



Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

Sept 2012

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Goal:
Sharing together,
One God —
One Community

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

September Dinner Meeting

Wednesday, September 19, 2012

First Reformed Church-Schenectady

8 N. Church Street, Schenectady, NY 12305

Dinner 6:30pm ~ Program 7:30pm

Imam Djafer Sebkaoui will present a program on

"Fasting: The Road Towards Spiritual Growth"

Imam Sebkaoui is currently the Imam of Masjid Al-Hidaya and the Muslim Community of Troy. He is also the Director of children and youth programs for MCT. He was one of the founders and former principal of the only Islamic school in the area, AnNur Islamic School in Colonie. He represents the Muslim Community on the RPI campus as a chaplain and provides different services for students and staff. He obtained his Master of Science in Psychology from RPI. Imam Sebkaoui is a member of the Interfaith Alliance of NYS and the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Interfaith Lectureship Program at the College of St. Rose.

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 by Friday, September 14. 370-2150 or schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com

Our 15th Annual

James Stamper Concert

Sunday, October 28, 2012 ~ 3:00 pm

Congregation Gates of Heaven

852 Ashmore Avenue, Schenectady, NY

Please plan to attend and bring a friend!

The Fall Interfaith concert is shaping up. Here is an opportunity for you to have a part in it. The Fall Interfaith Concert is one of only two fundraisers that Interfaith promotes each year. Included with this newsletter is a form you may use to join others in sponsoring the concert. Your gift will go a long way to help with the effectiveness of Interfaith in months ahead



From your president...

Compassionate Restoration—Road to Deep Joy

Begin with a true story. The CEO of an investment firm was not at the World Trade Towers when they went down, because he had to take his five-year-old son to school. By the time he approached work, the buildings were down. He lost over 700 of his 1200 employees. Like thousands, he was living a nightmare. What kind of God would allow this to happen to him, and to all those others? Where was God's love? Where was God??!! Why should I praise such a God, say nothing of trusting God?

Of necessity he was led into conversations with many of the surviving families of his employees. He shared the fear and terror and pain of their loss. He also shared their desperation at "going ahead" with life. How would spouses with children keep up with essential payments? How would they face day-to-day needs?

A strange thing began to happen to his broken trust as he engaged the families. He began planning to move his business as soon as possible to a new location where he could bring the company back to functioning. Yes, it would be slow with such a loss of employees.

But now, *his values, his purpose and his priorities were clearly different.* His entire perspective had changed. There was a growing passion in his voice, and compassion in his decisions. Once he was satisfied to have a successful enterprise for the sake of its success and the fortune he could gather.

Now ... he spoke of a successful enterprise for the sake of the care of several hundred broken families of vanished employees.

Now I ask you a question: Is this not a life renewed by the present Source of Life and Love? This particular man was Jewish. Within his faith tradition I can imagine him saying with Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives!"

Add some theological truth. Bill Easum is a church consultant. He offers five maxims regarding God's grace and local congregations. Though writing specifically to Christian congregations, these maxims are, I believe, as true for those of every faith.

The Spirit of The Eternal One of Love and Life comes to us on the way to someone else.

Congregations should focus outward instead of inward.

Congregations exist for those who are not yet a part of them ... so does God's grace.

Life is meant to be given away and not kept.

God does not honor congregations that seek merely to gather wealth and to survive for themselves.

Now, add a bit of humor. A scripture verse is posted on the door of the infant changing room in a Longwood, Florida, church. It reads: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

Is not life a process of being changed? Of moving from pity and self-worry to caring for and empowering those who have lost much? Of receiving the grace which the eternal offers every moment so as to gladly, gratefully give it to others for their wellbeing? [cont'd p.2]



[cont'd from p.1]

Is this not at the heart of Judaic, Islamic, Buddhist, Sikh, Native American, Christian and Hindu spirituality and life?

May we give ourselves together to the essential healing and wholeness in our own and in each other's faiths. And in doing so, may our joy become contagious.

Shalom, Salaam, Santi, the peace that passes understanding,

Bob Long

IFC Seeking Congregational Representatives

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 insight into interfaith engagement, communicate with their congregations the interfaith experience of today and share your congregation's interfaith/multi-faith values and experiences with the greater Interfaith Community. For further information, call Pastor Bob Long, President of Interfaith, 372-1083.

What resources have helped you mature in ecumenical and interfaith trust?

One book that has informed me is Reuel Howe's timeless book, "***The Miracle of Dialogue***." Written in 1962, Howe sets the tone on the first page: "Dialogue is to love, what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born. But dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring relationship into being, and it can bring into being once again a relationship that has died." [pg.3]. Howe continues: "The act of loving another gives life to the lover as well as the one loved, and to speak the word of love is to be loved as well as to love." [pg6] And, "Love is born out of ...dialogue in which there is both the intimacy of what these two people share in common and the distance of the unplumbed mystery of each ... In dialogical love there is enjoyment of love, but since it is not exploitive, the enjoyment increases rather than diminishes the power of love." [pg.7]. The remainder of the book clarifies for everyday practice this magnificent process of engagement.

What resources would you recommend to one another to release increasingly mature ecumenical and interfaith affirmation, care, acceptance, and respect? If you share them with us, we will share them with all.

The Wisdom of Faith

The Wisdom of Faith is a four-week study being offered at First United Methodist Church, 603 State Street, Schenectady. This study is based on the statement "All religions, at their core, are the same." This statement was authored by the preeminent professor of comparative religion, Huston Smith. Bill Moyers joins Prof. Smith in "thoughtful and absorbing" 5-part conversations called "The Wisdom of Faith." The conversations between Moyers and Smith "provide thorough insights into the world's largest religions—Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. This study is being led by C. Joseph Waring, Ph.D. and Rev. Robert Long. All are welcome.

Share your news with Interfaith Community...

CONGRATULATIONS...

to The Rev. James Kane for his three decades of investment in ecumenical and interfaith engagement as the Director of the Albany Diocese [Roman Catholic Church] Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Father Kane has been a pioneer in ecumenical/interfaith engagement. Currently he is pastor of the St. Patrick's parish in Ravena.

to Judy Brown, whose granddaughter was recently married.

To Helga Schroeter whose daughter was recently married.

CONDOLENCES...

to Rev. Adrian and Blanche Gray on the death of their daughter, Jolie, this summer.

Welcome to Rev. Marvin Batcher appointed to both Carman and Stanford United Methodist Churches as of July 1.

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 over the summer

Individual membership renewals: Fran Madison, Jules Scheinzeit, Rev. Viki Brooks, Roberta & Don Steiner, Sandy & Dick Goble,

Institutional membership renewals: First Reformed Church– Schenectady, Faith United Methodist Church, Church Women United, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church,

No Sweat Garage Sale: Beverly Eisenstadt, Rev. James Kane, Gerry & Eleanor Pierce, Ann Cramer, Audrey Hughes, Sandy & Dick Goble, Norma Hudson, Eleanor Wright, Phyllis Boyd, Rev. Adrian & Blanche Gray, Jessica Many, Rev. Viki Brooks, Sondra Christian, Miranda Rand, Mr. & Mrs. John Pierce, Sr., Eileen Sowa, Joan Stanovich, Paulyn Cox

In memory of Dorothea Brown: Fran Madison and Helga Schroeter

Thank you for your support!

Interfaith Dues Make Possible What Interfaith Offers. The amount that each of you contributes helps make engagement and gathering possible. The Interfaith Council decided earlier in the year to move the month when dues are to be offered to January for everyone [instead of the month when you first became a member]. That means that dues for 2012 are due as soon as possible for those who have not paid them this year. Then dues for 2013 will be due in January of the year. The process makes it easier to remember when due are sought. Please mark your calendar appropriately.

Healing Hearts Ministry

The Rev. Dr. Alan Rhodes, currently serving as pastor of the Esperance-Sloansville United Methodist Church, is active in the Healing Hearts Ministry Domestic Violence Program. He is asking clergy and lay religious leaders to sign on to the statement "Faith Communities Stand Against Domestic Violence" before October, 2012, which is Domestic Violence Alleviation Month. For more information, contact Pastor Alan at alanrhodes25@gmail.com.

Interfaith Calendar for September 2012

- 1 Ecclesiastical Year begins -- **Orthodox Christian** -- The way a Christian Church arranges a calendar of time and sets dates of special importance.
- 8 Nativity of Mary – **Christian** -- Celebration of birth of the Virgin Mary.
- 14 Elevation of the Life Giving Cross - Holy Cross Day – **Christian** -- A day of recognition for the Cross on which Jesus was crucified as a central symbol of the Christian religion.
- 17-18 Rosh HaShanah -- **Judaism** -- Jewish New Year. A time of introspection, abstinence, prayer and penitence. The story of Abraham is read, the ram's horn is sounded, and special foods are prepared and shared.
- 19 Ganesh Chaturthi -- **Hindu** -- A festival honoring the god of prosperity, prudence and success. Images of Ganesha are worshipped.
- 20-29 Paryushana Parva -- **Jain** -- 8 day festival signifying human emergence into a new world of spiritual and moral refinement. Marked by recitations from Jain sacred writing and family exchange of cards and letters. Celebration of the natural qualities of the soul. The 8th day (Samvatsari) is most important and is focused on forgiveness.
- 22 Equinox -- The time when the sun is directly above a point on the equator. The equinox will be either Vernal or Autumnal depending on the hemisphere.
- Mabon - **Wicca/Pagan** northern hemisphere -- Observance of the autumnal equinox when day and night are of equal length. A harvest festival time.
- Ostata -- **Wicca/ Pagan** southern hemisphere -- Wicca welcoming of spring and the goddess-as- maiden.
- 26 Yom Kippur -- **Judaism** -- Jewish Day of Atonement. This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting and ceremonial repentance.
- 28 Mesket -- **Ethiopian Orthodox Christian** -- Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Christian commemoration of the discovery of the True Cross by Queen Eleni (St. Helenea) in the 4th century c.e.
- 29 Michael and All Angels – **Christian** -- **TA day to praise to God for the heavenly angels** who serve God and his saints. Today, we (i.e. Christians) also ask God to continue to allow His heavenly angels to help and defend us here on earth.

Upcoming events of interest

Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area September 13, 7-9 pm at the Turkish Cultural Center, 291 Broadway (Route 32) Menands Mr. Ali Evren Kupeili will begin the evening with a story about the importance of taking care of parents; helping and respecting seniors in society, values that are an essential part of the fabric of Turkish culture. The floor will then be open to other storytellers.

International Peace Maker Visiting Capital Region Linda Macktaby, a Lebanese peacemaker, will be speaking at various events around the Capital Region the week of September 21-28: 9/21-9/22 Peace event at Presbyterian New England Congregational Church, 24 Circular Drive, Saratoga 9/23- Sunday Worship (10:30am) at Schoharie Presbyterian Church, 314 Main Street, Schoharie 9/24 - Monday Morning Coffee at the Presbytery Office, 1915 Fifth Avenue, Troy 9/27 - Middle Eastern Dinner & Presentation at Delmar Presbyterian Church, 585 Delaware Ave., Delmar Linda Macktaby will speak about the Christian presence in the Middle East and the role of youth in peace-building and conflict resolution.

Human Rights Celebration "Embracing Our Oneness" on Saturday, September 29, 9:30am at Stanford United Methodist Church, 1569 State Street, Schenectady. Offering will be received for Nickels for Nationals. Visit www.churchwomen.org for more info.



IFC OF SCHENECTADY

811 N. Brandywine Ave
Schenectady, NY 12308

Phone: 518-370-2150

E-mail:
schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com

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

Mailed September 10



Coordinating Council Meetings

Friday, September 14, 2012
Friday, October 12, 2012
Friday, November 9, 2012
Friday, December 14, 2012
Friday, January 11, 2013

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!