



# Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

Nov/Dec 2017

Vol. 46, No.1

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

## Interfaith News

~ Over Forty-five Years of Interfaith Partnerships ~ Est. 1971 ~



## December Dinner Gathering

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

6:30pm Dinner ~ 7:30pm Program

Dominican Retreat & Conference Center

1945 Union Street, Niskayuna, NY 12309

**“Out of Silent Suffering”**

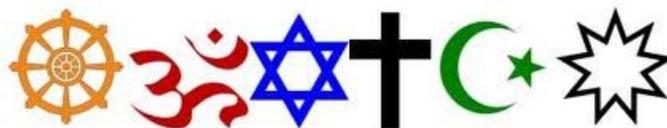
**Cecelia Thomas, presenter**



*Ms. Thomas is an author and educator specializing in bringing awareness to human trafficking and domestic violence and helping hurting women.*

*Ms. Thomas has made presentations at the Schenectady YWCA; the Alliance for Positive Health and H.O.P.E Enterprises. Cecelia is also an artist and seamstress. She has sewn costumes, banners and flags for liturgical dance as well as stoles and robes for clergy and she enjoys making jewelry*

Dinner is \$15 payable at the door. Program only is free. If you require a kosher meal, please let us know at time of reservation. Reservations to the IFC office, [schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com](mailto:schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com) or 370-2150 by noon, December 1.





## From our President

*“Peace among religions is a precondition for world peace.”*

*Swami Agnivesh*



### Thank you so much...

A big shout-out to all who supported our Friendship Celebration last month... whatever role you played.

If you placed an ad in our booklet or solicited one; thank you!

If you toured local merchants asking for donations to the silent auction or if you supplied one; thank you!

If you came just for great food and fellowship or to listen to the wonderful storyteller; thank you!

Your participation was very much appreciated.

### *Funds raised help to sustain our organizational objectives...*

To foster greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of all people.

To oppose bigotry and racism of any sort or manner.

To share ideas, concerns and resources among the member congregations, as well as individual members.

To promote cooperation in social action working through existing social agencies.

To support the chaplaincy work at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Center.

It was indeed a fine celebration. Your presence and support is deeply valued.

*Miranda Rand, President*

### **The Golden Rule from Major World Religions**

**Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.** (Buddhism)

**Blessed are those who prefer others before themselves.** (Bahai)

**Be not estranged from another for God dwells in every heart.** (Sikhism).

**Regard all creatures as you would your own self.** (Jainism)

**Human nature is good only when it does not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.** (Zoroastrianism)

**What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.** (Judaism)

**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.** (Christianity)

(Kindling New Fires for Peace: Church Women United 2017 World Community Day)



## More or better

In his significantly relevant book, *Deep Economy*, Bill McKibben makes a distinction. In our hyper-individualistic American culture, we have equated more with happiness. We have said more is better. But, the results have shown otherwise. More is better has reduced happiness in life and increased greed and depression. It has driven our culture to the place where competition is honored and cooperation is belittled. People find their worth in what they can accomplish alone. Interrelationships are downplayed as liabilities. We are tearing life from our "common home" [earth] at a frightening rate. The end result, as we view it in today's American scene, tends to give credence to the license plate that reads: "The one who dies with the most toys wins."

McKibben offers us a different model. "In 2005, the *Economist* developed a new system to rank not GNP, but "quality of life." Using indexes of everything from divorce rates to community life, material well-being to political freedom, the magazine's researchers found that the ten highest ranking countries were all in Europe. The United States, despite having the highest income per capita of any place but Luxembourg, nonetheless came in thirteenth, well behind, say, Spain, where people earned barely 60 percent as much.

"Does 'quality of life' mean anything? Here's perhaps the most important statistic: In recent years, while, as we have seen, Americans grew steadily less satisfied with their lives, the percentage of Europeans predominantly satisfied with their lives 'increased ... from 79 to 83 percent.' As the economist, Richard Layard concludes, 'The decline in happiness is largely an American phenomenon.'

"It can be summed up like this: Europeans have a higher regard for community, a more measured sense of the individual. They emphasize 'community relations over individual autonomy, cultural diversity over assimilation, quality of life over unlimited material growth, deep play over unrelenting toil, and universal human rights.' Americans define freedom as 'autonomy and mobility,' which requires amassing wealth. Europeans define freedom in community terms – in belonging, not belongings.'

"What does that mean in practice? Sixty-nine percent of Europeans believe that environmental protection is an immediate and urgent problem, and more than half agree that 'it is necessary to fundamentally change our way of life and development if we want to halt the destruction of the environment.' In contrast only one American in four is 'anxious about our environment.' Asked to rank their priorities, 95 percent of Europeans put helping others at the top of their list; 84 percent said they 'put a high values on being involved in creating a better society.' Financial success came in dead last, perhaps because you're allowed to go to the doctor, or to college, or to retire even if you don't make a lot of money."

The weather disasters which have grown into this year's seismic proportions, the political diatribe which has become poisoned, the racial and ethnic dehumanizing [and cleansing] which has increased all but unchecked, the ridicule of people of differing sexual orientations by many who openly employ differing degrees of sexual abuse ... all these and more lend credence to the fracturing of society, the crushing of personal hope and the tremendous dissatisfaction of life as we live it today. Is more at this price better?

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It is my deep conviction that our greatest need is to immerse ourselves once again, not in the competing religious systems of this day, but in the spirituality that is the essence of all of our faith expressions of God's loving presence within this and every day. Here is where we can move with conviction from more to better ... better for everyone, better for the earth and thus better for us personally as well.

As we approach each holiday season through the coming year, will you gift one another with the precious affirmation that grace trumps law, generosity empowers while accumulating weakens, acceptance unites while hostility and hatred divide, and those who embrace the inhabitants of this beautiful globe offer fruitfulness and fulfilling hope to all.

Salaam, Shalom, Shanti, the peace that passes understanding *Bob Long*

(Rev. Bob Long is a retired United Methodist Church pastor and immediate past president of IFCS)



## **2017 Tellabration!™ - Challenges**

**Sunday, November 12, 2017, 3:30 pm Proctors GE Theatre**

Tickets available online ([proctors.org](http://proctors.org)) or at the Proctors Box Office \$12.00 (\$8.00 for groups of 10 or more)

Challenges cause some people to rise to the occasion. Come hear stories of what happened when people responded to challenges.

If you're one of those people who linger in your car long after reaching a destination just to hear the end of The Moth Radio Hour, or of Garrison Keillor's "The News from Lake Wobegon" or Ira Glass on "This American Life," then Tellabration! may be for you.

At Tellabration! performers tell rarely heard contemporary and traditional stories celebrating the human spirit. You will discover that Tellabration! is a shared experience between the audience and the performer, combining the intensity of a solo performer with the intimacy of a face-to-face conversation.

[Tellabration!](#) is a project of the [National Storytelling Network](#). Proceeds from our previous Tellabration programs have funded over 90 storytelling events at libraries, museums and other locations in the Capital District.



## November Interfaith Calendar

1— All Saints Day -- **Christian** – Day for honoring saints, known and unknown. In specific, saints are all faithful and loving followers of Jesus. In general, persons with reputation for unusual lives of holiness and devotion to God or who were martyred for their faith. A Holy Day of Obligation in the Roman Catholic Church where saints have special formal status.

Samhain -- Beltane Wicca/Pagan Northern and southern hemispheres – Celebration of endings and beginnings and of remembering the dead.. Revering of elders is also observed. Celebration of the conjoining of the goddess with the energy of the god in the sacred marriage which is the basis of all creation.

2 - All Souls Day -- **Catholic Christian** – Day of prayers of remembrance and intercession for the dead. Prayers of the faithful are seen as helping to cleanse the souls for the beatific vision of God in heaven.

4 - Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib -- **Sikh** – Honoring of the birthday of their founder.

12 - Birth of Baha'u'llah - **Baha'i** – Celebration of the birth of their founder and teacher. Refrain from work.

15 Nativity Fast begins -- ends Dec. 24 -- **Orthodox Christian.**

23— Thanksgiving -- **Interfaith USA** – USA Interfaith celebration of the created earth.

24- Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahdur -- **Sikh** –

26— Day of the Covenant -- **Baha'i** – Celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah.

Christ the King -- **Christian** – Celebration of the preeminence of Jesus over all earthly authorities.

28— Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha -- **Baha'i** – Celebration of the rising of the spirit of Abdu'l-Baha to the heavenly dwelling.

30— St. Andrew's Day -- **Christian** – Observance of the coming of Christianity to the area now know as Scotland. The martyrdom of St Andrew is remembered as the season of Advent is about to begin.

## December Interfaith Calendar

1— Mawlid an Nabi -- **Islam** – Commemoration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, in about 570 c.e. Not universally observed. The prophet's teachings are read and religious meetings are held. Shia and Sunni on separate days.

3-24—Advent begins -- **Christian** – Time of preparation for observing the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest November 30 and is the beginning of the Christian worship year. Advent is observed with the lighting of advent candles, display of wreaths, and special ceremonies. Advent also anticipates the coming again to earth of Jesus Christ.

6— Saint Nicholas Day -- **Christian** – Celebration of the birth of Saint Nicolas, patron saint of children and role model for gift giving. Many churches named for this saint who is also the Dutch version of Santa Claus.

8— Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) -- **Buddhism** – Celebration of the time when Prince Gautama took his place under the Bodhi tree, vowing to remain there until he attained supreme enlightenment.

Immaculate Conception of Mary -- **Catholic Christian** – Day of celebrating the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin all of her life. A day of obligation and required church attendance.

12— Feast day - Our Lady of Guadalupe - **Catholic Christian** – Honoring of a legendary appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531 c.e.

13-20—Hanukkah—**Jewish**—Jewish Festival of Lights. It commemorates the Maccabean recapture and rededication of the Jerusalem Temple in 165-164 b.c.e. Special readings and praise songs focus on liberty and freedom. The eight candle Menorah is lighted

16-25—Posadas Navidenas -- **Hispanic Christian** –Hispanic Christian feast of The Lodgings commemorating the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in preparation for the birth of Jesus.

21— Solstice: Yule -- **Wicca/Pagan** northern hemisphere; Litha -- **Wicca/Pagan** southern hemisphere; Yule -- **Christian** -- That time when the earth is most inclined away from the sun. It is the most southern or northern point depending on the hemisphere.

24— Christmas Eve – **Christian** – Celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for for the birth of Jesus. It is observed with worship, candle lighting, manger scenes and festive meals.

Herod in the attempt to destroy Jesus.

[cont'd p. 6]

## December Interfaith calendar cont'd

25— Christmas **Christian** – Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Observed by prayers, exchanging of gifts, and family parties.

Feast of the Nativity -- **Orthodox Christian** – Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

26— Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) -- **Zoroastrian** – Anniversary of the death of Prophet Zarathushtra.

St Stephen's Day -- **Christian** – Remembrance of St Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

28 Holy Innocents -- **Christian** – Day of solemn memory of male children killed by King

31 Holy Family -- **Catholic Christian** – Celebration of the love between the family of Jesus.

Watch Night -- **Christian** – Occasion to thank God for bringing people safely through another year.

Controversial history. Protestant European Christian history dating from 1733 and in US 1770. Some sources link the observance to Black Christian celebration of Emancipation in 1862.

## Up for Bid: Hypnosis for Goal achievement; \$120 value (minimum bid \$50)

Rev. Joselle Gagliano, Interfaith Chaplain at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital and Coordinating Council member of IFCS, has donated a gift certificate for a personal appointment at Seasons Change Services, Hypnosis for Wellness.

Rev. Gagliano is an interfaith minister and a certified hypnotist with the National Guild of Hypnotists. Hypnosis services have proven helpful with smoking cessation, weight management, stress management and life transitions.

Please contact Rev. Gagliano at [revgagliano@gmail.com](mailto:revgagliano@gmail.com) or call 518-605-1396 to make an appointment. Her website is [www.seasonschangehypnosis.com](http://www.seasonschangehypnosis.com). A check made payable to Interfaith Community of Schenectady should be presented at the time of the appointment. Please mention the Interfaith Friendship Celebration when you make your appointment with Rev. Gagliano.



## Events

Jewish Film Festival—Schenectady JCC, 2565 Balltown Road, Niskayuna, NY, 12309  
 Saturday, November 11, 7:15 PM with Discussion led by: Commander Paul Zonderman, JWV  
 Schenectady Post 106

Sunday, November 12, 2:00 PM with Discussion led by: Professor Stephen Berk  
 Co-sponsored with Schenectady Post 106, Jewish War Veterans of the United States, Belgium & France, 2016, 94 min., French w/subtitles

Based on a true story, this incredible tale of bravery, strength, and victory of a daring young girl who will stop at nothing, and fears no one. In 1943, 13-year old Fanny and her younger sisters were sent from their home in France to an Italian foster home for Jewish children. When the Nazis arrived in Italy, their loving caretakers desperately organized the departure of the children to Switzerland. Suddenly left on their own, these eight children understand they must do the impossible to reach the Swiss border and freedom. Directed by Lola Doillon. Winner of Audience awards at various film festivals.

The Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc. was established on November 17, 1971. It is the first organization in New York State to encourage membership of diverse religious institutions and organizations. Its goal has been to foster dialogue and create better understanding between groups of different faiths.

**INTERFAITH OFFICERS FOR 2017-2018**

- Miranda Rand, President.....518-393-5047
- Colette Odell, Vice-President..... 518-371-0634
- Humera Khan, Secretary.....
- Edith Kliman, Treasurer.....518-346-0025

**COORDINATING COUNCIL:** Erica Berger, Karen Bond, Zarina Chaudry, Sr. Carol Davis, OP, Scott Ebeling, Rev. Joselle Gagliano, Audrey Hughes, Rev. Bob Long, Gerry Pierce

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENTS:** Rev. Bob Long & Sr. Carol Davis, OP

Participation in the Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc, 811 Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12308, is open to all congregations of all faiths, to individuals and to institutions.

Contribution Information

I (We) hereby subscribe to the following category of contribution:

- \_\_\_\_\_ LIFE \$600.00 per year per person, which may be given in five annual payments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ PATRON: \$100.00 per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ SUSTAINING: \$60.00 per year for individuals; \$70.00 per year per household
- \_\_\_\_\_ CONTRIBUTING: \$35.00 per year per individual; \$45.00 per year pr household
- \_\_\_\_\_ SUPPORTING: \$25.00 per year, individual; \$35.00 a year per household

\_\_\_ My check is eligible to the GE Foundation for matching funds and has been reported.

Name(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address:\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_ Email\_\_\_\_\_

Contribution: New \_\_\_\_\_; Renewal\_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the name of the congregation or religious organization to which you belong:

\_\_\_\_\_



**IFC OF SCHENECTADY**

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office hours:  
Tuesday 4-5pm  
Fridays 7:30-8:30am  
Others as needed  
[Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com](http://Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com)



**Coordinating Council Meetings**

**Council Meetings** Visioning and planning are accomplished at the monthly Council Meetings. December 14

Council Meetings are held at Faith United Methodist Church, 811 Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12308, and begin at 9:00 am. Members and participants may attend.

**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)**



Don't forget  
to like us on  
Facebook!

*Someday after we have mastered the  
winds, the tides and gravity we  
shall harness for God the energies of  
Love. Then, for the second time in  
the history of the world, humankind  
will have discovered fire."  
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*