



# Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

February 2014

Vol. 42, No. 6

**Goal:**  
Sharing together,  
One God —  
One Community

## Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

### *February Dinner Meeting*

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

Dinner 6:30pm

Program 7:30pm

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

#### **Mormonism: Beliefs and Practices**

John V. Gulisane, Jr., who is the Albany Stake President of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, will be guest presenter. This program continues a theme we have followed as part of the 2013-2014 focus to gain increasing insight into differing expressions of faith.

**Dinner is \$15. 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](mailto:schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com), by February 7, 2014.**

#### **Looking ahead**

***Because you asked: More advanced publicity of coming programs*** So that people can know the dates and focus of monthly programs much farther in advance, Interfaith will be providing publicity for as many months into the future as programs are established. In this newsletter information about programs is available through April, 2014. This will help with your scheduling. The current month's program will always be on the front cover. Succeeding month's programs will be in an article inside the newsletter. Watch for it.



## From our President

I have long cherished the name of a certain street on Cape Cod. It is called "The other Way." When I first saw that street, I wished that I could live on "The Other Way." Truth be told, however, though I cannot live "on" it, I know that I can live "in" it ... in "the Other Way."

When we use the term "comfort" in current conversation we usually mean "to sooth." To be "at ease." To be in "quiet enjoyment." It implies stability, predictability, lack of change. "To be comfortable" – as in "comfortable living" – is to have things rather plush. It is to be used to being and having and doing what one wishes the way one is accustomed.

The Hebrew and Christian scriptures offer us "The Other Way" to comfort. I am not significantly versed in the scriptures of Islam, nor the sacred writings of Hinduism and Buddhism, but I suspect from what I grasp of their spirituality that the concepts can be found there as well. The Hebrew word "comfort" means to "feel compassion and be in solidarity." It includes the ideas of repentance and sorrow. It indicates action that unites in community. The English word "comfort" comes from the Latin word meaning "to strengthen."

Thus, when second Isaiah speaks to the people, he is urged by Yahweh to say that their time of repentance has ended. Now is the time for comforting, strengthening. With compassion and justice Yahweh will end their sorrow and gather them into community. Thus "to comfort, "to bring comfort," to "live in comfort" is to nurture, to strengthen, to empower for movement, change and action of wellness, wholeness for all – which is peace. "Comforting peace" always creates community. And it is community action. It is life's uniting "Other Way."

In the royal courts of Shakespeare's plays, the "wise fool" is the mouthpiece of unorthodox, but helpful, criticism again the king. The "wise fool" interrupts the process designed to be uninterrupted as it serves a few at the expense of the most. The "wise fool" intervenes with alternative ideas and visions promising greater well-being for all. The "wise fool" questions an approach held to be unquestionable. The "wise fool" invites and expresses "The Other Way."

So, too, with us. If we are to live in "The Other Way" we, too, will assertively, intentionally, yet compassionately and justly engage public opinion of our day with the character of Eternal Love as we find it at the heart of our faiths. This way of community comfort has implications. When we walk in "The Other Way" we "want" for others what we "need" for ourselves. We ask for ourselves only what we are ready to ask and make available for all others as well. We refuse to take for ourselves what is not fairly offered to others. In this way we express visible compassion and solidarity through repentance and sorrow which turns to "The Other Way" which in turn brings harmony.

At the heart of our varying faiths I believe there is a core essence – when we nurture, empower and strengthen those overlooked and ignored, oppressed and suppressed, we actually bring the comfort that makes life full and joyous. For me, that is to live in "The Other Way."

*Aho, Alafia, Shanti, Salaam, Shalom, the peace which passes understanding Bob Long*



## Upcoming Dinner meetings

**March** The March Gathering will be held on Tuesday, March 4 at Congregation Gates of Heaven, Ashmore Avenue and Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY. The Gathering begins with dinner at 6:30 pm. The presenters will be Rabbi Matt Cutler and Paster Albert Manu of Prampram, Ghana. They will speak about their friendship and their partnership to help build up the Bethel school complex for which Paster Manu is the headmaster. Join us for dinner, lively conversation and pictures of what is happening in Ghana. Reservations at \$15 per person are required and can be made by calling the Interfaith office at 370-2150.

**April** The April Gathering will be held at the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center, 1945 Union Street, beginning with dinner at 6:30 pm. The focus for the evening will be on Trafficking of humans. Christine Knowles, of the Hindu Temple, and Sister Carol Davis of the Dominican Retreat Center [both members of the Interfaith Council] are bringing together the program. Watch for a possible event on the same subject at the Retreat Center around the same time.

**May** The May Gathering will be held at the Dominican Retreat Center. The program is still being developed.

## Community Events

***Interfaith Continues to Network*** The Interfaith Community takes pride in networking with organizations that provide events that also express our values and objectives. Two of these follow:

**Interfaith Community Co-Sponsors Jewish Community Center 2013-2014 Film Festival** The Interfaith Community is co-sponsoring the showing of the film, "Disobedience: The Sousa Mendes Story," in the Jewish Community Center Film Festival on Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:30 PM at the JCC Auditorium. The film depicts the true story of the Portuguese Consul in Bordeaux during WW II, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who saved 30,000 refugees on his own, defying his government orders. A devoted Catholic, he decided to obey God's law rather than man's law. A speaker from the Sousa Mendes Foundation will lead a discussion. A reception will be provided. Bring a neighbor and/or friends.

**FROM HELL TO HEALING: One Veteran's Story** Friday, February 7th, 2014, 7:30-9:00 PM, at Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, 943 Palmer Ave. Schenectady, NY 12309. Admission: donations of any amount appreciated, all proceeds go toward veteran healing. Free for Veterans. **Jason Moon** uses science, humor, storytelling and personal experience to weave together a 90 minute entertaining and educational message about how returning from war with PTSD affects not only the veteran but families and entire communities. He shares his own struggle of decline into depression, isolation and eventual suicide attempt in 2008. He also offers practical tips about how civilians can listen to and communicate with veterans, deepening understanding and reducing isolation. This promises to be an engaging evening rich in song, story and truth. The presentation will be non political and non religious. To learn more about Warrior Songs [www.warriorsongs.org](http://www.warriorsongs.org).

**Maha Shiva Ratri**— February 27th the Schenectady Hindu temple will be celebrating Maha Shiva Ratri beginning at 7pm. This is one of Hinduism's most important holy days and is celebrated by all Hindus all over the world. It is a celebration and evening of devotion to God as Lord Shiva, The third Divinity of the Hindu Trinity. Lord Shiva is the Destroyer of Ego and Duality. It is through Lord Shiva that Hindus come to understand we are one with God, not separate from God. Shivoham! ( I am He) All are invited for the ceremony and feast afterwards. 1052 Pleasant street, Schenectady.

Please see the enclosed flyer regarding Interfaith Story Circle upcoming event!



## Providing information about regional ecumenical and interfaith groupings

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We continue a look at area faith based agencies that serve everyone by focusing on Catholic Charities. Catholic Family Charities of the Albany Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church serves 14 counties with a wide variety of practically helpful services. Their vision and goals are to address "human needs at all stages of life regardless of race, creed or lifestyle with emphasis on the economically poor and vulnerable."

Services include:

- Food Services: Food pantries and soup kitchens; meals for the homebound; WIC
- Housing Services: Homeless facilities; Transitional housing; Low income housing; Domestic violence shelters; Housing for the disabled and seniors
- Furniture: warehouse
- Emergency Assistance: Basic needs, heat, electric and transportation; Disaster response Youth Services;
- Care programs: Day care centers; After school and summer programs; Foster care/group homes; Mentoring; Kinship care;
- Senior Services; Health and wellness; Housing; Senior meals; Day care and respite care; Transportation Disabilities Services; Health Related Services
- AIDS/HIV services
- Substance abuse prevention
- Maternity and parenting assistance; Adoption services;
- Counseling
- Caregiver support services
- Health care enrollment assistance
- Food Services; Food Pantries;
- Immigration assistance
- Information and assistance in accessing systems

Catholic Family's gathered statistics show that 158,903 people live below the poverty line in the 14 counties of our Diocese. Increasingly, the working poor are seeking assistance from Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany. There are sites in Herkimer, Otsego, Delaware, Fulton, Montgomery, Schoharie, Green, Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Rensselaer and Columbia counties.

## Coming at Dominican Retreat and Conference Center

**Lincoln's Journey to Immortality**—Monday, February 10, 7-8:30pm or Tuesday, February 11, 10-11:30a

In his time, few, if any, thought that Lincoln would one day become our most cherished and beloved President. Most at the time would have laughed at the notion that Lincoln would be considered by the ages as the best president we ever had. In his time, Lincoln was maligned by just about everyone, including members of his own party, his own cabinet, his Generals, the press, Senators and Congressmen. Lincoln was widely thought of as a tyrannical incompetent buffoon. This year we will look at Lincoln's journey to immortality. We will study the unpopular decisions and measures he undertook while conducting this unprecedented Civil War. We will learn how Lincoln navigated through these rocks and shoals to achieve both the preservation of the Union and the extinction of our great national shame—the institution of slavery.

**PRESENTER: Thomas Hoffman** is married and has two adult daughters. After serving as a VISTA volunteer and a Legal Aid Attorney, he began his private practice of law and has maintained his law offices in Manhattan. Mr. Hoffman is a trial attorney, specializing in federal and state civil litigation. He is a member of the US Supreme Court and the NY Court of Appeals as well as all NY courts and Federal District courts. Mr. Hoffman has had more than 50 published judicial decisions relating to civil rights and family law. In addition to his being a civil lawyer, Tom has a big interest in the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. He has a private library of more than 1000 books on Abraham Lincoln.

Cost is \$15 per person; **Reservations/Information:** Call (518) 393-4169 Monday through Friday, 8:30-4:30 PM or email [dslcny@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dslcny@nycap.rr.com)

## Share your news with Interfaith Community

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Deb Riitano upon her installation as president of the Capital Area Council on Churches. Deb is the first lay woman to hold this position.

**Our love and support** to Ted Vinick upon the recent loss of his wife, Raquel.

**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 January

**Individual membership renewals:** Eleanor Wright, Erica & Len Berger, Alma Blohm, Fran Madison, Charles & Sharon Maneri, Gerry & Bea Hahn

**Institutional memberships:** First United Methodist Church—Schenectady  
Thank you for your support!

## From the Coordinating Council

***To each one who is a member and friend of Interfaith,*** the Council asks several things:

That you keep up with news in the newsletter, marking the dates of events and monthly gatherings on your calendar and attending as many monthly gatherings as possible – the real strength of any organization is in its participation;

That you share you personal, or institutional, visions for the Interfaith Community – it is vitalizing to engage new visions for new directions and ways to fulfill purposes;

That you invite friends and neighbors to Interfaith's activities because you believe them worthwhile; and

That you make a generous contribution each year when your membership renewal comes due.

No one will beg. No one will nag. No one will scold. No one will embarrass. But the Interfaith Council is unanimous in bringing to you the reality of both the gifts and needs of this practically helpful community. We invite and encourage your participation ... the gift that you can give.

**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 interfaith insight to communicate with their congregations in return. They can also share their congregation's multi-faith values and experiences with the greater Interfaith Community. ***I ask clergy and laity from congregations of all faiths to discern who might be representatives from your congregation and support them as they attend gatherings.*** For further information, call Pastor Bob Long, President of Interfaith, 372-1083.

## Financial Report

The Interfaith Community of Schenectady was fortunate to end the year 2013 with income exceeding expenses by \$559.12. At December 31, 2013 the checking account balance was \$2,962.57. The Dorothy and Robert Ludwig savings account used for purchasing annual awards had a balance of \$762.90.

The Bequest received from the Robert Ludwig Estate is invested in a Long Term Corporate Bond Fund which had a value of \$22,715.42 at year end. This is an endowment fund that allows use of income generated but no use of any of the principal. The balance reflects market swings for the year; it ends quite well.

## Interfaith Calendar for February 2014

- 2 Candlemas -- **Christian** – Christian celebration of the presentation of young Jesus in the temple to the aged Simeon. New beginnings are recognized. Candles are lighted.  
Wicca (pagan) celebration of the return of the sun and lengthening of days.
- Four Chaplains Sunday -- **Interfaith** – Commemoration of the event in World War II when four Chaplains of Jewish and Christian traditions (Catholic and Protestant) gave their life jackets to others as a troop ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Presentation of Christ in the Temple -- **Anglican Christian** – Christian remembrance of the infant Jesus being brought to the temple in Jerusalem. His Godly presence was recognized. Celebrate at worship services.
- Imbolc - Lughnassad - **Wicca/Pagan** – Reflection on the power of the gods from which physical and spiritual harvest will come. Observance of first harvest of the year involving agricultural festivals and prosperity magic. The Christian name of Lammas is sometimes used.
- 3 Setsubun-sai -- **Shinto** – Celebration of the change of seasons with the coming of spring with shouts of "Devils out, Good Fortune in". Bean throwing protects against demons.
- 4 Vasant Panchami -- **Hindu** – Celebration dedicated to Saraswati, goddess of learning.
- 14 Saint Valentine's Day -- **Christian** – Celebration of the love of God presented in Jesus and in the lives of Christian believers. St Valentine was a 3rd century martyr. This day is widely observed in the USA as a secular celebration of love.
- 15 Nirvana Day -- **Buddhist - Jain** – A regional observance of the death of the Buddha.
- 16 Triodion begins -- **Christian** – Orthodox Christian time period leading up to Lent. The liturgy involves hymns, odes and scriptures.
- 26 - March 1 Intercalary Days -- **Baha'i** – Insertion of days into the calendar in order to maintain their solar calendar.
- 28 Maha Shivaratri -- **Hindu** – Festival in honor of Lord Shiva and his marriage to Goddess Parvati. Ceremonies involving prayers and hymns take place mostly at night. Special foods are not used.

## Prayer for an End to Human Trafficking

**Compassionate God,  
You are ever-present to Your Children  
In their times of greatest need.  
Draw near, then to all those  
Who are victims of human trafficking.  
Gift them with courage and hope  
As they struggle to envision  
Freedom and a better future.**

**For all who work to end this evil practice,  
we ask for the graces of perseverance,  
creativity and strength of purpose.  
Use our minds, hands and hearts  
To do your work,  
For we are yours.**





## IFC OF SCHENECTADY

811 N. Brandywine Ave  
Schenectady, NY 12308

Phone: 518-370-2150

E-mail:  
[schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com](mailto:schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com)

office hours:  
Tuesday 6-7pm  
Fridays 7:30-8:30am  
Others as needed  
[Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com](http://Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com)



### Coordinating Council Meetings

The Council will meet on the second *Thursday* at 9:30 am at Faith United Methodist Church, 811 North Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, 12308 on the following dates: [February 13](#), [March 13](#), [April 10](#) and [May 8](#). On occasion these may have to be changed.

**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)**

**Check us out at**  
**[Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com](http://Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com)**

**We cannot live only for  
ourselves. A thousand fibers  
connect us with our fellow  
men; and among those fibers,  
as sympathetic threads, our  
actions run as causes, and  
they come back to us as  
effects.**