



Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

April 2013

Vol. 41, No. 7

Goal:
Sharing together,
One God —
One Community

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

April Dinner Meeting

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

Dinner 6:30pm

Program 7:30pm

Dominican Retreat and Conference Center
1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, NY

“The essential ingredients of the Buddhist Faith

Susan Spang, presenter

Ms. Spang is a Buddhist monk.

Dinner is \$12. 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, 370-2150 or schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com, by April 15.

May Gathering of Interfaith Community

Thursday, May 9, 2013

Dominican Retreat Center, 1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, NY 12309

Dinner 6:30 pm Program 7:30 pm

Speaker -- Michael Saccocio, Executive Director, City Mission, Schenectady

The James Stamper Community Service Award will be presented to The City Mission, Michael Saccocio, Executive Director.



From your president...

Seeds of discord can lie within each faith Jim Rigby, Pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, shares in a February 1 blog [as reported in *Connections*, Barbara Wendland, March, 2013] that he doesn't believe that interfaith efforts will result in lasting unity as long as each faith keeps carrying the seeds of discord within its own self-definition. He says:

"So long as each religion refuses to renounce the idea that its leader is the only true guide;

"So long as each religions refuses to renounce the idea that they are God's only chosen people;

"So long as each religion believes that God has given them an actual tract of land;

"So long as each religion believes that their scriptures are to be taken literally, thus overriding human reason and trumping the needs for he common good;

"So long as these factors remain in place, we can have all the interfaith picnics and worships we want but will still carry dagger in our hearts and will pass them on to our children. The roots of religious intolerance do not lie in hatred, or even in ignorance, but in our claims of special privilege over one another" in the name of God.

Buddhism and Prayer The purpose of Buddhist prayer is to awaken our inherent inner capacities of strength, compassion and wisdom rather than to petition external forces based on fear, idolizing, and worldly and/or heavenly gain. Buddhist prayer is a form of meditation; it is a practice of inner reconditioning. Buddhist prayer replaces the negative with the virtuous and points us to the blessings of Life.

Buddhist Mealtime Prayer This food is the gift of the whole universe, Each morsel is a sacrifice of life, May I be worthy to receive it. May the energy in this food, Give me the strength, To transform my unwholesome qualities into wholesome ones. I am grateful for this food, May I realize the Path of Awakening, For the sake of all beings. Namó Amida Buddha.

Metta Karuna Prayer O Amida, Oneness of Life and Light, Entrusting in your Great Compassion, May you shed the foolishness in myself, transforming me into a conduit of Love. May I be a medicine for the sick and weary, nursing their afflictions until they are cured; May I become food and drink, during time of famine, May I protect the helpless and the poor, May I be a lamp, for those who need your light, May I be a bed for those who need rest, and guide all seekers to the Other Shore. May all find happiness through my actions, and let no one suffer because of me. Whether they love or hate me, whether they hurt or wrong me, may they all obtain true entrusting, through Other Power, and realize Supreme Nirvana. Namó Amida Buddha.

Refuge Prayer O Amida, I take refuge in you, Ocean of Oneness, Eternal Life and Light; Entrusting with my whole heart and mind In your Primal Vow; I am empowered by you to live a full, compassionate and creative life, I dedicate myself to the service of all beings, striving to help others realize, their human potential and Enlightenment; May your teachings guide me throughout the day, in my relationships, work and play. Namó Amida Buddha

Shalom, Salaam, Santi, the Peace that passes all understanding. *Bob Long*



Poems for Youth and Adults

Beyond the Sixth Grade

Graduated from theology in the sixth grade
 No need for Sunday school again
 Too much struggle for mom and dad
 To plead that young soul into a classroom
 One more Sabbath.

Others finished with biblical studies
 Just after clergy words and hands
 Confirmed the journey.

For few remaining or handful brought later by a party
 Simple answers served.
 Just when spicy foods and rich meals could be appreciated,
 Peanut butter and jelly fare, crust off,
 Served cut in half as to a preschooler.
 As school encouraged wrestling with Plato and heavy weights
 Church promoted "simply believe."

No one would conceive youth departing
 Chemistry, government, orchestra and basketball
 Because knowledge and skills sufficient.
 No memo to sit this one out concerning race relations and global affairs.
 No teacher would convey the theory
 That the universe would crack,
 All knowledge shatter, if questioned, tugged and manipulated this way or that.

Monday-through-Friday learner she became, so did he.
 Absorbing the mysteries of the galaxies,
 Reveling in literature, practicing cello and backstroke,
 Pondering ancient philosophies of the wise ones.
 Delighted by discoveries within and beyond self,
 Thrilled in the land of accomplishments and meaningful living.

All the while religious education –
 Perfect attendance awards with Bible school art
 Tucked in a scrapbook on the top shelf.
 Journey with the creator deemed complete
 In an "all I need to know I learned by sixth grade" approach.

Is it any wonder that it is both stunning and refreshing
 To consider divine study –
 The kind where head and heart muscle grow as we grapple with God?
 Areas atrophied and places newly discovered
 Surprised that Holy Mystery can withstand
 Questions, fears, disillusionment, prods and amazement –
 As can our faith.



Stripped by God

What would happen if I pursued God –
 If I filled my pockets with openness,
 Grabbed a thermos half-full of fortitude,
 And crawled into the cave of the Almighty
 Nose first, eyes peeled, heart hesitantly following
 Until I was face to face with the raw, pulsing beat of Mystery?

What if I entered and it looked different
 Than anyone ever described?
 What if the cave was too large to be fully known,
 Far too extensive to be comprehended by
 One person or group,
 Too vast for one dogma or doctrine?

Would I shatter at such a thought?
 Perish from paradox and puzzle?
 Shrink and shrivel before the power?
 Would God be diminished if I lived a question
 Rather than a statement?
 Would I lose my faith
 As I discovered the magnitude of grace?

O, for the willingness to explore
 To leave my tiny vocabulary at the entrance
 And stand before you naked
 Stripped of pretenses and rigidity,
 Disrobed of self righteousness and tidy packages,
 Stripped of all that holds me at a distance from you
 And your world.

Strip me, O God.
 Then clothe me in curiosity and courage.

Cynthia Langston Kirk [in ***Living the Questions***, pg 29-30]

Events of interest

Wold Lecture: Spielberg's Lincoln and the Issue of American Exceptionalism, Robert Jewett, Professor (Emeritus) University of Heidelberg. April 10th, 5:30 PM (Reception to Follow). Nott Memorial, Union College. Contact Info: Peter Bedford, Director of Religious Studies, bedfordp@union.edu, 388-8786.

Interfaith Lecture at St. Rose: Daisy Khan, executive director of the American Society for Muslim Advancement, will deliver her address "The Modern Muslim Woman: balancing Western Freedoms and Islamic Culture" on Thursday, April 11 at 7:30pm in the College of St. Rose Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary, 959 Madison Avenue, Albany. Ms. Khan will offer her perception of the challenges Muslim women face in Western culture and modernity. Admission is free and open to the public.

Share your news with Interfaith Community...

Congratulations to Rev. James Kane, the newest Life member of IFC.

Our love and support to Kathleen Duff on the recent passing of her mother.

Our deepest condolences to Robert Hall and Richard Hall on the passing of Robert's wife and Richard's mother, Dora Hall. She was a long term active member of Interfaith.

Wishing a speedy recovery to Connie Galloway following an accident which resulted in a broken neck.

Wishing a belated Happy Birthday to our long term member, Elyne Schulte!

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: Rev. James Kane, Marie & John Gorman, Paulyn Cox,

Institutional membership renewals: First Reformed Church—Schenectady, Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area

GE Matching Funds

Thank you for your support!

A special way to honor or remember. Gifting is a wonderful part of celebrating a special occasion. You may receive many precious gifts on your birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion. You may give gifts to others on their special days. No gift is more precious than the gift of the love and compassion of the Eternal One received in and through your faith ... and the love and care of others.

God asks us to re-direct our great love for God through specific gifts for others. God works through us that others might live more fully the Life that was intended for them. In this way we honor and glorify God. God's way of giving is deeply meaningful. Therefore, to celebrate your special day, or that of a family member or friend, won't you consider a gift to the Interfaith Community of Schenectady in their honor or memory. We trust that you will also feel honored by this same gift.

2013 Interfaith Award to be Presented

The Robert J. and Dorothy S. Ludwig Interfaith Award will be presented to the Sisters and Staff at the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center, Union Street, Niskayuna, at the April 17 gathering. The award recognizes individuals and groups who have expressed significant ecumenical and interfaith engagement in the area. In this instance the award recognizes the focus of the Retreat and Conference Center which is to minister to and with people of all faiths and to provide programs that lead to spiritual rest and renewal.

Interfaith Calendar for March 2013

2 Pesach - Last two days -- **Jewish** -- Eight day pilgrimage festival celebrating the Exodus from slavery to freedom. Also known as Passover.

7 Yom HaShoah -- **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.

11 Hindu New Year -- **Hindu** -- Celebration of New Year with colors and lights, rangali making and cracking fireworks, gifts for family and friends. People acknowledge the Goddess Laxmi or Lord Ganesha. Guests visit, bring sweets and coins, and wish each other happy New Year.

11-20 Ramayana -- **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.

Baisakhi - New Year -- **Sikh** -- 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 Yom Ha'Atzmaut -- **Jewish** -- Israel's Independence Day is celebrated on the fifth day of the month of Iyar, which is the Hebrew date of the formal establishment of the State of Israel.

20 Ramanavani -- **Hindu** -- celebration of the birth of Lord Rama.

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.

25 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.

25-28 Therevadin New Year -- **Buddhist** -- Celebration among the earliest surviving form of Buddhism commonly found in South and Southeast Asian countries.

27 Lazarus Saturday -- **Orthodox Christian** -- Celebration of the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus, celebrated on the eve of Palm Sunday; revealing to Orthodox believers that Jesus in "the resurrection and life" of all humankind.

28 Lag B'Omer -- **Jewish** -- Observation of the counting of the day - the link - between Pesach and Shavout.

Palm Sunday -- **Orthodox 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.

29 Ninth Day of Ridvan -- **Baha'i** -- Special day without work and focusing on the teachings of Baha'u'llah.



IFC OF SCHENECTADY

811 N. Brandywine Ave
Schenectady, NY 12308

Phone: 518-370-2150

E-mail:
schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com

office hours:
Tuesday 6-7pm
Fridays 7:30-8:30am
Others as needed
Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com



Coordinating Council Meetings

Friday, April 12, 2013
Friday, May 10, 2013
Friday, June 14, 2013

All meetings are held at Faith United Methodist Church, 811 Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, and begin at 9:30 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 Rev. Bob Long, 372-1083, 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)**

**Don't forget our
No Sweat Garage Sale
coming soon!**

*Check us out at
Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com*