



Ministering Together

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

Spring 2021



ICARE continues to create opportunities for us to strengthen relationships with one another and serve those in need in our county. Since our last article in December, look at what we've done:

Opportunity Junction—There were two projects in January/February:

- Interviewing skills practice**
- Informational interview fair**

Thanks to two congregational cosponsors, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and St. Isadore Catholic Church in Danville under the stewardship of Dave Longhurst, 25 interns received the help and support from volunteers. Via Zoom, volunteers helped these eager interns with interviewing skills and offered insight and information about different jobs. Everyone felt great about this project and we will be offering these projects every quarter as a new cohort of interns become available for this phase of their training.

Contra Costa County Health, Housing and Homeless (CCCH3) Food Kits — Christ the King and the First Christian Church of Concord coordinated this effort of buying and assembling 250 food kits, under the beautiful tent at Christ the King in the winter month of January, where the weather cooperated. Thanks to Carolyn Peters and Diane Maltester who marshalled this project beautifully.



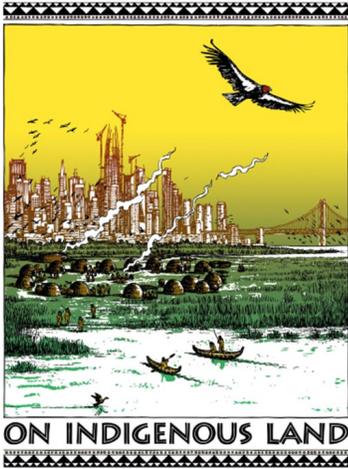
Breakfast bags for CCCH3 assembled by ICARE volunteers at Christ the King and First Christian Church

(continued on pg 2)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

A land acknowledgement serves many functions. It reminds us of those First Nations who were here before our ancestors brought our families to these shores. It helps remind us of the un-ceded rights of their dependents upon the land. It reminds me that most California First Nations' tribal and humanity was not recognized by our state, or the Federal Government, who helped pay up to \$5 per head or scalp in order to exterminate California's First Nations. You may have heard a short land acknowledgment from me at some of our events. I would like to share another version shared at the Showing Up for Racial Justice gathering last Saturday.



**Grounding, Land and Labor Acknowledgement
SURJ Contra Costa Meeting 3/20/2021
by Joani de Vries**

“Grounding: Let’s take a moment to ground ourselves. Settle your body feeling your feet on the ground, take some deep breaths and feel your lungs fill with air. Relax into this moment. Being present now can allow you to open to new information and see your own reactions.

This is my land acknowledgment, coming from my home in Clayton, I acknowledge that this is also the ancestral home on the border of Bay Miwok and Tachi-Yokuts people. I acknowledge the wisdom held by these human ancestors in their relationship to this land. I seek to learn from their long stewardship. This land was forcibly taken from indigenous people and the violence that occurred then and

(continued on pg 2)

Contra Costa County Health, Housing and Homeless (CCCH3) Hygiene Kits — Funded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Danville, in February, the San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church, Temple Isaiah and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Concord worked together to assemble 650 more hygiene kits.

Red Cross Blood Drive — Literally a gift of the heart, this project was coordinated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Danville and St. Isadore in Danville and took place in February in honor of Valentine’s Day.

Trinity Center Breakfast Bags — Three congregations with a special assist from a fourth, worked together to buy, assemble and deliver 350 breakfast bags to Trinity Center on March 23rd. Thanks for outstanding project management goes to Hillcrest Congregational Church, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian, with a special assist from Christ the Lord Church.

Coming up April 11th and 13th, three congregation are working together to buy and assemble hygiene kits for women and donating diapers and wipes to Monument Crisis Center in honor of moms. Thanks to the team planning this project: Temple Isaiah, Hindu Community of San Ramon and Danville and Peace Lutheran Church. They are hoping to buy and assemble between 300 – 500 kits! Special thanks also to the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church which is doing a special diaper and wipes drive for this project.

Future Projects

 *Opening Hearts—through Caring, Diversity and Compassion*

We are looking for more projects. If you know a nonprofit looking for help from interfaith teams, please contact Terri Moss terri-moss55@gmail.com or Greg Kremenliev interfaith-gregk@gmail.com

We are so pleased with all of your enthusiasm for ICARE. The need is great and the feeling so good when we meet and build relationships with others of different faith traditions and serve others, too. If you believe in ICARE and the power of this kind of love and service, we welcome your donations to help us help our congregational cosponsors make these projects possible.

Please check here for volunteer opportunities or to share with others what ICARE does and how it works. <https://www.signupgenius.com/>



continues now is a source of grief and shame. Acknowledging this past, I also want to work towards racial justice now and for the future in the way I live on this land which includes re-visioning the way we humans see our place in the world, how we interact with each other, as well as other species. I seek to learn from the plants and other animals who currently inhabit this habitat and those displaced or lost through violence and land mismanagement – otters, beavers, grizzlies, antelope, chub and kangaroo rat, thistle, grass and tule. For me, justice means moving from exploitation to recognizing interdependence at all levels of being. Let the earth hear this and hold this intention.

We must also acknowledge that this country was built on the free, enslaved labor of Black people and that labor was violently enforced for hundreds of years. Let’s honor the legacy of the African diaspora and black life, knowledge and skills stolen due to white supremacy.

With this acknowledgement, let’s recognize a duty to give honor through our work and continue to stand up for racial and social justice every day.

Let’s remember our purpose as a group, in organizing against the forces of white supremacy, in allying ourselves – body and mind – with the people of color led organizations that will lead us all into the future we imagine for ourselves and generations to come.”

As I have preached recently in my faith community, our congregations are mutual improvement societies, and as we do our anti-racism work in a book group, or listening to a sermon with our faith family, we have the opportunity to re-create the world in a new way. We remember the past so as to ensure we are not a party to recreating the past’s mistakes. We re-member and keep past failings alive to re-create a future beyond the colonization of the past. To re-mind us of our relationships with the rest of the animal kin-dom.

It’s a prayer ensuring that such atrocities will never happen again. May it be so.

“Envisioning a World of Interfaith Peace...”

~ Rev Will McGarvey





73% of people experience stress that affects their mental health.
77% of people experience stress that affects their physical health.

People of Color, Women, Single Parents, and Caretakers tend to

experience the highest rates of stress and this is not good.

"Stress" has become a topic that many of us cannot get away from these days. When we speak about this 5-letter word, it tends to be within the realm of mental health and focused on stress within the workplace or self-imposed stress that comes from unhealthy habits that we have developed over time. Only in recent years have we heard, seen, and read about the effects of stress on our physical health as well. And just to be clear, we're not health experts by any means over here, but if something is affecting your mental and physical health, it has to be affecting your emotional health, too.

Along with the effects it has on your entire being, stress can be triggered by any and everything around you. Some of us encounter it at the gym when we think others are watching us, while dealing with our children after a long day at work, or while checking our bank accounts to make sure we haven't spent our last dollar on gas. And today could be the day when all three happen at the same time that sends you on a spiral throughout the rest of the week. It's... *stressful!* So many of us experience stress and some of us more often than others and even at higher levels. It is more common than we would like to admit, but the hard truth is that we will always have to handle stress. And if that's the case, how do you release that energy or use it to push forward and live your best life?

You know when you have 5 assignments due for school and feel consumed by all of them? Maybe you should think about redirecting that energy of anxiety and fear to make a quick decision priority list and take an hour to work on each of them to see how much you get done. Are you having a hard time completing work from home these days? Maybe ask your manager for a mental health day and work on a goal list for when you return to work. Feeling trapped

in your thoughts lately? Try getting out into the fresh air or opening a window for the same effect. Grab a pen and a piece of paper to get the thoughts out of your head, onto a piece of paper, and into a plan for success.

We've noticed that sometimes stress requires you to get creative with the ways you resolve it. Everything isn't for everybody, and nothing has to be done the same way each time. Whatever positive, healthy idea gets you excited about the next move you're going to make can be your next step to a less stressful and more joyful existence. Choose joy and happiness by any means necessary when you can, and when you think you can't - plan for tomorrow.



Please feel free to reach out to me if there is anything I can do to support you emotionally or spiritually.

Blessings,
~ *Rev. J. X. Van Hook*



ICARE: Strengthening Our Interfaith Partnerships and Serving People in Need in Our County

It was an unseasonably but welcoming warm Sunday afternoon at the Temple Isaiah parking lot; a two-hour staging area for 30 volunteers from three faith traditions gathered to assemble over 500 hygiene kits, including tea and handmade cards and bookmarks for clients at Monument Crisis Center.

This service project, organized by ICARE, a program offered through the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, honored moms and their babies and brought together volunteers from Temple Isaiah, the Hindu Community of San Ramon and Danville and Peace Lutheran Church of Danville who share the belief that serving those in need is an active expression of their faith tradition. Additional generous donations came from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Danville, Trader Joe's in Danville (who made it possible to buy tea bags to add to the comfort of these kits) and Costco. As an added bonus, Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church conducted a diapers and wipes drive and delivered over 25 boxes of diapers and unknown quantities of wipes. This was truly a large-scale interfaith effort.

How did it begin? Temple Isaiah's VIA program and Rabbi Levine jumped on this opportunity to serve and it was a daunting task: first the fund raising, then the endless shopping at dollar stores for shampoos, razors, soaps, toothbrushes, socks, and more; project management, communication, teamwork, coordination,

logistics, schlepping, and overall logistics visioning and implementation. The Temple Isaiah sourcing and project team was outstanding: Anita Weil and Zina Rosen-Simon were our lead sourcing geniuses, and Jason Katz was our logistics wing man. Leslie Shafton, Adina Zinn and Terri Moss played supporting roles. And then there was the incredible generosity of so many temple members whose donations and volunteer time made this project possible and the drivers who dropped off the kits on April 12. Our volunteerism for this project continued with 12 volunteers from all three faith traditions providing direct service for three hours on April 13th.

Volunteers were happy to meet new friends from other faiths, in person, outside and with masks. Members from all three faith communities expressed gratitude and the fulfillment that comes from working together to help others. New friendships were forged, and memories made. It was a perfect antidote to our year of quarantine, and we hope there will be many more opportunities for service and interfaith relationship building through projects like this. If you're interested, get on the VIA mailing list. You can also check out the Sign-Up Genius for ICARE for new projects and individual volunteer opportunities. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084ea5ab28abff2-icare>

~ Terri Moss, Vice Chair  *Opening Hearts—through Caring, Diversity and Compassion*

ICARE's mission is to foster and strengthen ties among different faith traditions within our community by creating opportunities to serve those in need through nonprofit partners like Monument Crisis Center, Trinity Center, Opportunity Junction, Shelter Inc. and the county's health, homelessness, and housing department. Temple Isaiah is a member of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County.



Ministering Together



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Spring 2021

SOJA (Social Justice Alliance)

Update

[The next SOJA Meeting via Zoom is scheduled for May 12, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.](#)

We continue to monitor the Naval Weapons situation. The City Council has begun discussing the requirements for a new developer. The City Council met with the Navy on January 20th concerning cleanup of the site. It is estimated that there are 14,000 metal objects to be removed. Arsenic removal is another concern.

The SOJA Climate Group has been working with National Interfaith Power and Light to celebrate Climate Action Week, April 16 -25. The theme this year is Sacred Ground Cultivation Connections between our Food, our Faith and the Climate. The featured film will be “Kiss the Ground”, a new film about how regenerating the world’s soils has the potential to rapidly stabilize Earth’s climate, restore lost ecosystems and create abundant food supplies.

Some SOJA members took part in a Green Faith Recognition demonstration in Walnut Creek on March 11th, supporting a host of environmental issues.

March 22nd some SOJA members attended a discussion on the Bay Area’s transition from a fossil fuel production to alternative energy production. The presentation included State Representative Tim Grayson, US Representative Mark DeSaulnier, and two County Supervisors. They presented plans for the Bay Area’s transition to alternative forms of energy and how the local refinery companies will help with the change. The attendees were impressed that our politicians are spearheading this effort.

SOJA is meeting with Shelter, Inc, the Multi-Faith Coalition and other groups every two weeks to draw up and implement **Roadmap 2030**, a plan to deal with the housing and homeless problems over the next ten years.

SOJA is working with local officials to see if tiny houses, being promoted by an organization called Home Match, could be constructed on the parking lots of our faith communities. We would like to work with ICARE to see if we can develop any synergy in this effort.

The Contra Costa County Supervisors extended the existing eviction moratorium and rent freeze

protection urgency measures to shield both residential and commercial tenants. Residential renters are now protected through June 30th and commercial occupants through March 31st.

Rev. Will McGarvey is on the committee to plan and establish the new County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. SOJA expects to be active participants in this process.

The Miles Hall Foundation received a settlement payment from the City of Walnut Creek for \$4 million. Some of that money has been used for various Black History Month programs and will be used for anti-racism presentations in the future.

The Poor People’s Campaign has published “14 Policy Priorities to Heal the Nation: A Moral and Economic Agenda for the First 100 Days”. The Campaign is very encouraged with the actions that President Biden has already taken. SOJA enthusiastically endorses this statement and will be studying ways to promote them in CC Country.

The Rapid Response team has drawn up a procedure paper which outlines the scope of work and methods of the team. Rev. McGarvey explained the paper point-by-point and received the support of SOJA members. Doug Leich will join the team as the SOJA representative.

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

****All meetings 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 and 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#

The Chaplaincy Institute (CHI) is a member of the I4C community of 109 congregations and organizations serving Contra Costa County and the Bay Area. Several I4C clergy have been ordained by CHI – Rev. Channing Miller, Interfaith/Interspiritual Minister, Rev. Margaret Niles, Interfaith Chaplain, and Rev. Sharon Campton, Interfaith Chaplain. The Chaplaincy Institute is an Interfaith Seminary and Community whose mission is to educate and empower individuals for innovative interfaith service and spiritual care that heals and transforms the world. Founded in 1999 by Rev. Dr. Gina Rose Halpern, CHI's curriculum reflects and responds to the ever-changing climate of religious and spiritual life.

Board President and New Executive Director



In February, The Chaplaincy Institute named a new Executive Director, Rev. Andrew Chirch to lead the growing organization, effective March 1, 2021. Formerly serving as CHI's Minister of Operations, Chirch has been on staff since 2019. He brings over two decades of executive management and business administration experience, holds a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from Starr King School for Ministry, and is a CHI ordained interfaith minister. This promotion comes as CHI implements a strategic plan that aims to strengthen the Institute's capacity in three critical areas: leadership, financial and programmatic effectiveness.

Rev. Andrew Chirch, Executive Director

"Andrew's experience and care for CHI are proven, and he is the perfect leader to oversee the exciting enrollment and fundraising growth we are experiencing," said the Rev. Ineda Adesanya, will remain in place as CHI's Board President.



Rev. Ineda Adesanya, CHI Board President

Ordinations

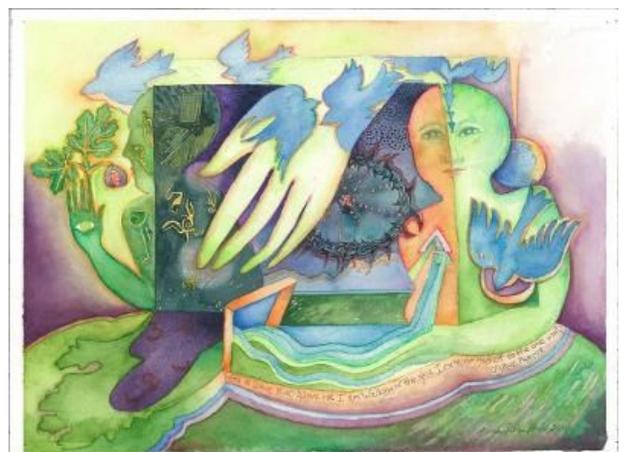
CHI holds two ordinations a year. When a CHI student decides to go for ordination and has completed all aspects of the program including interfaith studies, a 6-month second faith immersion, a 400 hour practicum, an evaluation by a PhD Psychologist to understand more deeply about themselves and their calling, a core panel evaluation consisting of the community minister, the student's academic advisor, and a choice of CHI faculty by the student. The panel will approve the student for ordination. The 2021 spring ordination was held on April 10th – there were 9 new ordinands, and 3 being certified for spiritual direction. The next ordination will be in the fall – October.

Pioneering Interfaith Ministry

CHI trains interfaith chaplains, interfaith ministers and interfaith spiritual directors, providing spiritual care to our broken world, a world never more needy of the pioneering path of interfaith practitioners. We are the imaginal cells (like those beautiful cells that turn a caterpillar into a butterfly). This is the time for humanity's longing for radical change towards peace and justice. We "imaginal cells" will serve with courage, compassion, love and fearlessness. Our hearts are open and we see the hearts of all humanity: we are the sacraments to this broken world, understanding the sacredness of our work. We lay our heads on this shoulder of hope in these dark times, and minister to all those who are suffering, bringing healing, comfort and change. This is CHI!

A poem and painting from Rev Dr. Gina Rose Halpern, founder of The Chaplaincy Institute

"Your pain will be transformed and transmuted into sweetness by the love and prayer of others who are sending you their hope. Even the prayers of those unknown to you IN your darkness, the hopes and prayers are sent. The moon is still existing in the shadow of the earth, Until drop by drop it is filled with the honey of light. Look up and hold out your tongue and receive the freely given communion from the moon, Who shines equally on all creation. It is Spring! Sweetness awaits you."



~ Rev. Channing Miller

www.chaplaincyinstitute.org

Ministering Together

Spring Events . . .



♦ **Thurs, April 22nd, 4 pm**
VOLUNTEERISM: CONTRA COSTA NEEDS YOU! <https://www.interfaithccc.org/event/volunteerism-contracosta-needs-you/>

♦ **Wed, April 28th, 7-8:30 pm**
“BECOMING MS BURTON”
Facilitated by: Rev. Larry Foy With Special Guest Susan Burton <https://www.interfaithccc.org/event/a-virtual-discussion-of-becoming-ms-burton-featuring-the-author-susan-burton/>

♦ **Thurs, April 29th, 7:00 pm**
I4C ANTI-RACISM TRAINING: Understanding Northern California Native History with Corrina Gould. <https://www.interfaithccc.org/event/understanding-northern-california-native-history-with-corrina-gould/>

♦ **Thurs, May 13th, 8:30 am**
I4C ELECTED COUNCIL MEETING
<https://www.interfaithccc.org/event/monthly-interfaith-dialogues-yes-you-are-invited/2021-05-13/>

♦ **Sun, June 6th, 3-6:00 pm**
online – NURTURING THE BE-LOVED COMMUNITY - with Rabbi Jill Perlman. \$20-40 sliding scale.
Second in a 2021 series of four quarterly retreats for everyone, from students to older people of any particular faith or life philosophy, to those with an Interfaith spirituality. Led by Rabbi Jill Perlman from Temple Isaiah. We will explore Jewish conceptions of the Beloved Community, and the relationship of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel with Dr. King and Howard Thurman. <https://www.interfaithccc.org/event/nurturing-the-beloved-community-june-6th/>



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 20 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm [Link](#)



ICCCC YouTube Channel



Be sure to watch new videos, including the **Big Questions videos on Science and Religion**, at the ICCCC YouTube Channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCghSWmM76ihEAd3rZw9dBxQ/featured>

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](#) .

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](#)

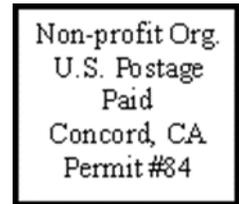
Every week on Monday from noon to 1:00 pm. Bring a prayer or short reading from your tradition(s) to share. **Register in advance for this meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqdOmprijHd0upoM17uzGXXnmgljyDqr>

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. That link will work on any future meetings, so save the link, which will be unique to you.

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

404 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
www.interfaithccc.org



Chair.....Dr. Erica Bains
Vice-chair.....Terri Moss
Treasurer.....Mary Ann Cropper, CPA CGMA
Executive Director.....Rev. Will McGarvey
Juv. Det. Chaplain.....Rev. Julius Van Hook
Singing Messengers.....Marjorie Musante
Office Manager.....Charlotte Ginn
Bookkeeper.....Christina Shih

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Please submit info for the newsletter, send copy marked to the attention of:
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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**

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. 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.
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PLEASE PRAY FOR... (in our rotating circle of prayer):
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Orinda • St. Joseph Catholic Church, Pinole • Baha’i of Pittsburg • Community Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg • Pittsburg United Methodist Church • St. Peter Martyr Catholic Church, Pittsburg • Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Sikh Temple, Pittsburg • For those that experience Islamaphobia or Anti-Semitism • Black Lives Matter leaders around the country • 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.