



Ministering Together

“News, Comments, and Events of concern to the Religious Community”

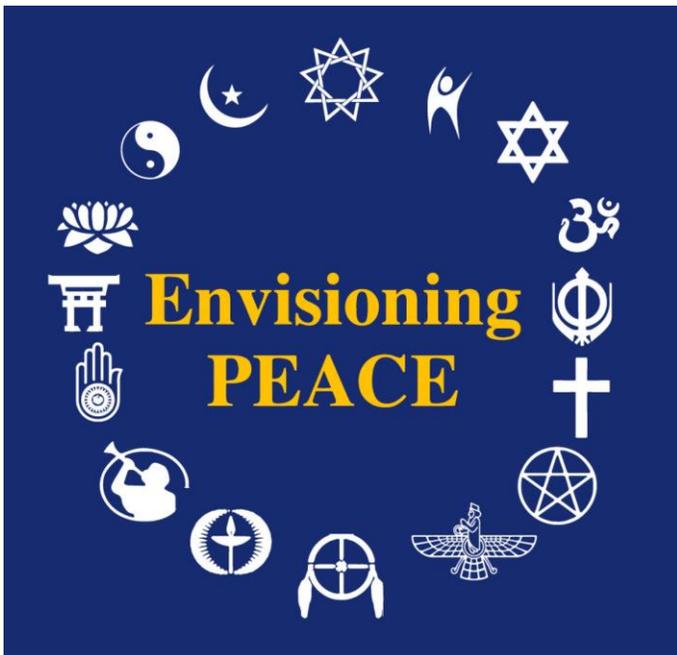
The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

Late Summer Edition 2016

From the Executive Director, Rev. Will McGarvey

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that we have a new logo and motto for the Interfaith Council of CCC. You may have seen them on our new t-shirts or on some of the mailings that have gone out recently. Here is a larger version of the logo that is easier to see all of the different faith groups represented.



Our new motto is *“Envisioning a World of Interfaith Peace”*, so we included the words Envisioning Peace within the logo itself to help share what we view as our purpose. Holding this hope, along with the Interfaith dialogues, programs, service and interactions we create together helps us work toward of Interfaith Peace – but first we need to together cast our vision for that peace.

Annual Meeting:

Our Annual Meeting has been set for Sunday, November 6th at 6:00 pm in the Social Hall at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church (1543 Sunnyvale Ave. – down the hill from our office).

Save the date and consider what vegetarian/kosher dish you would like to share for the potluck dinner from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. Afterwards, we will have reports from all of our committees and Rev. Dr. Charles Tinsley.



We will also share our Making a Difference Awards for the year. If you would like to nominate someone, please send the name, contact information and a paragraph describing their service to the community to Rev. Will at eye4cee@gmail.com by October 15th for them to be considered.

We will elect a new class to our Elected Council at the event. Please send any self nominations or nominations of others to our President, Terry Clark at terence.clark08@gmail.com.

Over the last few months we have been casting this vision in a culture that has seen religiously motivated hate crimes increase against the Muslim American community since Paris and San Bernadino with programs we have called “Love Your Muslim Neighbors.” These programs have been in Christian and Unitarian Universalist congregations across the East Bay, introducing attendees to real, live, diverse Muslims from across the spectrum who were able to share what they believe and what life is like for them in this peculiar era of American life.

On May 21st we had a special event for World Diversity Day at the Guru Ravidass Sikh Temple in Pittsburg, with a great tour of their renovated temple. We heard from members there about their faith tradition and then talked about our different cultures and religions, sharing about our differences and similarities.



We’ve also been offering some “Lunch and Learn” events on the road at our congregations. We now do these as brown bag lunches at different host congregations who will have an opportunity to give a tour of their facilities and share about their faith tradition. We a great turnout at Sufism Reoriented and the Interfaith Peace Project in Antioch. Our next meetings will be at noon on October 7th at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church (1543 Sunnyvale Ave.) and November 4th at the Church of the Latter Day Saints Institute of Religion (300 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill). If you would like to host such a gathering in the future, please let me know.



Recently, we hosted a Peace Vigil on Sunday, September 11th to kick off the Season of Peace between then and the International Day of Peace on September 21st. To get ready for that day, we hosted a weekend retreat at San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville with speakers on Non-Violent Communication, letting peace begin with us, and a special listening session with two of the refugees that reside at the Retreat Center. It was a powerful experience of sharing, music and rest. Sunday afternoon, Grace Presbyterian Church hosted a benefit concert on our behalf with Jack Williams singing the songs and telling the stories of Neil Diamond.

Our Social Justice Alliance will host another Dr. King Celebration, this time at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church with Father Kwame from the Graduate Theological Union preaching. Fr. Kwame is from Ghana and regularly teaches on the Civil Rights Movement. We will have the same musicians joining us in the new, larger space, and thank St. Paul’s Episcopal for their many years of hosting. See the SOJA page for more information.

In these days when many forces are attempting to divide us – and our nation – our common work is more powerful than ever, as long as we still have the wherewithal to stand up for a world where everyone belongs. Let us continue to lift up those reconciling impulses that allow us to reclaim our own humanity as we protect the humanity of others.

“Envisioning a World of Interfaith Peace”

Shalom, Peace, Salaam, Om Shanti, Solh, Amani, Paz, 평화, Ping On...

Rev. Will McGarvey

Religious and Cultural Observances

October

- 1-10 Navaratri ** - Hindu
- 2 Muharram - New Year * - Islam
- 3-4 Rosh Hashanah * - Jewish
- 4
- St Francis Day - Catholic Christian
 - Blessing of the Animals - Christian
- 10 Thanksgiving - Canada - Interfaith
- 11 Dasara ** - Hindu
- 12
- Ashura * - Islam
 - Yom Kippur * - Jewish
- 17-23 Sukkot * - Jewish
- 18 St. Luke, Apostle & Evangelist - Christian
- 20
- Birth of the Báb * - Baha'i
 - Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth - Sikh
- 24 Shemini Atzeret * - Jewish
- 25 Simchat Torah * - Jewish
- 30 Diwali - Deepavali ** - Hindu - Sikh - Jain
- 31
- All Hallows Eve - Christian
 - Reformation Day ** - Protestant Christian
 - New Year ** - Jain

November

- 1
- All Saints Day - Christian
 - Samhain - Beltane * Wicca/Pagan N/S Hemispheres
 - Birth of the Bab - Bahi
- 2
- All Souls Day - Catholic Christian
 - Birth of Baha'u'llah * - Baha'i
- 14 Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib - Sikh
- 15 Nativity Fast begins - ends Dec. 24 – O. Christian
- 20 Christ the King - Christian
- 24
- Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahdur - Sikh
 - Thanksgiving - Interfaith USA
- 25 Day of the Covenant * - Baha'i
- 27
- Advent begins through Dec. 24 - Christian

- Christ the King - Christian
- 27 Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha * - Baha'i
- 30 St. Andrew's Day – Christian

December

- 6 Saint Nicholas Day - Christian
- 8
- Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) ** - Buddhism
 - Immaculate Conception of Mary - Catholic
- 12
- Feast day - Our Lady of Guadalupe – Catholic
 - Mawlid an Nabe * - Islam
- 16-25 Posadas Navidenas - Hispanic Christian
- 14 Mawlid an Nabi * - Islam
- 21 Solstice
- Yule * - Wicca/Pagan northern hemisphere
 - Litha * - Wicca/Pagan southern hemisphere
 - Yule - Christian
- 24 Christmas Eve - Christian
- 25
- Christmas * - Christian
 - Feast of the Nativity ** - Orthodox Christian
- 25-Jan 1 Hanukkah * - Jewish
- 26
- Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) ** - Zoroastrian
 - St Stephen's Day - Christian
- 28 Holy Innocents - Christian
- 30 Holy Family - Catholic Christian
- 31 Watch Night - Christian

January

- 1
- Mary, Mother of God - Catholic Christian
 - Feast Day of St Basil - Orthodox Christian
 - Gantan-sai (New Years) - Shinto
 - Holy Name of Jesus - Orthodox Christian
- 5
- Twelfth Night - Christian
 - Guru Gobindh Singh birthday - Sikh
- 6
- Epiphany - Christian
 - Feast of the Epiphany (Theophany) - Orthodox Christian
 - Dia de los Reyes (Three Kings Day) - Christian
 - Nativity of Christ - Armenian Orthodox Christian

Chaplain's Corner



Rev. Dr. Charles Tinsley
Juvenile Detention Facilities Chaplain



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Support, PMA

August 2, 2016

Sheriff Robert T. Doyle
1600 Los Gamos Drive, # 200
San Rafael, California 94903

Dear Sheriff Doyle:

I have been informed by the Reverend Dr. Charles Tinsley, Juvenile Detention System Chaplain of Contra Costa County, that Ryan Hill, a young man incarcerated in your jail, has received death threats from Marin County sheriffs' deputies.

Dr. Tinsley has worked with Ryan for the past ten years and realizes that Ryan is not above reproach for his past criminal behavior. However, Dr. Tinsley feels that Ryan's life and personhood should never be intentionally impugned, threatened or attacked by officers of the criminal justice system.

I share Dr. Tinsley's concern and as the President of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus, an organization of the 1.6 million member Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), ask that you investigate this matter. If you find that Ryan's complaint is legitimate and authentic, I ask that you use the full authority of your office and position to ensure that the threats to Ryan's life cease and those responsible for these abhorrent actions are dealt with appropriately.

I look forward to your response to my letter by September 1, 2016.

Sincerely,
David L. Wallace

David L. Wallace, Sr., D.Min.
President, National Black Presbyterian Caucus

Cc:
The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II
Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
The Reverend Dr. Tony DeLaRosa
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Ruling Elder Jane F. Odell
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Reverend Robert E. Conover, Ph.D.
Mission Presbyterian/Stated Clerk, Redwoods Presbytery
The Reverend Maxine E. Jenkins
Vice President, NBPC
The Reverend Dr. Charles D. Tinsley, IV
Chaplain, Juvenile Detention Center

Your Words – Windows on each other's lives of faith

❖ Dr. Amer Araim

*President of the Islamic Community Outreach of California,
member of the Islamic center of Walnut Creek*

On Thursday, September 15, 2106 I attended a Seminar on Advancing the Culture of Philanthropy organized by the John Muir Foundation, under the title 'Shrouds Have No Pockets.' I told my friend the Reverend Michael Gillen, the Director of Pastoral Care Services (PCS) in John Muir Hospital that a similar saying my mother and grandmother used to tell me when I was child: 'No one will take his money to his grave.'

I am thankful to the Reverend Gillen, and Mr. Michael Crvarich of the John Muir Health Foundation for the invitation. I participated in the discussions by affirming the Islamic tradition of the importance of the culture of giving and sharing with the members of the community particularly the poor and the needy. I am pleased with a message from Mr. Crvarich thanking me for participating in the seminar and presenting Islamic tradition on giving and sharing.

I also appreciate the fact that since I moved to Walnut Creek fifteen years ago, I have established a very good working relationship with PCS. It began with the Reverend Dwane Michael the then Director of PCS, and has continued with the Reverend Gillen and his staff.

Whenever there is a Muslim patient in need of help in the hospital, PCS contacts me and asks me to visit that person, and to help him and his family. It is also part of faith tradition to help patients and to visit them.

❖ Rev. Ron Dunn

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

Many of us have been enjoying the exceptional year that the Golden State Warriors are having. After many years of frustration and disappointment, it's actually fun to be a Warriors fan! And it's not just about the record number of wins that they have been able to accumulate—it's about the way in which they have been able to accumulate them. If you've watched the Warriors play this season, you cannot help but notice that they play with a certain selfless style that invites the contribution of each player on the floor. While they have their "superstars" in Steph Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green, they play a brand of basketball that emphasizes the importance of the team over the individual. They are clearly motivated to play the game with a different set of ground rules than those employed by many other teams.

I am intrigued by the fact that Coach Steve Kerr has developed a set of core values that are used to give shape to the team's fundamental approach to the game. Those values, as you may be aware, are:

- JOY
- MINDFULNESS
- COMPASSION

• COMPETITION

It is interesting, isn't it, that "Joy" would be first on the list? And that "mindfulness" and "compassion" would follow? One might have guessed that "competition" or "winning" would have been first. What these values suggest, of course, is that there more—much more—to playing the game of basketball than focusing primarily upon winning. The irony is that if one really does focus on the concepts of joy, mindfulness and compassion, winning is much more likely to be the result. For these are the values—the core values—that pour the foundation for the experience of truly being a team and, of course, playing like a team.

I have been thinking about these core values of the Warriors as we envision the kind of recreational ministry that we will develop through the ARC (Athletic Recreation Center) now under construction. A number of our people are presently involved in a very important conversation that will give shape and direction to the ministry that we offer once the doors of our new gym are open.

In this discussion, we recognize that we will need to balance the practical needs of making sure that our program is financially solvent with the philosophical needs of offering the kind of ministry that witnesses to the deeper values of our faith and how it calls us to live. In a culture that is often obsessed with winning at all costs (literally and figuratively), what message and approach will we choose to offer that may, in fact, counter the culture? What are the "core values" that we will seek to instill within the children, youth and adults who take part in the programing that we will offer?

These are not easy questions to answer, but we are now in the process of seeking to provide those answers to underscore and reinforce our vision of the way this new recreational center will be used to connect in meaningful ways with the community that surrounds us. You may recall that, early in the process of discussing our primary reason for building this new building, it was determined that this building would be a primary tool for reaching out to and connecting with our community. While we understood that there would certainly be a benefit for our own members and friends, it was felt that the greater focus ought to be placed upon forging a meaningful relationship with those who are not a part of our immediate church community.

With this understanding in mind, we are now taking the steps to create that link and develop that relationship. While there are challenges, to be sure, I am pleased to witness the work of so many who are committed to creating the kind of programing that will enable this wonderful new building to become a place where people can not only train and improve their athletic skills, but also a place where they can reflect upon and refine the core values that grow out of the

Your Words – Continued

experience of sport. When this takes place, it is then that the ministry we offer will truly be a "re-creational" one in which body, mind and spirit are "re-created" and made new.

It is, I believe, a wonderful vision to pursue and, by the grace of God at work in quite a number of people, it is now taking shape.

❖ Rev. John Sutton

St. Anselm's Church, Lafayette

As is the case so many times when I write this article, this morning I was looking for inspiration. I thought of the recent celebration of Pentecost: maybe I should write about that. For some reason, that had nothing to do with that thought, a feeling of peace came over me, and it was palpable. It wasn't anything like what happened on the day of Pentecost. It was very private, and I experienced it alone.

My 'holy' experiences are often like that: for some reason something shifts and I am touched by a feeling that I can't explain. I think a very big part of building a spiritual life is building the intervals into one's daily life where those experiences can get in. The busier we are, the less room there is for those messages to get in. And even if we slow down what we are 'doing' a busy mind can bar the door just as effectively.

THEN, a song came on that I absolutely love- "So Quiet In Here" by Van Morrison. It speaks to this dynamic with great beauty and depth:

Big ships out in the night
And we're floating across the waves
Sailing for some other shore
Where we can be what we wanna be
Oh this must be what paradise is like
This must be what paradise is like
Baby it's so quiet in here, so peaceful in here
So quiet in here, so peaceful in here
So quiet in here, so peaceful in here
So quiet in here, you can hear, it's so quiet.

I imagine you might be smiling, because you have known that quiet and that peace.

As we head into summer, many of us will have the opportunity in vacations to get out of our daily routines. In new environments it is often easy to experience the holy as we are more open.

But the great promise of the Holy Spirit is that it is reaching out to us constantly, and wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we can experience the quiet and peace that Van Morrison sings about.

❖ Laura Huntly, Grade 7

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Paths of Transformation

After my Winter Nights experience I truly believe God lives everywhere. When I first got there not much was going on. I was thinking "Oh no this is going to be boring." Quickly after though I thought twice. A little kid wanted to play. We had races, and whatever else boys do for fun. He was unfazed by the environment he was living in, like any other 5 year old you would meet. Except he was living so much differently. He was living on people's kindness.

A similar story at lunch with a kid named Gabe. Full of energy and exuberance. It's shocking to see what you'd think to be depressed bored kids in a homeless shelter to be full of life. Partly probably because they don't fully understand what's happening and why they are there, but also because God stirs everywhere. And God doesn't care rich or poor, you are simply a child of God that is loved.

❖ Rabbi Roberto Graetz

Temple Isaiah, Lafayette

I can barely believe that May 2016 has arrived. It seems that the days rushed by as the date for my retirement approached. I gave the congregation ample notice of my intentions, and you responded by finding ways to lovingly honor my tenure and creating a smooth transition for the synagogue. You organized a visioning task force to imagine future directions and plan for them. You mindfully embraced the task of selecting a new assistant rabbi while the board – conscious of its fiduciary responsibilities – plowed through the finances of the possible in order to keep the congregation healthy. From that vantage point it seems to have been ample time.

For me the experience was somewhat different. As I tried to juggle the day-to-day work while beginning to plan for the next chapter, I realized that time – which our tradition values more highly than space and place – was beginning to work against me. I had to accept that I would not accomplish all that I had hoped before the end of this year. This was a problem until I understood that there would be time after retirement to go through the paper trail of my rabbinic life. The anxiety of an impending deadline gave way to the wisdom of my having decided that I needed to control my own schedule and engage in a different type of discipline than the work I had lovingly embraced for over 45 years.

Many years ago, long before the baby boomers were anywhere near retirement, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi wrote a book called *From Ageing to Sageing*. In it he describes the detrimental effects of loneliness and isolation and advocates for elders to build and strengthen their communal networks, and to use all the

Your Words – Continued

years of our lives to grow, change, and learn. He quotes Sister Ann Chester's wise teaching about aging: "Retirement is like a spiritual discipline that enables us to become mindful and open to life as we were in childhood...we can discover a lot of unexpected delight by living in the present moment, which mystics around the world tell us is the gateway to eternity."

So here I am ready to embark on a new adventure and, stepping out of the full-time rabbinate but not leaving our community, I will continue to see each of you as members of that extended community that can, through our interactions with each other, make us wiser, kinder, gentler, and more open to the world around us. This year I participated in a training seminar entitled "Wise Aging: Living with Joy, Resilience and Spirit." Though in part I studied for myself, I also saw the training as an opportunity to bring these lessons back to you at Temple Isaiah. Whether you are in your fifties, beginning to think of what will come next, or already an experienced octogenarian, we can learn from one another in a mindful way how to discover and embrace the blessings of aging.

I will be away for a few months, but when 2017 arrives, expect to get an invitation from me to come together to create Wise Aging groups at Temple Isaiah. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel taught, "...These years are indeed formative years, rich in possibilities...to deepen understanding and compassion, to widen the horizon of honesty, to refine the sense of fairness...One ought to enter old age the way one enters the senior year at a university, in exciting anticipation of consummation...But the attainment of wisdom is the work of a lifetime."

May we continue to grow together in wisdom; young and old, together let us build community. May we grow from strength to strength! Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek!

❖ Refugee Resettlement Task Force

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church, Alamo

There are more than 50 million displaced people in the world as a result of global conflict. In particular, the reports of the suffering of the Syrian refugees is heart wrenching.

Every year 85,000 refugees, through a very strenuous vetting process by the U.S. State Department, are allowed entry into the United States as U.S. Citizens. Catholic Charities of the East Bay (CCEB) works with the State Department to assist approximately 700 refugees (regardless of ethnicity) to successfully resettle to the East Bay each year.

Task Force: More recently members of three local church communities, who form our local Methodist Circuit, have gathered together to form the Refugee Resettlement Task Force which is designed to support the resettlement of refugee families to the East Bay through monetary and volunteer support. We are teaming with Catholic Charities on this new ministry.

Volunteers: We will help with housing, home

furnishings, stocking food pantry, clothing, school enrollment, job search, English language tutoring, transportation, medical, dental, mentoring and socialization.

Money: It takes approximately \$8,000 to support a family in the resettlement process. This covers the first and last months' rent and other expenses while refugee family members find work.

At present, we are fundraising and soliciting volunteers to help. Our church has offered to raise \$2,500 towards the circuit goal of \$8,000. Two of the churches have already raised their share. There was a special request for donations at the April 17 service. You may offer your contribution at that time or just send your donation to the office at any time. Make out the check to SRVUMC and memo Refugees. An anonymous donor has already offered to match the first \$1,000.

Housing: Most refugees in the East Bay are placed in housing in the broader Oakland area, where CCEB can access afford-able housing. If we could access an affordable unit in the Tri-valley we would place them here. If you are able to assist with this project, then please contact Liz Bayat.

Timing: We believe we will be ready to take a family by May 2016.

If you can give of your time or donate items, then please contact Liz Bayat at 925-487-9693 or lbayat@aol.com.

Great lecture to watch:

TED Talks, Why Refugees Have a Right To Be Protected

❖ Ramadan the Month of Fasting, Giving, Sharing and Blessings

The Muslim communities in the United States of America and all over the world began observing the month of Ramadan on Monday, June 6 after sighting the new moon. This is the greatest month of the year for Muslims because fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. The others are the Shahadah (confession of the faith), Salat (prayers), Zakat (alms-giving) and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca.). Allah (God) commanded Muslims to fast as stated in the Quran: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was to those before you (the followers of the monotheist faiths before Islam), that you may learn (taquwa.)." The word taquwa represents many meanings including self-restraint, to ward off evil, or to protect oneself by constantly observing the commands of Allah (God.)

In addition to fasting, Muslims perform extra night prayers during Ramadan, recite the Quran on daily basis, and provide more charity. Adult Muslims who are traveling or sick may break their fast, and compensate it later on. If any adult is not able to fast due to health concerns, and has the financial ability do so, they must feed one poor fasting person for every day of the month.

Your Words – Continued

In addition, people are providing extra charity in Ramadan not only to compensate for their inability to fast but because it is the month of giving and sharing. Inviting friends to break the fast together is one of the traditions of Ramadan.

Breaking the fast in a group, which is combined with group prayers are highly recommended for Muslims. Accordingly, masjids (the place of worship for Muslims, the word is derived from prostrating and used by Muslims rather than mosques) in the Bay Area and everywhere organize breaking the fast dinner, and praying together in Ramadan.

Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) requested his companions to make supplication by asking Allah to bless them in the two months before Ramadan, and to enable them to reach Ramadan. Scholars interpreted that by stating that when we reach Ramadan, fast, and perform all other worships explained above, which are done during that month, there will be continuous blessings. On July 6th to 8th (subject to citing the moon) Muslims will celebrate (Eid Alfitr) the feast of breaking the fast. Muslim men, women and children will go to the masjids to perform the prayers of the feast of breaking the fast. It is a Sunnah (the tradition of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) that each family will pay the Zakat of breaking the fast. Originally families used to provide to the poor wheat, barley or dates. Now the practice is to give the equivalent of a meal for each member of the family including the unborn baby. When giving to the poor the equivalent of the cost of a meal it should be at the same cost of the meal of the donor.

The Muslim communities in the United States will fast, perform their prayers, and thank Allah for enabling them to fast and to perform all other worships with full freedom, and while peace, prosperity and tranquility are prevailing in this country. In the meantime we will not forget those who are poor and suffering all over the world. No doubt, the Muslim world is passing through difficult times. I hope that, in their prayers, Muslims and all people of faith will remember those who are suffering because of wars and conflicts as well as the poor and the needy everywhere.

Amer Araim, President of the Islamic Community Outreach of California, and member of the Islamic Center of Walnut Creek.

Muhammad Ali the World Champion and Symbol of Interfaith Cooperation

The world champion, and the Muslim who was a symbol for Interfaith cooperation Muhammad Ali passed away, and was praised by all, and will continue to be remembered by peoples of all faiths around the world. He chose the name Muhammad Ali, which is a combination of the name of Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon Him (PBUH), which means the praised one, and Ali, the name of the fourth caliph in Islam, which means high. Throughout his life, whether in sport or while struggling for thirty-two years with Parkinson disease, Muhammad Ali demonstrated his faith in Allah (God),

courage, and determination.

Muhammad Ali built a masjid in his hometown and named it after Bilal Bin Rabah, one of the close companions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Bilal was a slave in Mecca, originally brought from Ethiopia. After hearing about the call of Prophet Muhammad PBUH on people to embrace Islam, Bilal was one of the earliest who responded to the call. However, he suffered tremendously from his slave-master, who tortured Bilal. Then Muslims in general were persecuted, however, Bilal suffered more, and due to the severe pain of the torture, Bilal was crying and saying "Ahad" which means one God. A Muslim bought Bilal and immediately freed him, and Bilal became the Muathin of the Prophet (the person who calls for prayers). Muslims began calling him our master Bilal. Once Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) saw in his dream that Bilal was in a high place of Paradise, and told him about that. Bilal responded that he was a poor-man and all what he did was to be constant in his prayers. Muhammad Ali and many Muslims always remember Bilal and his embracing of Islam, and consider him a symbol of the believers strength to face suffering and pain.

The life story of Muhammad Ali including his struggle with Parkinson disease reflected his deep faith, and the inspiration to resist illness and other challenges in life. Muhammad Ali described his Parkinson illness by stating that "God gave me this illness to remind me that I am not number one, He is." Yes, we should also remember that Allah (God) created us, and we are in need of His mercy and help. I recited Al-Fatiha (the preamble of the Quran) for the soul of Muhammad Ali, and I am sure many Muslims as well as people of different faiths will remember Muhammad Ali in their prayers.

Amer Araim, President of the Islamic Community Outreach of California, and member of the Islamic Center of Walnut Creek.

❖ Fasting and Ramadan

Ejaz Naqvi, MD

Author, "The Quran: With or Against the Bible?"

Member, Governing Board, ICCCC

Ramadan is the 9th, and the holiest month on the Islamic calendar. *Sawm*, or fasting is mandatory for all healthy adult Muslims during this month. Fasting is recommended at other times of the year but not mandatory. The fasting starts with a meal at dusk, called *Sahoor* (or *sehri*) and lasts till after sunset by breaking the fast, called *Iftar*. Between *sahoor* and *Iftar*, Muslims abstain from eating or drinking. The Quran was revealed to prophet Muhammad during this month. Muslims believe that God opens His door of mercy wide open during this month. All good deeds are multiplied several fold. All bad deeds are forgiven, when the person sincerely asks for forgiveness. Many Muslims invite

Your Words – Continued

others to have Iftar together in a festive, yet spiritual experience.

What is forbidden during Fasting?

- Smoking and sexual intimacy. These will “break” the fast.
- Avoiding sins-major and minor. These include getting angry; hurting anyone-physically or emotionally, back biting, engagement in immoral activities etc.
- Avoiding distractions that move one away from God’s remembrance.

What’s encouraged during Ramadan?

- Constant remembrance, or awareness, of God or *Taqwa*. (This is often mistranslated as “God fearing”). When one is aware of God, he/she is much less likely to engage in the forbidden activities or thoughts. Formal and informal prayers and supplications are highly recommended. Recitation of the Holy Quran is highly recommended.
- Charitable giving. Ramadan is considered the month of giving. In fact Muslims worldwide, including Muslim Americans, give the most during the month of Ramadan. According to some estimates, up to 70% of the yearly donations to charitable organizations are made during this month.
- Acts of kindness, love and peacemaking.

Myths about Fasting/Essence of Fasting

Ramadan is widely considered as the month of fasting, which is true. However, “fasting” is rather an inaccurate translation of *Sawm*, and is much more than just an abstinence from food and drinks. This is a month for spiritual cleansing and strengthening, and an opportunity to renew your relationship with God. This is a month to seek, and work towards, nearness to God by submitting to His will and serving His creation. This is the month to show random acts of kindness to all- humans and animals and other creations of God- to parents, siblings, neighbors, strangers, co-workers and spouses. It is a month to forgive, and seek forgiveness from the Almighty. It is month to show kindness to others, and ask for God’s mercy. It is a month to learn, and practice, self control. By abstaining from some of the acts noted above, one is essentially going through a behavioral change that calls for self-control. As you learn to control your urge to eat when hungry, or to drink when feeling thirsty, or control your urge to engage in lustful activities, you are learning how to be in control of your inner desires. Ali, considered the first Imam by shia Muslims, and the 4th Caliph by all Muslims, famously said” One who controls his inner self (AKA desires and urges), finds God”. In short, Muslims are supposed to be on their best behavior during this month, with the idea that the good

habits learned during this month will last rest of the year, to be renewed the following Ramadan.

Fasting is not unique to Muslims. Many other religions and cultures in history have recommended fasting. Moses and Jesus had fasted. Hindus fast. Others fast for secular reasons with the belief that fasting has physical benefits such as improved gut function, emotional well-being, blood sugar and cholesterol control. For Muslims, physical aspects are just the beginning of the benefits of fasting, with a much greater emphasis on spiritual health and *taqwa* during this blessed month.

❖ Hunger Project San Ramon Valley



On May 19-21, nearly 1,000 community members of the San Ramon Valley joined together for the San Ramon Valley Hunger Project, an inter-faith effort organized by the Interfaith group of San Ramon Valley (“I-SRV”) to prepare meals for children, homeless and families in need in Contra Costa County. In total, over 200,000 meals were prepared and distributed and also many donations of cleaning, household supplies and food were brought and collected and given to Contra Costa Interfaith Housing.

A similar event was held last year and all the meals were sent abroad, primarily to Africa. However, this year, I-SRV felt a great need to provide food for those in need in our own communities and used the group, Feeding Children Everywhere who allowed I-SRV to distribute to local agencies and groups. After the event, cars were loaded with cases of food that went to White Pony Express and Monument Crisis Center. The rest of the food was picked up by Contra Costa County Food Bank to be distributed to school pantries and various ministries that feed the hungry. Contra Costa Food Bank normally charges these other ministries a small amount for the food they distribute, but all of this food will be distributed to these organizations free of charge. These organizations were also invited to set up tables so that all the volunteers who came to the service project could learn about our local needs and those organizations who are set up to serve those needs. Another current focus of I-SRV is providing housing.

Your Words – Continued

The project was held at East Bay Four Square church, who donated their facility, and significant contributions of time and resources were contributed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joan of Arc Parish, San Damiano Retreat, and many other faith groups in the community who provided funds, free web services and volunteers. The project had great participation from church youth groups and youth organizations like Boy and Girl Scouts. In fact, 51% of the volunteers were age 17 or younger. It was a great opportunity to model by example and educate the youth about the needs and ways to serve our own neighbors and communities. At the end of each shift, the volunteers gathered and a prayer of thanksgiving and hope was offered by a different faith group.

After the event was over I-SRV was told that a local non-profit had nominated I-SRV and the San Ramon Valley Hunger Project for an award. The representative wrote, "I feel like this is a model event to showcase what the community can do together to help feed others in the community, and it is just the type of project we like to honor. So save the date of September 21st, as I suspect you just might receive an award :). It's truly a lovely event with lots of local politicians, mayors, etc.. It will be great visibility for the project."

This year's I-SRV San Ramon Valley Hunger Project was a great model of how powerful Interfaith work can be in uniting and blessing our communities.

Michael Peterson
I-SRV Board member

❖ Our Place At Luther's Table – Our Saviors Lutheran Church

Join us this fall as we celebrate and participate in the reforming spirit that began at Luther's table 499 years ago. In the early days of the reform movement, Martin Luther would gather at table with students, teachers, and all who were willing to share beer and their insights into where God's vibrant spirit might be leading them. The world was changing, the religious institution felt stuck, and a new way of being relationship with God was just around the corner.

As a Lutheran congregation, we too listen to the voices of today's reformers, we share in the conversation, and we continue in the very spirit of reform for our time. Clearly, we have a place at Luther's table. Starting on Sunday, September 4, we will spend our mornings exploring the insights we have discovered along our journey:

- Where is God?
- Jesus and his relationship to the holy
- Living beyond the Garden of Eden
- Miracles as a window into a holy world
- What is salvation for today?
- Easter as an invitation to life....
- And more

Join us as we continue to chart the reformation in our time.

❖ UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at the April 2010 World Summit of Religious Leaders

"When we build a culture of understanding and uphold human dignity, we build a better world. We live in a changing and interconnected world, where local events can have an impact globally and international events can also have a local impact... Globalization continues to transform our societies, bringing gains for many but leaving too many others untouched and discontent. These 21st-century facts compel us to strengthen cooperation – to expand the space for dialogue. As religious leaders, you have an essential role to play in ensuring that the values of equality, tolerance and mutual respect, which lie at the core of all the world's greatest religions, are defended, promoted and used to truly enrich our societies. You can encourage dialogue that respects the importance of tradition but also embraces change. You can foster contacts and create conditions that will lead to sustainable peace, social justice and cultural cohesion."

Events & Announcements...

SAN RAMON VALLEY INTERFAITH PROGRAM WITH FR. TOM BONACCI: THE WORLD HAS MET ITSELF – THE DYNAMICS OF INTERFAITH SPIRITUALITY AND PRACTICE IN A WORLD GONE GLOBAL

Led by Thomas P. Bonacci,
Director of The Interfaith Peace Project of Antioch, CA

Thursday Evenings, 7:00-9:00

October 13, 20, 2016 (NOT Oct. 6!)

At San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
Great Hall, Wesley Center
902 Danville Blvd., Alamo CA

OCTOBER 13, 2016

Justice and Peace in the World of Interfaith Spiritual Practice

We will explore the transformative power of the Faith Traditions to forge that Justice which creates Peace in the midst of conflict and division. We will glean the wisdom of several Faith Traditions as we seek to discover the principles by which we might practice peace in all the affairs of our lives.

OCTOBER 20, 2016

Do the Faith Traditions Provide a Basis for Interfaith Love and Respect?

We will challenge the idea that “religion is the cause of violence and misunderstanding” as we search the wisdom of the Traditions. We will explore several Traditions as we seek to discover what they teach and proclaim about people who are not members of their own communities or belief structures. We will come to understand the magnificent wisdom the Traditions offer by which others are seen as beloved.

Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.
The Interfaith Peace Project
<http://peace@thomaspbonacci.net>
interfaithpeaceproject.org
(925) 787-9279

Witness Our Welcome – Save the Date! Whose religion? Whose freedom?

Sunday, October 30th at 4:00 pm
Lafayette Christian Church (DOC)

584 Glenside Dr., Lafayette
The East Bay's Open and Affirming Interfaith congregations host a yearly service to celebrate their history of welcoming all, including the LGBTQQ community within the ritual and service life of their congregations. Come join us as we celebrate the diversity of the human family. Rabbi Michael Rothbaum will be the keynote speaker, and we will honor Gary Leveque, San Ramon School District Teacher and LGBTQ mentor.

Volunteer Opportunities:

◆◆ Mt. View House Shelter has opportunities for Congregations to share meals with their homeless Clients. (Updated dates available to serve.)

The shelter is one of only two family shelters in Contra Costa that is for men, women and children. Please contact Martie Steinmetz, Site Coordinator of the Mt. View House Shelter (1391 Shell Avenue, Martinez, CA 94553) at (925) 228-6920 or maritess@shelterincofccc.org to help.

The Shelter has sign-ups through the winter, when the following weeks are available throughout the new year - and beyond. Collect a group of friends from your congregation or friendship group and build an experience of a lifetime!

- 10/3- 10/7
- 10/10- 10/14

Please note that once these above dates have been taken, then Martie will begin scheduling for future calendar dates.



CCIH Opportunities for Involvement

Provide Dinner for a Monthly Resident Meeting: These community meetings are essential in building community, reinforcing resident roles as community stakeholders, and allowing

residents to learn important skills needed to improve their lives. Volunteer groups prepare, serve, and share a meal for about 50 people. Families, congregations, service clubs, and other groups are encouraged to sign-up. **JANUARY 2017 is in need of a sign-up.** Please visit this website to volunteer: www.tinyurl.com/ovepnva



WHITE PONY EXPRESS
relaying food and goods to those in need in Contra Costa County

White Pony Express Growth Calls For More Volunteers

By Gary Conner, Executive Coordinator, WPE

Being recognized by ICCCC in 2014 with the *Making a Difference Award* made our White Pony Express volunteers feel very appreciated and happy. Thank you! If you or anyone in your community would like to share our day-to-day happiness, please join us as a new volunteer!

Many readers will know that the mission of the all-volunteer White Pony Express is to help eliminate hunger and poverty in Contra Costa County by delivering the abundance all around us to those in need. Dr. Carol Weyland Conner, the spiritual director of Sufism Reoriented, founded the program because she felt it unacceptable that, in a county of such abundance, scores of thousands were malnourished or going hungry, were poorly clothed, and children of less fortunate parents had few toys and good books to read. Meanwhile, other of our neighbors were being pulled down a path toward poverty and homelessness.

When Dr. Conner discovered that food retailers throw away huge quantities of fresh, wholesome food every day, and clothing manufacturers and retailers often had large amounts of excess clothing, she created White Pony Express (WPE) to be the connecting link between the surplus and the need. Even more, she wished this program to come from the heart. So today it is staffed entirely by volunteers who want to help, purely in the spirit of service.

More Volunteers Needed!

Since its founding less than three years ago, the White Pony Express has had extraordinary growth, made possible by the 400 people who have joined us as volunteers. But the need is even greater. The only thing holding us back from delivering more high quality food and goods is the need for more volunteers. Because our administrative expenses are less than 1% of total expenses, we can deliver more than 1,000 pounds of food or 100 articles of clothing for every \$100 donated, and there is virtually no limit as long as we have the volunteers to staff the programs. WPE makes a real difference, but there are many more to reach.

WPE has provided more than 3,000,000 pounds of food in the past two and a half years and more than 200,000 articles of clothing in the past two years. However, there are still 100,000 people hungry and living in poverty in our county. Together we can uplift the lives of more people in Contra Costa County, who would be overjoyed to receive high-quality, nourishing food, and new or like-new clothing, and toys and books. Although we have excellent access to supermarkets and clothiers who will donate their goods, we need more people to help pick up, process, and deliver this bounty, and others to help with administration and management.

We wholeheartedly invite you and members of your faith group to join us as volunteers. If you're interested, here's more on the work of these programs and their success to date:

White Pony Express Food Rescue Starting with a budget of only \$800, Food Rescue now gets food from over 100 donors and has delivered over 3,000,000 pounds of free food to those in need. This represents enough food for 2,400,000 meals the hungry would have gone without. If all of this high-quality food had not been rescued, it would have ended up in landfill creating more methane gas, one of the strongest greenhouse gases.

Why do we need more volunteers? Well, just recently we added two more Sprouts Farmers Markets, another Nob Hill Foods, another Costco, a Trader Joe's, and Walgreens, which add to the volume we receive from our other important food retailers. These new donors join a solid lineup that includes other Sprouts, three Whole Foods, The Cheesecake Factory, other Nob Hill Foods, Safeway, other Costcos, and Lunardi's. WPE Food Rescue has made 20,000 deliveries to its growing base of recipient nonprofit partners throughout the county and delivers almost 5,000 pounds of free food every day of the week.

The Free General Store (FGS) This special program works on several fronts. Volunteers in its unique Mobile Boutique take thousands of articles of new and like-new clothing to a host site in an impoverished neighborhood where they are given away free. Volunteers create the atmosphere of a real store where shoppers find clothes properly sized, pressed, and hanging on clothing racks or folded neatly on tables. There are departments for men, women, girls, and boys and separate areas for children's toys and books.

These Mobile Boutiques have been staged 35 times and volunteers have given away over 240,000 articles of new or like-new clothing, toys, and books to thousands of low income and homeless individuals and families. One example is worth noting. A year ago, the Free General Store celebrated its first anniversary with a wonderful, fun-filled Mobile Boutique for over 1,000 people at E.M. Downer School in San Pablo, where 13,000 articles of clothing and more than 5,000 toys and books were given away. There was entertainment, decorations, and refreshments, and even staff to show women how to apply makeup (with free makeup to take home). Food Rescue joined the celebration with a Mobile Grocery that provided 4,000 pounds of free food. The community was in such need that with the enthusiastic help of the school's principal, Marco Gonzales, and parent volunteers, a pantry was created to which Food Rescue delivers between 3,000 and 4,000 pounds of free food each week.

When emergency situations arose, such as homeless people sleeping outside on freezing nights, volunteers delivered thousands of articles of warm clothing and bedding for them. FGS now distributes about 10,000 articles of clothing per month along with thousands of toys and books.

We are so very grateful to the thirty-five churches, schools, service clubs, youth groups, and corporations that have made White Pony Express their charity for in-service days. If you join us, I know you'll find this service inspiring, delightful, and deeply meaningful.

The White Pony Inn (WPI) This pilot project was started in 2014 to help individuals struggling to meet the demands of our complex culture. WPI volunteers have been able to help 22 people avoid homelessness, assist a family of three to remain in transitional housing, and help a homeless individual enter a program with the goal of finding housing. This year the WPI team looks forward to starting new services for the homeless population with a homeless shelter project using "tiny homes" or tiny apartments. Another service being researched is a mobile shower that can be taken to different places in the county each week.

New Facilities Flowing from our volunteers' dedication and the financial support of our donors, White Pony Express just recently leased two warehouses at a mixed-use facility in Pleasant Hill. Together the warehouses give us approximately 9,000 square feet of much needed space in which to house WPE's programs. This more than doubles the space WPE moved from.

Having this good workspace has enabled FGS to forge new partnerships with retailers who have agreed to provide us with over \$1,000,000 worth of new clothes each year! We are so grateful because we know the joy this clothing will bring to our "shoppers". Their happiness constantly inspires and encourages us and these new partnerships will move us toward our goal of having half our inventory be new clothes.

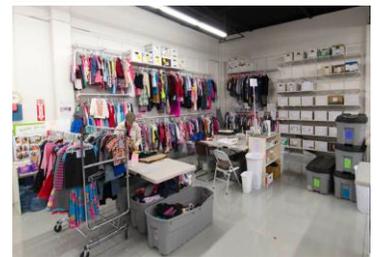
Funding and Asset Acquisitions About the time ICCCC honored us with the *Making A Difference Award*, the IRS awarded us our tax-exempt status, thus enabling us to begin active fundraising. This was critical because WPE was facing a year in which expenses would increase many fold if we were to pick up and deliver all the food and goods that businesses were making available to us in the county. Fortunately a large number of individuals, churches, service clubs, corporations, and foundations saw the value of this service and responded wholeheartedly. Among the foundations have been the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation, Thomas J. Long Foundation, Kaiser Foundation, HEDCO Foundation, Bank of America Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, Willis Foundation, and Marshall Charitable Trust. Together they provided over \$250,000 for operating expenses and for acquiring needed assets like refrigerated trucks, vans, and a walk-in cooler.

Last December, WPE signed a contract with the county through the Equal Opportunity Council. The county will provide \$25,000 for a twelve-month program during which WPE will deliver 250,000 pounds of fresh, nutritious food free to seven organizations serving the homeless. (Yes, the all-volunteer WPE can deliver 10 pounds of food for each dollar funded!)

Awards and Honors The hard work and effectiveness of WPE's volunteers shines in the faces of our recipients and has been recognized by the community. WPE has received The San Francisco Foundation *John R. May Innovation Award*, the East Bay Leadership Council's *Outstanding Collaborative Project Award*, and Sustainable Contra Costa's *Innovation in Food Systems Award*. Our founder, Dr. Carol Weyland Conner, was named a *Local Hero* by the Contra Costa Times, was featured in Diablo Magazine's *Threads of Hope* issue, and received the *Jefferson Award* from KPIX-TV. Just recently, the Diablo Valley Dietetic Association awarded WPE its *Silver Spoon Award*.

Conclusion All of us volunteering in White Pony Express want to thank the readers of *Ministering Together* for the loving support you have given us in carrying out our shared mission of helping eliminate hunger and poverty in Contra Costa County. Food, clothing, and shelter are basic human rights, and, as ICCCC has recognized, this program is indeed "making a difference" in honoring those rights. WPE is now the second largest food provider in Contra Costa County and has become the largest clothing distributor. WPE's goals of uplifting lives and providing opportunities for selfless service are being realized. As volunteers in this work, we feel deeply privileged to be able to help.

Invitation If you, too, would like to have a direct, immediate impact on the lives of your disadvantaged brothers and sisters, please join us. Happiness awaits for you and those you serve!



Social Justice Alliance

of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

Invites you...

SOJA is a standing committee of the Interfaith Council. Its mission is to develop policy statements of advocacy and community witness on matters of social justice, fairness, acceptance, and understanding. SOJA also oversees the work of the Winter Nights Shelter and makes regular reports to the ICCCC Board of Directors.

SOJA meets on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM, in the WC United Methodist Church Library. All are welcome.

Items on the September 14 SOJA Agenda included:

Martin Luther King Celebration

Monday, January 16, 2017, SOJA will sponsor the annual Martin Luther King Day in a new location: Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Avenue. Father B. Kwame, instructor at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, will be the keynote speaker. St. Benedict Gospel Choir and Dwight Stone will provide the music.

For several years this celebration was held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. We want to thank Rev. Sylvia Vasquez and her staff for welcoming us each year with warm hospitality. As the number of our guests grew, we asked Frank Burroughs to lead the search for a larger place. And Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church agreed to permit us to hold our event there.

If you can help with planning, providing snacks, ushering, and set-up, please contact Mary Silva, Chair of the 2017 MLK Annual Celebration, silva.bice@comcast.net.

CNWS Advisory Committee

SOJA and the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County sent a Letter of Recommendation to the Concord Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council Members asking for the appointment of Delores Loague, member of the Concord United Methodist Church and resident of the City of Concord, to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Delores is known for her work in creating community. For ten years she has represented the Social Justice Alliance at the CNWS realignment meetings and workshops and City Council meetings.

Refugee Program

Amer Araim described a refugee program operating on the East Bay named No One Left Behind. Their most crucial needs in descending order of urgency are:

- * Drivers to pick up and deliver donations to our refugee families, who live from Fremont to Antioch.
- * Securing donations; items much sought by the refugees but that we rarely get are laptops, pressure cookers, sewing machines and microwaves.
- * We also have ongoing needs for blankets and bedding, heaters, fans, furniture, kitchen supplies, baby food and diapers.
- * Mentors and English tutors to work with individual families

All our clients with a few exceptions are beyond the 90 days that is the limit of support by Catholic Charities, IRC, and Jewish Family and Community Services (the 3 resettlement agencies in our area). We do have relationships with all three resettlement agencies. Upgraded housing is a desire of most of our clients, as most are living in very marginal places, paying very high rents (\$1800-1900/mo for a one bedroom in Oakland or \$2000 in Concord is usual).

We are just beginning our program to assist our refugee clients with correcting the FNU on their documents. Many need a bit of help filling out the I 90 form. I have produced a step by step document with the assistance of the Immigration Officer at IRC, but it really requires someone sitting down with each family to help them fill out the form; volunteers to help them fill out the form would be very helpful and your contacts might be useful in doing this one-on-one work.

I would be happy to talk with you about what we do and what we need, and I would be happy to do a presentation for your group, or to field queries. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide more information. Warm regards, Bobbie Preston Landline: 925-376-8474 Mobile: 925-330-2446

CROP Walk

Ann Crisp, Chair of CROP Walk Contra Costa, thanked the ten SOJA members and their friends who participated in the September 14 fundraising meals at BJ's for the Walk. Our members and faith congregations are planning to participate in the Walk on the afternoon of Sunday, October 16, as are their children, grandchildren, and furry pets.



Winter Nights Shelter

Jo Kerner, Winter Nights Grant Writer and SOJA member, reported this Final WN tally: 77 (46 children, 30 school-age); 20 families; 40% had more than 2 children; 20% had 4 or more children, 60% were single parents, including 3 single dads. 14 families exited to home, apt, family or trans shelter; 70% families found shelter (58% last year); (75% people); 222 people on wait list. New website (need 3rd web designer). Funding solid so far (half of 182,600 budget in bank or granted). Possible grant for part of van; van registered, being serviced now. Jo was thanked and congratulated on the success of her funding efforts on behalf of Winter Nights Shelter.

MFAC Housing and Shelter

Doug Leach, a leader on the Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition's Housing and Shelter Task Force, provided the current status of Zero2016: As of August, 2016, 156 Contra Costa homeless veterans are on the list to be housed; down from 250. He also reported that planning is underway for the Trinity Center Evening Program. Other matters of interest for Multi-Faith are the homes owned by the Coast Guard near the Concord Naval Weapons Station and Rent Control.

Announcements

School of the Americas Watch will hold a Detention Vigil Convergence with other human rights groups such as Puente.in Nogales, AZ, and Nogales, Mexico, from October 7-10.

Special Commendation

Congratulations to Frank Burroughs, the author of "*Immigration reform—is this something we can ever achieve?*," an editorial which appeared in the East Bay Times on September 14, 2016. Frank lived and worked in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon for 15 years, and served as a liaison between the then-Shah of Iran and President Jimmy Carter.

September SOJA Meeting Attendance

Dr. Amer Araim, Dr. Frank Burroughs, Chris Coons, Dean Coons, Jo Kerner, Doug Leach, Delores Loague, Dorothy Vance, and Gwen Watson. Will McGarvey missed because of a commitment in San Francisco.

You Are Invited to the October 12 SOJA Meeting in the Library of the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church at 7:00 PM.

- **Gwen Watson, SOJA Co-Chair**

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

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To request a paperless newsletter and to receive our bi-weekly E-Blasts,
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The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County depends on contributions from member congregations and individuals who support our mission of promoting interfaith understanding. To make a tax deductible donation, please make your check to Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and mail it to our office at 1543 Sunnyvale Ave, Ste. 103, Walnut Creek, CA 94597. For credit card donations, please visit our website: www.interfaithccc.org . Thank you!

THANK YOU CORNER:
The Interfaith Council is blessed to have dedicated volunteers who come together to collate, fold, sticker and label our newsletter in preparation for mailing. We'd like to thank the teens at People Who Care for their help with the winter edition.
If you are interested in being part of this joyous band or interested in taking on the role of mail-out coordinator, contact Jessica at (925) 933-6030 or eye4cee@aol.com.

PLEASE PRAY FOR... (in our rotating circle of prayer):
Grace Episcopal Church • Moraga Valley Presbyterian • St. Giles' Episcopal Church • St. Monica's Catholic Church • Baha'i Assembly of Orinda • Church of Santa Maria • First Church of Christ, Scientist • Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church • Orinda Community Church (UCC) • St. Mark's United Methodist Church • St. Stephen's Episcopal Church • St. Joseph Catholic Church • Baha'i of Pittsburg • Community Presbyterian Church • Pittsburg United Methodist Church • For those that experience Islamaphobia • For the Interfaith Youth Council • Congregations going through clergy transition. • The kind-hearted souls who deliver Meals on Wheels • Those seeking employment • Those that are homeless • Those that are ill