



Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

November 2013

Vol. 42, No. 3

Goal:
Sharing together,
One God —
One Community

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

December Dinner Meeting

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Dinner 6:30pm

Program 7:30pm

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

Program presented by

Gert Johnson and storytellers from Children at the Well

The program will focus on a new film entitled, *Stepping Toward the Lion: Finding My Story*. The film is created by John Lyden, a former member and student of Children at the Well. Jennifer Patterson, of the Albany Times Union says of the film: "John Lyden's 'Stepping Toward the Lion: Finding My Story' is an intimate and revealing look at the life of an African-American Muslim teenager, post-9/11, as he overcomes prejudice and bullying to find his voice as a versatile storyteller. It also shines a light on the interfaith youth storytelling group, Children at the Well, and the positive, powerful impact it has on the lives of young people. This story is one to be shared."

Gert Johnson and current Children at the Well students will provide follow-up discussion.

Please be pro-active. Invite someone from your congregation to join you in this engaging evening. Then share with your congregation what you have discovered.

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 November 25.

Looking toward the 2014 James Stamper Interfaith Concert In last month's Newsletter we shared that the 2013 concert had been cancelled due to competition with several other significant concerts/events on the Sundays of October. Following discussion at the October Council meeting the decision was made to seek another venue that would avoid such conflicts and offer a setting/time to bring the community together in an interfaith manner.



From our President

Strange and Discomforting Interrelationships In the past few years, I have been reading and relating to the reality of ethnic cleansing of Native Americans within the USA. As with the Holocaust, part of my personal interest, as an United Methodist, is to try to understand how such brutal inhumanity could be imposed on others in the name of the Prince of Peace. Moreover, because Methodism was one of the earliest denominations to spread throughout the country, I am becoming aware that Methodists often asked to, and did, take leadership in the atrocities that took place. I am humiliated and embarrassed by this reality which I cannot undo. Personally, I am seeking to get a hold of what personal values I hold – consciously or unconsciously – that may in any way participate in such dismissal of the human dignity of entire peoples in this manner.

My friend Thom White Wolf Fassett -- member of the Seneca Nation and an United Methodist pastor, wrote a few years back ; “While campaigning for the presidency, Ronald Reagan was asked what lives he wished he might have lived. He said he was fascinated by those who saw this new world – Cortes, Lewis and Clark, Father Sierra – when it was virtually untouched by man. At the end of his presidency, when asked to evaluate the justifications for current Indian policy, Reagan replied: “Maybe we made a mistake in trying to maintain Indian cultures. Maybe we should not have humored them into wanting to stay in that kind of primitive life-style. Maybe we should have said: ‘No, come join us. Be citizens along with the rest of us.’” [***Giving Our Hearts Away***, page 90] Is there anything about me that believes anything close to that?

As I have surveyed the growth of the Christian Church in the west some observations make themselves known. The increasing alliance of the church with nation-states in the west, coupled with the increasing reliance of Christianity upon western philosophies, led to the rise of destructive doctrines held in the name of Christ. You will not find these in any official listing of Doctrines of the Faith of denominations; but they have been clearly visible in Christian living and practice in recent centuries – most clearly observed by those toward whom they were directed. Among them:

The doctrine of divine destiny [manifest destiny] – the inherent right and ultimate good to expand the principal ideals, values and interests of the dominant society, including the right and good of interference in the affairs of other peoples and nations, claiming of land and dispersing and oppressing of its peoples.

The doctrine of racial superiority of western Christians, from which they believed that others were savages, uncivilized, needing to be ripped from their cultures and reeducated into the ways of the dominant society.

The doctrine that all resources, including earth itself [and today outer space as well] are at the disposal of the dominant society, to be subdued and expended to fulfill its own ends.

Recently I was given a document entitled ***American Indian Boarding Schools: An Exploration of Global Ethnic & Cultural Cleansing*** [Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk), Assistant Professor of American Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz]. It is emotionally difficult, but necessary, reading. On page 17, I found a deeply disturbing interrelationship with interfaith implications. “As a young boy, German leader, Adolf Hitler’s favorite game was ‘Cowboys and Indians.’ His friends reported that he enjoyed endless war scene re-enactments. As an adult, he continued with his fascination of American Indian history and studied about the plight of the American Indian. In 1916, Madison Grant, an American writer, published his book, ***The Passing of the Great Race***. Grant introduced the notion that the Nordic blonde, Arayan race was “ideal.” He advocated that killing and sterilizing non-white, non-Christian people was an acceptable method of achieving what he termed “racial purity.” In addition, Grant wrote specifically about the need to control the American “Melting Pot” by



prohibiting interracial relationships between whites and Indians, Negroes, or Hindus. He stressed the need to remove and control the perceived inferior races. Adolf Hitler wrote a letter to Grant about the book that said, 'This is my bible.'"

I am seeking to discover what needs to be included in any appropriate act of reconciliation with Native Americans – and every people toward whom ethnic cleansing has been directed. It is becoming clear to me that the most needed thing from me is to name and disengage my participation in values/practices that divide and destroy human dignity and human beings. To affirm the human dignity of all and every people. To celebrate and fully participate in the values of the Source of Life and Love who claims and resides in all. To claim all as my sisters and brothers under the same Creator and Sustainer of Life. I invite responses from all who will.

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

Mark your calendars now for our 2013-2014 Program Year meeting dates

Monthly Gathering dates and places:

- December 3, 2013, Tuesday, Dominican Retreat and Conference Center, Union Street
- January 21, 2014, Tuesday, Dominican Retreat and Conference Center
- February 11, 2014, Tuesday, Dominican Retreat and Conference Center
- March 4, 2014, Tuesday, Congregation Gates of Heaven, Ashmore and Eastern Parkway, Schenectady
- April 8, 2014, Tuesday, Dominican Retreat and Conference Center
- May 7, 2014, Wednesday, Dominican Retreat and Conference Center.

When you can plan ahead, it is possible to invite friends and neighbors to this aspect of our shared life which you hold significant. Please do so regularly.

Schenectady Honors Hindu Celebration

Schenectady's Mayor, Gary N. McCarthy, has issued a proclamation declaring the Hindu Festival of Diwali a Citywide celebration this year. The Festival was celebrated by the Hindu Community at the Hindu Temple on November 2, 2013.

DIWALI or the Festival of Lights

Dipavali is a Sanskrit word made up of Dipa which means light and Avali which means rows. Therefore, Dipavali means rows of lights. Dipavali, or commonly called Diwali, is the Festival of Lights which signifies the victory of good over evil, the removal of darkness and the manifestation of light, and the victory of truth over untruth. Numerous legends associate with the origin of this festival. The message of these legends is the same. We must challenge darkness and ignorance by the nature of light and knowledge. Hinduism proclaims that all human beings are essentially pure and free. We are of the nature of pure consciousness. We are of the nature of light. The light of consciousness is our nature. However, when we are deluded, that light becomes dim, and we do all sorts of evil. We must remove that darkness and ignorance, so light and knowledge shine in its own splendor. The British poet Robert Browning calls it "the imprisoned splendor" in his poem Paracelsus. This wonderful splendor is in you, in me, in all.

by Pandit Jai N. Misir, Schenectady Hindu Temple



Interfaith Community Co-Sponsors JCC 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 friend(s).

From the Coordinating Council

Membership Contributions Membership contributions have not been increased since the beginning of the Interfaith Community in 1971. Everything else has increased significantly, including Interfaith's costs. At the October Council Meeting it was decided to increase slightly the suggested contribution levels. Beginning January, 2014, contributions will be sought at the following levels [yes, you may do more if you wish, many do]:

- Life Members -\$600 (payable in six annual installments)
- Patron Members - \$100.
- Sustaining Members [Individual] - \$50
- Sustaining Members [Household] - \$70
- Contributing Members [Individual] - \$35
- Contributing Members [Household]—\$45
- Supporting Members [Individual] - \$25
- Supporting Members [Household] - \$35

Institutions/congregations are asked to be as generous as possible as the Interfaith Community provides ministry which individual congregations/institutions cannot easily duplicate and which provides benefits to them.

Please remember this change....

In the past contributions were asked by all members on the month in which they joined Interfaith. The Interfaith Council now asks that you offer your "gifts of support and encouragement" at the beginning of each new calendar year ... within the months of January and February of each year.

If you have not made your contribution during 2013, we ask that you, as an individual, family or organization, make your gift to the effective work of Interfaith before the end of the year. To all who have provided gifts to date in 2013, we express thanks. We offer gratitude to all who do so through the end of the year.

Solidifying the Membership Roles

Membership List Update Sandy Goble, Scott Ebeling and Barby Harris have worked through several outdated membership lists to bring together a listing of what is hoped to be the most accurate list of contributing members and associate participants available in some time. The list includes updated addresses, telephone numbers [and email addresses for those who would share them] of contributing members, including individuals, institutions and life members. If you find that you are not on the list and wish to be, or if you discover incorrect information about you on the list and wish to correct it, please send information to the Interfaith Office by mail [811 North Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12308] or email [Schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com].

Share your news with Interfaith Community...

CONGRATULATIONS to the Rev. Alan Baumbach, pastor at Rotterdam United Methodist Church who has announced his retirement effective July 1, 2014.

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 October

Individual membership renewals: Miranda Rand, William & Ruth Haase, Barbara Oliver, Patricia Bumbarger

Thank you for your support!

Every one is invited !

As you probably know, Bishop Howard Hubbard of the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese, by Church law, had to submit his resignation as Bishop on his 75th birthday on Thursday, October 31st.

At this time, he not only celebrates 36 years as Bishop of Albany, but also his 50th Anniversary of priesthood. For both these reasons, the community has been having occasions of tribute to Bishop Hubbard honoring his years of service in ministry and his many accomplishments in furthering dialogue, trust and understanding among people of all faiths.

THE ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH LEADERS INVITE YOU TO A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO BISHOP HUBBARD ON

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2013, 7:30 pm

THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE

ST. JOSEPH'S HALL

MADISON AVENUE, ALBANY. NY

PLEASE COME! Let Us Celebrate Together!

Events of interest

Finding Sacred Common Ground: Three Abrahamic Traditions—Christianity, Judaism and Islam all spring from the life and faith of a revered Father Abraham. Yet over the years, generations have come to different understandings about how to express the faith we have received from this great ancestor. We live in a time in which we desire to understand and connect with others of different traditions. Professor Landau will help us consider both the challenges and the opportunities involved when we seek to come together with those of other faith traditions. Explore the tensions and possibilities for cooperation that exist in Jewish-Muslim relations. Consider ways that we can begin to promote Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations, and build lasting Abrahamic partnerships. Professor Landau will guide us through ways of greater understanding, offering tools to foster constructive conversation, build trust, and pave the way for new advances in Interfaith relationships. This course is being held March 13-14, 2014 at Congregations Gates of Heaven, 852 Ashmore Ave., Schenectady, NY , Contact the Capital Region Theological Center for more info, 462-2470.

Interfaith Calendar for November 2013

- 1 All Saints 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.
Samhain and Beltane -- **Wicca/Pagan** Northern/Southern hemispheres -- Celebration of endings and beginnings and of remembering the dead.. Revering of elders is also observed.
- 1-5 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.
- 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.
- 3 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. Jain: New Year.
- 4 Hijra -- New Year -- **Islam** -- The emigration of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in 615 c.e.
- 12 Birth of Baha'u'llah -- **Bahai** -- 13 Baha'i celebration of the birth of their founder and teacher. Refrain from work.
- 13 Ashura -- **Islam** -- Islamic 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.
- 14 Winter Lent begins to 12/25-- **Orthodox Christian** -- Orthodox Christian season of preparation for the Nativity of Christ.
- 17 Guru Nanak Dev Sahib birthday – **Sikh** -- Sikh honoring of the birth of the first Sikh teacher who lived from 1469 -1539 c.e. Sacred readings, prayers, hymns, meals together.
- 21 Yule – **Christian** -- A 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 Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom – **Sikh** -- Sikh time of remembering the execution of Teg Bahadur by the Moghul Emperor in India.
- 24 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.
Thanksgiving -- **USA** – Interfaith -- Interfaith celebration of the created earth.
- 28-Dec 5 Hanukkah -- **Judaism** -- 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
- 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.



IFC OF SCHENECTADY

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E-mail:
schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com

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



Coordinating Council Meetings

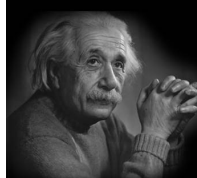
The Council will meet on the second *Thursday* at 9:30 am at Faith United Methodist Church, 811 North Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, 12308 on the following dates: [November 14](#), [December 12](#), [January 9, 2014](#), [February 13](#), [March 13](#), [April 10](#) and [May 8](#). On occasion these 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

**Peace cannot be kept
by force; it can only be
achieved by
understanding.**



Albert Einstein
German Theoretical-Physicist
(1879-1955)

QuoteHD.com