



Interfaith Community of
Schenectady, Inc.

Spring 2021

Vol. 49 No. 3

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating 50 Years of Interfaith Partnerships in 2021 ~ Est. 1971 ~

We're Virtual

*Join us Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm
via Zoom*

Miki Conn

*Local artist, storyteller and poet discusses her new book
Integrating Delmar*

*To join us, simply send your email address to schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com
by noon, April 20th .*

The Zoom link will be emailed to you the day of the program.

These programs are being offered free of charge.

*If you'd like to support IFC with a financial gift so we may continue offering these
programs, please send your tax deductible donation to IFC, c/o Edith Kliman, 2263
Sweetbrier Rd, Niskayuna, NY 12309.*

From the President:

As Charles Dickens famously wrote in the opening lines of his novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, ...it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

Here at the Interfaith Community of Schenectady, our Coordinating Council meetings run the range of those emotions – from delight (the season of light) in the wide range of excellent speakers that we have managed to attract, to despair (the season of darkness) at our dwindling treasury.

We have spent the fall and winter months debating our future – are we relevant? (yes), are we able to recruit new leadership and attract a more diverse following? (not at this moment); shall we look for a compatible organization with which to align ourselves? (yes), if we can find one that is already has 501c3 status and has compatible goals and visions.

It's not easy, there are no ready-made solutions. We will keep putting one foot in front of the other (proverbially speaking), continue debating, brain-storming, seeking answers... and looking for the Holy One to guide us in the way of wisdom. We cherish your support.

We have two more wonderful programs to engage your heart and mind to end our program year:

Wednesday, April 21, 7:00pm: Miki Conn: local artist, storyteller and poet discussing her new book, *Integrating Delmar*, co-authored with her mother, about being the first Black family to purchase a house in Delmar.

Wednesday, May 19, 7:00pm: Panel Discussion: “Faith and Conflict in Society”; a Druid, a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew will debate the question: How can our current society be influenced by our faiths toward constructive dialog? Rev. Joselle Gagliano, our vice-president, will act as moderator.

All our programs are on Zoom – all you need is the free software download from Zoom, a computer, laptop, tablet, or internet-enabled phone. Email schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com by 6pm the day before the event to receive the zoom link the day of the program.

I remain *cautiously* hopeful that our current “season of darkness” will be followed by fresh insight, new vision, a new sense of confidence in the “season of light” emerging as fresh and bright as a spring bulb after its long winter gestation.

Wishing you all a blessed spring and summer; I conclude with this excerpt from Gandhi's Prayer for Peace:

My wisdom flows from the Highest Source.

I salute that Source in you.

Let us work together for unity and love.

Assalamu Alaikum, (peace be on you), Shalom, Shanti, Namaste...

Miranda Rand, President

Religious Festivals of the Abrahamic Traditions:

Passover: (submitted by Edith Kliman) (Begins March 27 at sundown)

Passover – Pesach in Hebrew, is an eight (or seven) day festival, beginning this year at sundown on March 27 and ending at sundown on April 4. On the Jewish calendar, the dates are from 15 Nisan (a full moon) to 22 Nisan. Agriculturally, this corresponds to the spring wheat harvest. This biblically ordained festival commemorates the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, where they had been slaves. The first night is celebrated in the home with a ceremonial meal, called a seder (order) during which those in attendance read a special book, called a Haggadah which tells of the exodus, but also includes psalms, songs, blessings for ceremonial foods, a grace after the meal, and may contain contemporary readings having to do with freedom. For the entire festival, any leavened products are prohibited. Matzah, made only of flour and water, which must be completely baked within 18 minutes, is a requirement of the seder. For many Jewish families, the seder is the most important family event. In normal times, one finds all generations around the seder table, along with friends. In this time of COVID, as some sit at a seder table alone, connected only via Zoom, we wait for next year when we can again be with family and friends.

Easter: (submitted by Miranda Rand) (Considered a “Movable Feast” because of the rotation of the moon’s cycles on which the date is set, Easter is celebrated this year on April 8)

In the first century a Jewish man named Jesus (in Aramaic, Yeshuah), was executed by Rome. The Christian community considers him their resurrected Savior, the incarnation of God.

Easter is observed as an annual festival in commemoration of Jesus’ resurrection, celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon after the vernal equinox as calculated according to tables based in Western churches on the Gregorian calendar and in Orthodox churches on the Julian calendar.

Traditionally, Easter is observed by processions, themed worship, choral and communal singing, communal meals and the celebration of Holy Communion, emblematic of Christ’s last meal with his disciples.

The liturgical season of Easter is preceded by 40 days of meditative prayer and reflection – (the liturgical season of Lent), and followed by forty days of stories about Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances, culminating in the Feast of Pentecost which marks Jesus’ ascension to heaven and the gift of speaking in tongues assigned to his disciples.

Ramadan: (submitted by Humera Khan) (Begins April 12 at sundown)

Ramadan is a month of mandatory fasting for over one billion Muslims around the world. Ramadan is observed in the ninth month of the Lunar calendar, beginning each year eleven days earlier on the Gregorian calendar and thus rotating through all the seasons over a thirty-three-year cycle. Fasting is not just about abstaining from the intake of food from sun-up to sun-down, it is also about abstaining from all activities that are disliked by God, including lying, backbiting, being angry or getting involved in a fight. Good deeds, such as helping the poor and feeding the hungry are strongly encouraged. This is a time when a Muslim tries to reconnect with God in the hopes that he/she would be a good Muslim for the next eleven months. Muslims fast so that they feel the hunger from lack of food and remember to be charitable to other hungry human beings.

Those individuals excused from fasting, which includes the elderly, nursing mothers, travelers, and those with health problems are required to feed one poor person for each fasting day missed or fast in some other month as their health or circumstances allows.

The end of Ramadan is called Eid ul Fitr, which is a day of festivity. Families gather with friends and neighbors to share a meal and celebrate. It is one of the two major religious holidays of the Muslim calendar.

THE INTERFAITH COMMUNITY OF SCHENECTADY, INC. ~ ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION FORM

Please complete this form, choose a contribution level and mail it with your check to our treasurer:

Edith Kliman, 2263 Sweetbrier Road, Schenectady, NY 12309

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

INTERFAITH OFFICERS FOR 2021

Miranda Rand, President mirandarand411@gmail.com/518-393-5047

Rev. Joselle Gagliano, Vice-President revgagliano@gmail.com 518-371-0634

Karen Bond, Secretary kbond337@yahoo.com

Humera Khan, Assisting Secretary..... humerak19@gmail.com

Edith Kliman, Treasurer 518-346-0025

COORDINATING COUNCIL: Erica Berger, Karen Bond, Scott Ebeling, Rev. Joselle Gagliano, Audrey Hughes, Barby Harris, Humera Khan, Edith Kliman, Rev. Bob Long, Gerry Pierce, Miranda Rand

***PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERFAITH COMMUNITY OF SCHENECTADY, INC.
IS OPEN TO ALL RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS OF ALL FAITHS***

I (We) wish to contribute: (please mark the level at which you wish to make your contribution)

LIFE: \$600 payable in one payment of \$600, or six annual installments of \$100.00 each

PATRON: \$100 annually (individual or household)

SUSTAINING: \$60 annually (individual) \$70 annually (household)

CONTRIBUTING: \$35 annually (individual) \$45 annually (household)

SUPPORTING: \$25 annually (individual)\$35 annually (household)

I AM *CURRENTLY EMPLOYED* BY GE and my check is eligible for the GE Foundation Matching Funds program. My check has been reported.*

**GE Foundation Matching Funds program will no longer match contributions to nonprofit organizations made by retired employees.*

THANK YOU

Your contribution helps to offset our overhead which consists of telephone service, secretary's salary and associated expenses, Chaplaincy program, and costs associated with presenting programs.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ DATE: _____

EMAIL: _____

\$ OUR FINANCES**There's an old saying: "money doesn't grow on trees..."**

Here at the Interfaith Community of Schenectady we wish it did, we'd be out there picking it and putting it in our piggy bank!

Since such an option is not available to us, we urge you to consider making an annual contribution – just print the Annual Contribution Form found elsewhere in this newsletter, write your check and put it in the mail to our treasurer.

Our treasury is low. Your contribution is appreciated.

We are grateful to the following for their 2021 contribution:

Faith United Methodist Church

Erica and Len Berger

Karen Bond

Scott Ebeling

Joselle Gagliano and Michael Perman

Barby and Stan Harris

Audrey Hughes

Edith Kliman

Jessica Many

Gerry and Eleanor Pierce

Miranda Rand

We have recently established a PayPal account – we hope to have a PayPal Button installed on our website soon – this will make it much easier for people to donate in honor/memory of a loved one, make their annual contribution, and for a person to establish a Facebook fundraiser for their birthday or any other stated reason. Look for an email flash in your inbox soon.

SOMETHING TO SHARE: (from Vice-President, Rev. Joselle Gagliano)

God in the aspect of the Divine Mother is represented in Hindu art as a four-armed woman. One hand is upraised, signifying universal blessing; in the other three hands she holds prayer beads, representing devotion; pages of scripture, symbolizing learning and wisdom; and an artistic jar, representing wealth.

(Paramahansa Yogananda)

Each of Us Has A Name

a Poem by Zelda (adapted by Marcia Falk)

Each of us has a name
given by the Source of Life
and given by our parents

Each of us has a name
given by our stature and our smile
and given by what we wear

Each of us has a name
given by the mountains
and given by our walls

Each of us has a name
given by the stars
and given by our neighbors.

Each of us has a name
given by our sins
and given by our longings.

Each of us has a name
given by our enemies
and given by our love.

Each of us has a name
given by our celebrations
and given by our work.

Each of us has a name
given by the seasons
and given by our blindness.

Each of us has a name
given by the sea
and given by death.

(Submitted by Rabbi Spitzer of Congregation Agudat Achim in response to my request that he share something to honor Holocaust Remembrance Day – April 8).



SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2021 AT 1 PM EDT – 4 PM EDT

Interfaith Earth Day Mitzvah:

Schenectady Clergy Against Hate, Schenectady Community Ministries and Nemeton of the Ways

Sunday, April 25, 2021 at Vale Cemetery: 1 PM EDT – 4 PM EDT

Join Schenectady Clergy Against Hate, Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM) and Nemeton of the Ways for an afternoon of interfaith service both honoring our ancestors and caring for creation by helping clean up the Historic Vale Cemetery! Building off the long tradition of an event organized by Nemeton of the Ways, faith communities from across greater Schenectady will work together to build unity, learn more about one another and give back to their community. The event will begin with a brief blessing at 1:00pm. Please come prepared with work gloves, yard tools, face masks and be willing to practice good social distancing.

Earth Day, 2021, is April 22

A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song. (ancient Chinese proverb). Interfaith Community of Schenectady commends SiCM, Schenectady Clergy against Hate, and Nemeton of the Ways for being mindful of humankind's need to take care of Earth, our common home. I hope the birds are singing on April 25th and that you are encouraged to be an ecological partner with SiCM, SCAH, and Nemeton of the Ways.

KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP:

Here's what's new and exciting at IFC and in the Schenectady Community:

Joselle Gagliano, (our vice-president) and I, your president, have been attending the SiCM Ad Hoc Exploratory Committee which is investigating ways in which SiCM may become more inclusive of faiths traditions besides the Mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches which currently makes up the majority of their membership. SiCM has developed a tri-fold brochure as a form of invitation and mailed it to an extensive list of faith communities in Schenectady and Saratoga County with a cover letter. Members of the Ad Hoc committee are making phone calls to follow up.

SiCM has recently hired a new Executive Director, the Reverend Doctor Amaury Tañón-Santos, who has an extensive background in inner-city ministry and a deep interest in helping SiCM become more broadly involved in interfaith activities.

Our Coordinating Council has begun to invite local clergy persons/faith leaders to the early part of our meetings to introduce themselves and their ministry and to learn more about the Interfaith Community of Schenectady. Here's our list of invitees so far:

January: Rev. Tony Green, Chaplain, Ellis Hospital and its affiliates. (Tony also serves on the SiCM Ad Hoc Committee).

March: Pastor Michelle Harris of Duryee Memorial AME Zion Church brought news of her ministry, (she has been the pastor at Duryee a little over a year), and we, in turn, made her aware of a long-standing friendship between IFC and Duryee in the person of James Stamper, a member of her congregation (now deceased), who was such a passionate advocate for IFC that we named an award in honor of him.

April: Pastor Natalie Bowerman of Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church.

May: Rabbi Rafi Spitzer of Congregation Agudat Achim.

June or July: The Rev. Dr. Amaury Tañón-Santos of SiCM.

We Have A New Secretary! (Barbara Paul resigned in February).

Sarah Bachorik comes to us with a long history in non-profit administrative work. In addition to working very part-time for us, she also works a few hours a week at Messiah Lutheran Church in Rotterdam and runs a day-care program out of her home.

We have a new member on our Coordinating Council:

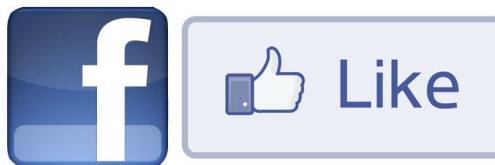
Barby Harris, who with her husband, Stan, has been a long-time supporter of IFC, has joined the Coordinating Council. At one time, Barby was our secretary.

Synagogue donates Torah to Military:

On March 22, The Daily Gazette featured a touching story on the front page of its local section. U.S. Army Chaplain Major Moshe Lans was pictured embracing a Torah scroll handed to him by Dr. James Strosberg, past president of Congregation Beth Israel, after a ceremony at the synagogue in which the scroll was transferred to the U.S. Army under the custodianship of Rabbi Lans. A donation from The Aleph Institute of Florida -- a non-profit Jewish organization dedicated to furthering the wellbeing of people isolated from their communities, (which includes members of the Armed Forces), made the transfer possible. Rabbi Lans, who is stationed at Fort Drum, said they did not have a Torah scroll there. He expressed profound gratitude for the gift. The Torah scroll has letters on it that are over 100 years old. As with all Torah scrolls, is entirely handmade. It is likely that it took more than a year to write. The scroll will travel with Rabbi Lans from base to base, wherever he is deployed, even overseas.

IFC OF SCHENECTADY

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Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com

Coordinating Council Meetings

Council Meetings Visioning and planning are accomplished at the monthly Council Meetings.

Council Meetings are generally held the second Thursday of the month by Zoom meeting and begin at 9:30 am.

Upcoming dates:

April 8 May 13

Thank You: We are grateful for the financial contribution received from **Faith United Methodist Church**. The church provides us free meeting space and storage, a mailing address, and a small office.