



# Ministering Together

News and Interfaith Events for the  
Religious Community of Contra Costa County

Spring 2020



## Opening Hearts - through Caring, Diversity and Compassion

Dr. Felicity Grove -  
**MAKING MASKS**

Dr. Felicity Grove, a member of I4C, from Pleasant Hill saw that there was a need for personal protective equipment (PPE) of the frontline medical workers during the Coronavirus/Covid 19 pandemic. Felicity thought about how she could meet a need that was caring and compassionate and serving people of all races, cultures and religions, deciding to get started making masks that were up to code. The I4C works with a network of Interfaith Councils throughout the Bay Area on Emergency Preparedness (coordinated with overall statewide Emergency Preparedness). California understood what needed to happen and was one of the first states to order a complete sheltering in place throughout the state. There has been slow response of the Federal Government in the U.S and she realized that she needed to act - this was a train wreck in slow motion. Felicity has her doctorate in Biochemistry and is familiar with contamination, and how to prevent contamination with essential workers.



Felicity started a "Go Fund Me" in January to pay for the 750 thread count sheets required. She raised \$1225.00 and purchased a large supply of sheets to begin making masks. Felicity then contacted several local hospitals to understand their need and the materials to use, and the best pattern. So far, she has made 130 masks with a goal of 500. Felicity's husband helped her in the preparation of the masks by cutting ties on the bias. She made a version with house filters cut up to put into the masks made with 750 thread count sheets. Felicity explained to me how the coronavirus can stay alive out of the host's body for so much longer than other viruses. (continued on page 2)

## WHAT DO COVID-19, NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND INTERFAITH HAVE IN COMMON?

By Carolyn MacKenzie, Executive Board President



How can a deadly virus and a nuclear weapon have anything in common you ask? It seems like nothing until you take a closer look. On this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the nuclear bomb blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it behooves us to study this past so that we may learn from it. We are currently experiencing a world-wide pandemic with a COVID-19 virus that has affected millions of people and is killing hundreds of thousands of people. It is especially affecting the poor, who do not have the luxury of physical distancing. And yet as a people, we are still preoccupied with nuclear weapons to defend our country at a tremendous risk and economic cost to our society. At the same time, we have been caught grossly unprepared for the pandemic that hit. Shouldn't we have been focused on preparing for a pandemic rather than modernizing our nuclear weapons for possible use? Both COVID-19 and the use of a nuclear weapon are global threats that are bigger than any one country can handle- just like climate change- and a global response to these threats is required. The Pope spoke out in November of last year in Hiroshima calling nuclear weapons an "immoral" crime and a dangerous waste. He asked for a renewed effort to abolish nuclear weapons, stating that there is no place in this world for nuclear weapons, even as a deterrent.

Nuclear weapons when detonated spew out radioactive particles called "fallout radiation" because it is projected into the upper atmosphere where it can travel long distances until it eventually rains down on the earth and its inhabitants with radioactive particles. The intensity of the fallout radiation decreases with time but some of the particles stay radioactive for an eternity. Fallout radiation cannot be seen or smelled or felt-- all our normal senses do not work to detect its presence. It requires special detection equipment like a Geiger counter to know that it is present. This it shares with our deadly COVID-19 virus - there is no easy way to tell it is present until you get sick with it. Detection again requires special equipment and slow laboratory tests to determine it is there. The health effects from exposure to excessive levels

(continued on page 3)

## MAKING MASKS (continued)

There are two ways to stop the spread of virus. Test everyone and separate those who have it from those without, which has been tremendously successful in other countries, or do what we are doing. and that is not let the virus spread to each other by not coming into contact with each other.

In the U.S. we are still lacking the testing to understand how many of our population has been exposed and is walking around asymptomatic exposing others. CA was one of the early states responding by staying at home and staying 6 feet apart around others. The population has mostly been compliant.

Where has Felicity given her masks? The first few rounds went to John Muir hospital - this hospital has a special box noting "donations here". Felicity will also given them to Kaiser hospitals, Oakland Children's hospital and the Navajo Nation. Whatever is left over, she has identified hospitals in states with an onrush of sick people and hospitals not able to keep up. She will keep making masks and give to hospitals in San Jose, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. People on the front lines will have a mask from Felicity's caring and compassion - and the good news is that these masks can be washed and dried thoroughly and used again. Thank you, Felicity for rising to the moment!

by Channing Miller



## Opening Hearts - through Caring, Diversity and Compassion

### Rev. Julius Van Hook - Juvenile Chaplaincy

*We all yearn for connection, and I4C is working together in ways that will bring us closer to providing loving interfaith service throughout Contra Costa County. We are opening hearts with our 108 congregations in Contra Costa County working together to bring solutions and love into our communities. Here is story of where I4C and its congregations are bringing Caring, Diversity and Compassion.*



Rev. Julius Van Hook is the current I4C Chaplain to the Contra Costa Juvenile Detention Center in Martinez, CA and the Contra Costa Boys' Ranch in Byron, CA. Julius works with young people who have at a young age made some decisions that have landed them in detention. As he works with each young boy or girl he develops a relationship, inspires them to gain motivation to refocus their lives towards decisions that will have a different outcome. He provides both spiritual care and life counseling with Caring and Compassion. The Diversity of the young people extends across many racial, cultural and economic backgrounds. What promotes Interfaith understanding and service is that there are young people from varying faith traditions and Julius is able to serve all of them from their life experience and religious background. Interfaith service is building mutuality and respect through love towards all others, emphasizing our differences and commonalities for healing. The result of Julius's service and the service of Rev. Tinsley who served in this position for 25 years, is that many young people have become motivated to pursue a college education - they have made decisions that have turned their life around. They have felt support and hope from their relationships with the Chaplains to change their lives. Julius is working to establish an "Aftercare Program" that will focus on continuing the relationship with young people once they are released from detention.

### Write a Letter, Send a Card

Julius would like to offer you the opportunity to do something for the young people at the Detention Center - simply write from your heart to a young person or persons. Provide a little bit of love and a little ray of hope to the young people that are used to seeing the volunteers. You can write letters, send greeting cards, maybe send a photocopy of excerpts from a book, or maybe some quotes that may inspire them. Don't worry about (continued on page 4)

## WHAT DO COVID-19, NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND INTERFAITH HAVE IN COMMON? (continued)

by Carolyn MacKenzie

of radiation is not immediate and shows with time, just as the COVID-19 virus can be carried without any symptoms for periods of time. But unlike the COVID-19 virus, where physical distancing can lower the curve of infection, nuclear fallout could be present indefinitely in our environment and continue to irradiate us.

Novel coronavirus's are not something we choose to have and in fact, biological warfare has been banned by most countries and is considered an abomination to mankind. But nuclear weapons are something our government has chosen to make, own and deploy. There are 9 countries in the world that have chosen to own nuclear weapons to inflict damage on others. But just like the COVID-19 virus, they know no national borders or boundaries and if used, affect us all-- no matter who we are. The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can testify of the horror of witnessing city-wide populations of people being annihilated and the on-going scars from such an experience. Our nuclear arsenal is useless against the COVID-19 pandemic that is bringing the world to its knees. Shouldn't we have been investing more into research into infectious diseases, personal protective equipment, ventilators, testing laboratories, and emergency planning for a pandemic rather than the nuclear weapon industry?

Today our US government has adopted a new nuclear weapon policy that promotes modernizing our existing nuclear arsenal with a current price tag estimated by the Arms Control Association as over \$1 trillion dollars over the next 30 years and \$15.6 billion just in 2020. On this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty whose goal is to stop nuclear proliferation and strive for complete disarmament, the US has chosen to continue to spend huge sums of our annual budget on promoting the use of nuclear weapons as a nuclear deterrent. Are we safer because of it? I would attest that is a misguided priority that has actually made us less safe and diverted money from real threats like pandemics, climate change, and poverty. Of the world's ~15,000 nuclear weapons, over 1,800 weapons are deployed on "long-term high alert status." As stated by Jonathan Granoff, president of the Global Security Institute, "Threatening to destroy civilization through the use of nuclear weapons is an immoral, irrational, illegal, and expensive pursuit unworthy of civilization. It is folly to think that by accident, madness or design the weapons will not ever be used." Has it taken this virus to help us to realize the insanity of our government's nuclear policies to secure our nation- gaining the ability to blow up our whole world how many more times is going to make us more "secure" as a nation? To cause fallout radiation to rain on us all from the denotation of a nuclear weapon as a means to "protect" our country will never protect us but will result in hurting us all.

How is our faith a part of any of this? The faith communities of the world have too often been conflicted with each other over our differences instead of respecting our diverse faith traditions. This virus has known no such discrimination, and has attacked people regardless of their faith, ethnic origin or country. It is our now our faith traditions that we turn to for strength and insight in how to cope with our world in crisis. We see signs everywhere if we look, of people helping each other and living out the Golden Rule that all of the world's major faith traditions honor. Suddenly our walls and divisions that we have clung to so tightly no longer make any sense- we are just sick or hurt and our planet is harmed. As members of the human family, we are called to join the voices of faith leaders to rise to this challenge and change our ways. I am hopeful that this experience of a pandemic can help us see through the walls and divisions and gain new insights into experiencing the human family as one. Once this new perspective is taken, we can reset our priorities as a country. As global citizens, we can choose to think and act cooperatively and, in the world's best interest. I pray that it be so.

*Carolyn MacKenzie is President of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, member of VOICES For a World Free of Nuclear Weapons – a United Religions Cooperative Circle <https://www.voices-uri.org/>, board certified health physicist previously employed by the University of California, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the International Atomic Energy Agency.*

## Rev. Julius Van Hook continued...

writing their names, because the Detention Center is not allowed to disclose that information, per policy. Currently, the age group is from about 13 to 19, and they are experiencing all of the normal adolescent issues, but for this demographic, those issues are magnified to the 10th power. Send any cards or messages to:

**The Martinez Juvenile**  
202 Glacier Dr.  
Martinez, CA 94553  
Attn: Rev. J. Van Hook

*Rev. Julius says, “My goal is to provide each young person with their own envelope of just a little something to let them know that someone cares”.*

**Rev Will McGarvey, I4C Executive Director says** “Community Chaplaincy has been at the heart of our work for the last 60 years. First as the Council of Churches, and now as the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, we have had chaplains serving in our community in various ways. Rev Julius continues the long tradition of sharing our caring and compassion with a religiously diverse world”.

*Submitted by Channing Miller, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. If you want to submit an Opening hearts article, email to [channingmiller99@gmail.com](mailto:channingmiller99@gmail.com).*



## Executive Director's Report

Dear Friends,

None of us could have guessed what a whirlwind we've been through these last couple of months. Some of our congregations had live streaming, now almost all of us have some kind of online presence weekly. Some of us used Zoom in order to do meetings for our regional gatherings or for clergy meetings, but now almost all of us are using some kind of online gathering forum for meetings, worship, prayers, checking in. I attended a California Interfaith Power and Light national conference today on Zoom. I also imagine that we will need to keep up our online presences for some time – at least until a vaccine makes it safe for those most vulnerable to come back to corporate worship – and we may choose to keep an online option for the “congregation-at-home.”



The good news of this Season of Care for COVID-19 is that the air is much cleaner, pollution is down, and even wildlife has returned to many areas that human noise and presence overcrowded them out of. The bad news is that our social safety net is getting tested like never before. The amount of unemployment in a high cost region is putting many families and individuals at risk. Food insecurity, the need for help with rents and mortgages, over taxed health workers, stressed out parents who are busy teaching home schooled kids and perhaps also taking care of aging parents – it can all seem too much.

As the saying goes, we are not all in the same boat, but we are all in the same storm. Even now, as most of us are staying at home and protecting our health care system, our fears can easily get the most of us. Let us consider then, how it is we can be a part of the system of neighborly care? How can we support those who are struggling the most right now? In these pages, you will see some of the ways we can do so. Winter Nights Shelter transformed itself to keep up with the Health

(continued on next page)

## *Executive Director's Report (continued)*

Department protocols. Felicity Grove used her sewing expertise to make masks. Rev. Julius's work at Juvenile Hall has been transformed, but he is creating ways for pen pals to connect with young people there.

Here at the Interfaith Council, we have tried to keep the lines of communication open between our religious leaders to share best practices around technology and community organizing. We've put together 7 different websites on our new website with informational resources around what agencies need donations, how to volunteer if you are well enough, applying for PPP loans, and how to get emergency help if you or a member of your congregation needs financial help.

All of our meetings are now on Zoom, and you are always welcome to join our Meaningful Mondays check-in, the Elected Council still meets the second Thursday of the month, SOJA meets on the second Wednesday, and our May Retreat got postponed until May 31st, the Sunday after Memorial Day weekend online. Other online Interfaith gatherings are on our Events page. Please remember to post your events there for others to find, and for me to share with the whole county in our eBlasts.

The goal I had set for 2020 was increasing our YouTube presence, and we now have many recordings of Interfaith programs, interviews with the diversity of our Elected Council on timely topics, and a recording of the Interfaith Vigil for those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 we did with Mt. Diablo UU Church on May Day.

As an extrovert, I can't wait for our gatherings to resume. As a realist, I'm preparing myself to be ready to be as flexible as I can to continue working online in the meantime. I hope you've had a chance to reach out to the communities of faith near you and yours. Don't hesitate to call or email me with your ideas, a ha moments or inspirations that are seeing you and yours through this Season of Caring for each other. Oh, and check out our new logos, and our new motto: "*Caring, Diversity, Compassion.*"

*Rev. Will*



## **Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County**

**SOJA meets the second Wednesday of each month from 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm.**

**\*\*May 13 meeting now on Zoom due to COVID-19\*\***

### **WHAT WE DO:**

- Speak out collectively on issues of conscience
- Advocate for social justice at the policy-making level
- Act when speaking out and advocacy fails
- Organize community forums to address critical issues
- Arrange time for interfaith worship, dialog, community understanding

### **All are welcome - Zoom Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/94533838950?pwd=WEEwZGNVcFpobS9qazNlbG5EYS9EZz09>

Meeting ID: 945 3383 8950

Password: 5878423

One tap mobile:

+16699009128,,94533838950#,,1#,5878423#



Dear Winter Nights Family Shelter Friends,  
We hope that this update finds you well. We have managed to successfully adapt to shelter-in-place! Families are healthy, staff is tired, but healthy too.

We have more good news to share, during the first month of shelter-in-place, two families found housing and moved into new homes. We are grateful to our congregations who have stepped up to host the shelter for up to 4 weeks at a time. Volunteers who would usually be prepping food are now busy organizing restaurant prepared meals and groceries for breakfast and lunch.

Huge thanks also goes to our many donors who are helping to cover the unanticipated costs of 24-hour operation. Donations have funded meal deliveries, increased staffing costs, and the delivery of games and activities to make time pass productively.



[From Danielle John, Executive Team Member,](#)

### Winter Nights Family Shelter Program

*Please join us in thanking our Winter Nights staff. The crisis has shone a spotlight on their remarkable strength and dedication. Without our usual army of volunteers shelter staff have taken on so much more. Setting up new schedules for families and children, helping with transportation, encouraging adults to work on getting housing and following health standards to the letter. **You are our heroes!***

## ICAN Corner

• Regular monthly meetings are on third Thursdays from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm in Rm 16 at Hillcrest Congregational UCC.



May ICAN meeting will be on Zoom  
May 21 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm [Link](#)



### Volunteer Opportunity:

Want to make a difference in an elderly person's life? For as little as a few hours a week as a **Meals on Wheels Diablo Region volunteer driver, Friendly Visitor or Friendly Caller**, you can make a profound difference in the life of an isolated senior and your own life as well! Volunteer drivers deliver hot nutritious meals to the "hidden hungry" - vulnerable seniors who can't get to a supermarket or are too frail to cook. As a Friendly Visitor or Friendly Caller you'll provide a welcome phone call or a weekly visit to the growing number of seniors who are isolated and alone.

If you're interested in these volunteer opportunities or others at MOW Diablo Region and want to make a difference in an elderly person's life, contact Lee Davenport at 925-954-8736 or [ldavenport@mowdr.org](mailto:ldavenport@mowdr.org).

## Spring Events . . .



- **Monthly Interfaith Dialogues - Elected Council Meeting**

Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am online at zoom. Check out this [Link](#) for the conferencing information. Join from 7:45 to 8:15 am for a meditation with singing bowls with Ben Jones.

- **Mother Earth Day Retreat –**

*Spirituality of Honoring and Protecting Mother Earth with Skylar Wilson and Jen Listug.*

Second in a series of four, quarterly retreats has been postponed until Sunday, May 31st, 2:00 - 6:00 pm online with zoom.

Registration is here: <https://tinyurl.com/SpritOfMotherEarth> [Link](#) at the event page.

- **Third Retreat on July 26th:**

Led by Phillip Scott of Ancestral Voices leading us in Native American thought and rituals.

- **Fourth Retreat on October 18th:**

Led by Rev. Kristin Powell from Unity Walnut Creek leading us in New Thought ways of creation care.

### Other Interfaith Retreats available this year!

**July 19th** - Dr. Mirabai Starr, the author of *Wild Mercy: Living the Fierce and Tender Wisdom of the Women Mystics* will also be leading a retreat on Sunday, July 19, at Unity of Walnut Creek! Save the date!

Questions? Contact Rev. Will McGarvey at 925.933.6030.



## New YouTube Channel!



There are 7 new videos at the ICCCC YouTube Channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCghSWmM76ihEAd3rZw9dBxQ/featured>

- [Interfaith Vigil for those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 hosted by I4C & MDUUC.](#)
- [Interview with Chaplain Margaret Niles on Grief and Loss during Covid-19](#)
- [April 9th Elected Council Meeting of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County](#)
- [Medicine of Interfaith in Times of Crisis with Phillip Scott of Ancestral Voice \(Native American\).](#)
- [Randy Thomas Interfaith Interview](#)
- [ICCCC International Women's Day Panel - 2020](#)
- [Pres. by Malik Mujahid, Pres. of Sound Vision, on the plight of the Uyghur Muslims in China](#)

## Meaningful Mondays

an ICCCC Online Chat and Check-in  
Mondays @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
Free

The Interfaith Council will host open Zoom Chat for an hour on Mondays [at noon](#) through the Summer.

*For those that are able to join we can share some best practices, support one another, and share the needs of the community together.*

**Topic: ICCCC Meaningful Mondays**

**Time: [12:00 PM Pacific Time](#)**

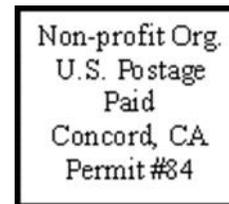
Every week on Monday from noon to 1:00 pm. Bring a prayer or short reading from your tradition(s) to share.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/248542648>  
Meeting ID: 248 542 648

One tap mobile  
[+16699009128..248542648#](https://t.me/joinchat/16699009128248542648) US (San Jose)

# The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

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Treasurer.....Ken Sargent  
Executive Director.....Rev. Will McGarvey  
Juv. Det. Chaplain.....Rev. Julius Van Hook  
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**To request a paperless newsletter and to receive our bi-weekly E-Blasts,  
E-mail Charlotte Ginn at [eye4ceeoffice@gmail.com](mailto:eye4ceeoffice@gmail.com)**

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 I4C or Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and mail it to our office at our new address!  
404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. For credit card donations, visit our website: [interfaithccc.org](http://interfaithccc.org). Thank you!

**We Have Moved! Update your records!**  
Many thanks to Walnut Creek United Methodist Church for the decades we were able to office there. We needed more office space for our growing Winter Nights staff and other programs.  
**Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County**  
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**PLEASE PRAY FOR... (in our rotating circle of prayer):**  
Ik Onkar Peace Foundation, Dublin • Buddha Gate Monastery, Lafayette • Lafayette Christian Church, Lafayette • Lafayette United Methodist Church, Lafayette • Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian, Lafayette • Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lafayette • St Amselm's Episcopal Church, Lafayette • St Perpetua Church, Lafayette • Temple Isaiah of Lafayette • Baha'i of Martinez • For those that experience Islamophobia or Anti-Semitism • For the Interfaith Youth Circle • Congregations going through clergy transition. • The volunteers who deliver Meals on Wheels • Those seeking employment • Those living without shelter • Those who are ill • Families separated at the border or with members detained in the US • Those detained during COVID-19.