero of the religious epic poem, The Ramayana. The day involves telling of stories and going to the temple.
- 5 Maundy Thursday -- **Christian** -- Observance of the first Lord's Supper during Holy Week.
Lord's Evening Meal -- **Jehovah's Witness Christians**.
- 6-9 Theravadin New Year -- **Buddhist** – On New Year day, people in Buddhist countries make a visit to temples and monasteries, bath Buddha statues, offer prayers and worship to Lord Buddha, and call for getting conferred with happy and peaceful times ahead.
- 6 Good Friday -- **Christian** -- Christian remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus and related events.
Hanuman Jayanti – **Hindu** -- Celebration of Hanuman who was an embodiment of Lord Rama. Devotion and selfless work are encouraged.
Mahavir Jayanti – **Jain** -- Festival honoring Lord Mahavira on the founder's birthday. Shrines are visited. Teachings are reviewed and reflected upon.
- 7-14 Pesach (Passover) -- **Judaism** -- Jewish 8 day pilgrimage festival celebrating the Exodus from slavery to freedom. Also known as Passover
- 7 Lazarus Saturday -- **Orthodox Christian** -- Celebration of the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus, celebrated on the eve of Palm Sunday; revealing that Jesus in "the resurrection and life" of all mankind.
- 8 Easter -- **Christian** -- The most holy of Christian sacred days. The day commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from his death by crucifixion. Observances include worship services beginning at sunrise, special music, feasting, and parades.
Palm Sunday – **Orthodox Christian**.
- 13 Holy Friday -- **Orthodox Christian**.
- 14 Baisakhi New Year – **Sikh** -- Hindu start of the New Years. Greetings that wish good life in coming days are exchanged. In Sikhi the day commemorates the founding of the Khalsa, a distinctive Sikh brotherhood.
- 15 Easter/Pascha -- **Orthodox Christian**.
- 19 Yom HaShoah -- **Judaism** -- Jewish Holocaust Day. The day has been established to remember the six million Jews killed by the Nazis in 1933-45. It is observed by many non-Jews as well.
- 21 First Day of Ridvan -- **Baha'i** -- Commemoration of the twelve day period in 1863 when Baha'u'llah declared that he was God's messenger for this age. Work is to be suspended on days 1, 9, and 12 of the festival.
- 23 St. George Day – **Christian** -- Remembrance of a person who, in the 4th century, was a martyr and became an ideal of martial valor and selflessness. Legend of killing a dragon is connected with this patron saint of England.
- 27 Yom Ha'Atzmaut -- **Judaism** -- Israel Independence Day. Israel celebrates 64 years of independence this year.
- 29 Ninth Day of Ridvan -- **Baha'I** -- Celebration of the arrival of Baha'u'llah at a sacred garden.
- 30 Saint James the Great Day -- **Orthodox Christian** -- Recognition of the martyrdom of the Apostle James the Great in 44 c.e



IFC OF SCHENECTADY

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Office hours:
M, W, Th.—3:30-4:30pm
Fri.—12:30-3 pm

Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com

Mailed April 5



Coordinating Council Meetings

April tba

May 11

All meetings are held at Faith United Methodist Church, 811 Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, and begin at 11:00 am.

You may attend Council Meetings if you are interested. Members and friends are invited to attend any Council Meeting to observe. If there is an interest that you would like considered, please contact Audrey Hughes or Bob Long at least two weeks ahead. Thank you.

Do we have your email????

**Please send your email address
to us at
[schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com!](mailto:schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com)**

We're on the web!

**Check us out at
Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com**

Event info!

Membership info!