



Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

Nov 2012

Vol. 41, No. 3

Goal:
Sharing together,
One God —
One Community

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

IFC will not be hosting a November dinner meeting but rather we encourage you to attend the annual

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Sunday, November 18, 2012 ~ 5:00pm

First Reformed Church of Schenectady
8 N. Church Street, Schenectady, NY 12305

This will be a Jazz Service with musicians of different faiths as well as readings from various sacred texts.

Advanced complimentary tickets are available from the church at 377-2201.

Tickets at the door are \$10

***Watch for information on our December
Dinner Meeting!***



From your president...

How does the Creature Say Thanks?

All those in heaven find themselves in the most beautiful setting imaginable. The sky is crystal blue, save for a few wisps of white, fluffy clouds. An arch of technicolor bows majestically across the horizon. The sun shines brightly and the most beautiful music fills the air. In the midst of all of this lies an unbelievably magnificent banquet with all of the most delicious food and beverage anyone could imagine or want. Everyone is stunned ... those present can hardly believe how immeasurably perfect everything is. When it comes time to eat, each person has a long-handled fork tied to his or her left elbow, with the tongs pointing away from the hand.

To their utter surprise those in hell find a setting that they cannot believe. Nature's full splendor is backdrop for an unexpectedly luscious meal. Magnificent music attends the setting and peace and beauty abound beyond any expectation. In the midst of all of this there is a magnificent banquet with all of the most delicious food and beverage anyone could imagine or want. Everyone is stunned ... those present can hardly believe that this is what hell could possibly be like. And, when it comes time to eat, each person has a long-handled fork tied to his or her left elbow, with the tongs pointing away from the hand.

Those in heaven enjoy an unspeakable meal. They celebrate with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Those in hell eat nothing at all. In frustrated hunger, they become hate-filled and break out in tumultuous babble and aggression.

What makes the difference between heaven and hell? Those in heaven, being deeply grateful for God's immeasurable gifts and confident of God's goodness and caring love, act spontaneously with hospitality and generosity. In such a spirit, they use their forks to feed the person to their left. Those in hell, being fear-filled and mistrusting any promise of God's caring love, become self-protective. In this spirit they use their forks as weapons against one another to protect what they believe is rightfully theirs.

I am reminded of an illustration from the earliest Christian Church. St. Lawrence was the archdeacon of Rome. His responsibilities included maintaining the sacred vessels of the small, struggling church in Rome and distributing alms to the poor. While he was archdeacon, the Governor of Rome took Pope Sextus captive and demanded, "Where is the treasure of the church?" The Pope would not tell, and they tortured him to death. He never did tell, but in his pain and agony, Pope Sextus somehow mentioned the name of archdeacon Lawrence.

They took Lawrence captive. "Where is the treasure of the church?" they demanded. Lawrence replied, "Governor, I cannot get it for you instantaneously; but if you will give me three days, I will give you the treasure." The Governor agreed. Lawrence left.

Three days later Lawrence walked into the Governor's courtyard followed by a flood of people. The Governor walked out onto the balcony and said, "Where is the treasure of the church?" Lawrence stepped forward and pointed to the crowd that accompanied him – the lame, the blind, the deaf, the oppressed, the nobodies of society. He said, "Here is the treasure of the Christian church."

I have a sense that we all have within us something of heaven and hell ... that we are all a combination of Pope Sextus and archdeacon Lawrence. We possess material things to which we assign great importance. Another part of us treasures the love of God and people which vital faith brings so clearly to us. When asked to produce "your treasure," which "treasure" is dominant and increasing in significance within you? What we believe determines who we are and what we see ... and what we see determines what we live and die for.

The wonderful mystery of spirituality is that The Source of Life and Love surprises us! God redirects our response of grateful love toward God's friends next to and around us. As we close out this year – in no matter which faith we find ourselves – may we ask our self personally, and our selves communally, how we might live within the heaven that is offered us in the days of our lives. May we seek treasures that need not be protected and kept hidden. May we give ourselves to treasures that we may accompany into the courtyard of life on "Main Street, Anywhere." And may we celebrate with festive praise and thanks giving.

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



From your immediate past president...

Dear Friends,

I want to thank ALL for helping to make this year's 15th annual concert a huge success. The participating groups were outstanding and Mark Eiser's bugle that called us to worship and ended with "Taps," brought a oneness that caught the spirit of the day.

Special thanks to our administrative secretary, Barbara Paul, for producing the concert program amid a variety of obstacles, and to Congregation Gates of Heaven, our gracious hosts. A fundraiser, the concert brought in a little over \$1,200.00

October was a special month for Roman Catholics around the world. Of the seven men and women who were declared saints and canonized October 21st by Pope Benedict XVI in Rome, one was from the Mohawk Valley. She was Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, a 17th century Mohawk maiden who has become the first Native American to be declared a saint.

Among those said to be cured through her intercession was my father-in-law, Thomas A. Hughes, Sr. Born in Amsterdam, he later worked for GE and raised his family (Lenore, Tom Jr., Donna and Carole) in Schenectady.

In 1915 at age 9, he was diagnosed with "hip-joint disease," was put into a full body cast to shrink the bone and was told he would subsequently have one leg shorter than the other. His mother, Mary Devine Hughes, a devout Catholic, carried him up the rustic Auriesville Shrine Hill where the Kateri's relic was applied. A short time later, relatives took off the cast after a strange odor was detected. An ex-ray revealed no evidence of disease. His doctor signed an affidavit stating that this could not have happened by natural means and was therefore a "supernatural" healing. In 1940, this healing was included in the Vatican's "positio" on the introduction of Kateri's cause for beatification and subsequent canonization.

There are certain steps that must be followed before the Church declares someone a saint. For Kateri, it has been years of promoting her cause by many, many people, ours included. So, understand the joy and jubilation that surrounded this Mohawk Valley last month.

Audrey Hughes

Membership now January through December

For many years, IFCs yearly membership coincided with the date of their first membership entry and was so indicated on the newsletter mailing label as a reminder of when to renew. For example, if you joined in June, your membership dues were renewable the following June. If you forgot and paid them in October, some thought their next due date would be in October. Not so. It was still June. You were confused and we lost revenue needed to sustain our existence.

At a Co-ordinating Council meeting last year, it was voted that the membership dues and the fiscal year should be the same, namely January through December. THAT WILL GO INTO EFFECT THIS COMING YEAR. ALL MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW PAYABLE IN JANUARY 2013.

HOWEVER, for just this transition period, the Co-ordinating Council voted that dues paid in November and December 2012 will be accepted as dues paid for the coming year, 2013. If there are any questions, call our office at 370-2150 or Treasurer Sandy Goble at 374-0819 or sgoble2@verizon.net.



Events of interest

Mayan Hands Fair Trade Sale at Alplaus United Methodist Church, 1 Brookside Avenue, Alplaus, Friday and Saturday, November 16-17 from 10am-3pm. To learn more about Mayan Hands Fair Trade, visit www.mayanhands.org.

CDPHP Free Noontime Organ Concert Series at Proctors on their Main Stage on November 27, December 11, January 15, February 19, March, 19, April 23, May 21 and June 11.

Native American History Month celebrated with Native American storytelling on Monday, November 26, 7pm, the Bush Memorial Auditorium at Sage College. For info contact NASO@sage.edu.

Festive Community Dinner Wednesday Nov. 28 at 6 PM is the annual FESTIVE COMMUNITY DINNER for international students at Union College. People from the community are encouraged to bring some home-cooked food to Hale House on the Union campus, and share a meal with students who are far from families and friends during the holidays. For more information or to RSVP, contact Abby Norton-Levering (518) 694-6234 / applekale@yahoo.com, or Viki Brooks, Union College chaplain, brooksv@union.edu.

Story Circle at Proctors is donating \$2 of every ticket sold to their Word Plays to the SICM Summer Lunch program. The Summer Lunch program serves over 35,000 free lunches to the children in Schenectady County each summer. Tickets are \$16 and performances are in The Gallery at Proctors. Shows include "Staying Alive" on January 13, "From Heartbreak to Rapture" on February 3 and "Unforgettable" on March 3.

Could you help one of our member congregations?

From IFC Board member Christine Knowles dated October 24, 2012

"This week our Hindu Temple was broken into, burglarized and vandalized.....again. We had been scheduled for Time Warner Cable to complete an assessment of the building for a security system when this heartless crime occurred. Thousands of dollars worth of damage and theft took place in what we believe was a hate crime. Now heading into the Diwali the Festival of Light, one of our most joyful events, our community is struggling to replace stolen equipment and repair our damaged and desecrated temple.

We did not seek assistance after the last break-in but instead pulled together to come up with the money for a security system. However, this time we are humbly appealing for donations from any individual, business or religious institution. We simply do not have the financial resources at this time to cope with this senseless attack.

Any donations you might be able to make should be sent to Schenectady Hindu Temple; 1052 Pleasant Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

May the one God who loves all bring peace,
Chris Knowles
Program Coordinator
Schenectady Hindu Temple

Share your news with Interfaith Community...

Congratulations to Kathleen Duff on receiving, along with Phyllis Silverman, this year's Carlyle Adams Ecumenical/Interfaith Award from the Capital Area Council of Churches. Co-Chairs of the Jewish-Catholic Dialogue Committee, they have been strong advocates and participants in interreligious dialogue in the Capital Region.

Congratulations to Dr. Musssarat Chaudhry of the Islamic Center of the Capital District, for writing such a fine explanation on *Women in Islam* for the RC Diocesan newspaper, *The Evangelist*.

Congratulations to Helga Schroeter whose son was recently married.

Congratulations to Paul Tonko on his re-election and for receiving an award from the NYCLU.

Congratulations to the Golub Family who received the Community Impact Award from the Hamilton Hill Arts Center.

Congratulations to Rabbi Mathew Cutler as he embarks on a well-deserved three month sabbatical.

Congratulations to Schenectady Inner City Ministry upon an enjoyable and successful Harvest for the Pantry dinner which raised nearly \$14,000 for the Emergency Food Pantry.

Congratulations to Rev. Larry Phillips and his wife, Faye, as they retire from 37 years of active ministry, 29 years of which were served at Emmauel Friedens Church, Nott Terrace, Schenectady. We celebrate Larry's long and effective ministry and significant contributions to many consequential movements in larger circles of community.

Welcome to Rev. Michael Taylor, recently ordained a priest in the RC Diocese of Albany, who has been named Associate Pastor to St Kateri Tekakwitha parish in Niskayuna (formerly St. Helen's).

Our love and support to Rabbi Kasman, IFC's chaplain at Sunnyview, and his wife, Sharon, on the death of her mother.

Our love and prayers to all our former members who now reside in nursing homes or are confined to their own homes. We give thanks for your many years of service to interfaith activities. Know that you are always with us in spirit.

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 November

Individual membership renewals: Patricia Bumbarger, Linda Dollase, Paul & Barbara Dworkin, Asa & Judith Kaplan,

Institutional membership renewals: First United Methodist Church, Faith United Methodist Church

Concert: Barby & Stan Harris, Gerry & Eleanor Pierce, Edith Kliman, Fran Madison, Helga Schroeter, Phyllis Boyd, Ralph & Catherine Boyd, Dick & Sandy Goble, Norma Hudson, Audrey Hughes, Dorothy Packard, Rev. Adrian & Blanche Gray, Eleanor Wright, Pauly Cox, Rev. James Kane. Barbara Paul

Thank you for your support!

Interfaith Calendar for November 2012

- 1 All Saint's Day -- **Christian** -- Day for honoring saints, known and unknown. In general, saints are 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. For many Christians, saints include all those who follow Jesus.
- Samhain -- **Wicca/Pagan Northern and Southern hemispheres** -- Celebration of endings and beginnings and of remembering the dead. Revering of elders is also observed.
- 2 All Soul's 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.
- 11 Jain New Year – **Jain** -- The New Year begins the next day of Diwali [the beginning of lighting the lamps] & is the occasion for joyful gatherings of Jains, with everyone wishing each other a Happy New Year.
- 11-15 Deepavali – **Hindu** -- A five day festival of lights marking the end of the Hindu year. First day is observed as a holiday by many Hindu people.
- 12 Birth of Baha'u'llah -- **Bahai** – Celebration of the birth of their founder & teacher. Refrain from work.
- 13 Diwali - Deepavali -- **Hindu; Jain; Sikh** -- Festival of Lights symbolizing the human urge to move toward the light. Gift exchanges, fireworks and festive meals. Jain celebration of Lord Mahavira's day of final liberation.
- 15 Hijra - New Year -- **Islam** -- The emigration of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in 615 c.e.
- Nativity Fast through 12-25 -- **Orthodox Christian** -- A *joyous* fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. In the weeks leading to December 25, Orthodox Christians prepare themselves to celebrate the birth in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 22 Thanksgiving USA -- **Interfaith** – Grateful celebration of the created earth ... USA.
- 21 Yule – **Christian** -- Celebration of the light dawning in Jesus. Also a Norse pagan celebration of the winter-born king, symbolized by the rebirth of the sun. A present day Wicca event.
- 24 Ashura -- **Islam** -- Optional one day fast. The Shia observance is based on the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's Grandson, Hussein, martyred on this date in 683/684 AD at the battle of Kerbala. Sunni observance is a recognition of Moses fasting in gratitude to Allah/God for liberation from oppression.
- Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom – **Sikh** -- Time of remembering the execution of Teg Bahadur by the Moghul Emperor in India.
- 25 Christ the King – **Christian** -- Celebration of the preeminence of Jesus over all earthly authorities.
- 26 Day of the Covenant -- **Baha'i** -- Celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah.
- 28 Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha -- **Baha'i** -- Celebration of the rising of the spirit of Abdu'l-Baha to the heavenly dwelling.
- Guru Nanak Dev Sahib birthday – **Sikh** -- Day honoring of the birth of the first Sikh teacher who lived from 1469 -1539 c.e. Sacred readings, prayers, hymns, meals together.
- 30 Saint 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.

An interfaith prayer for Thanksgiving

Yahweh, Elohim, al-Lah, God is the presence in whom my being comes alive; the core and ground of my existence; the infinite and inexhaustible ground of all being; the source of life and goodness; the fountain of all holiness; the originator of unconditional love. This presence calls me to fullness of life; to praise and thanksgiving; to integrity and wholesomeness and to courageous vulnerable love. Great Spirit, Divine One, Creator, teach me to live fully, to act justly, to



IFC OF SCHENECTADY

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E-mail:
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office hours:
Tuesday 3-4 pm
Fridays 12:30-2 pm
Others as needed
Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com



Coordinating Council Meetings

Friday, December 14, 2012
Friday, January 11, 2012
Friday, February 8, 2013
Friday, March 8, 2013

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)**

We're on the web!

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

Event info!

Membership info!