



Ministering Together

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

Fall 2021



ICARE is Celebrating its One Year Anniversary!

August marks one year since ICARE organized its pilot project, a cosponsored effort where Sufism Reoriented and the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church teamed up to fund raise and assemble 500 hygiene kits for the Contra Costa County Health, Housing and Homelessness department. Since then, thanks to so many of you, ICARE has manifested interfaith service in action:

- 2,150 Hygiene kits for Contra Costa County Health, Housing and Homelessness
- 950 Breakfast bags for Trinity Center
- 1,000 Thanksgiving food bags for Monument Crisis Center
- 1,100 lbs of food donated to Monument Crisis Center
- \$750 in gift cards for adults and kids living at Shelter, Inc.
- 250 food kits for Contra Costa County Health Services
- 34 Mock interviews with interns at Opportunity Junction plus an information fair
- 105 units of blood in two Red Cross Blood Drives
- 500 Hygiene kits for women plus diapers for Monument Crisis Center
- \$1,000 donated for backpacks for Monument Crisis Center
- 65 Goody bags and 75 Panera lunches for last day of school kids at Hope Solutions



Honoring Moms

Participating congregations included:

- Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church
- Sufism Reoriented
- Neighbor to Neighbor Interfaith Women's Circles

(continued on pg 4)

In Memoriam — Jackie Wan

Longtime Director for the Singing Messengers



I first met Jackie Wan in 2004 when I started as Pastor at Community Presbyterian Church in Pittsburg, where she was serving her second stint as Organist, having been the Minister of Music years before. She was very active in leadership with the Singing Messengers back then, and it was natural for me to join the Interfaith Council and see our connections continue to grow.

Jackie got her master's degrees from SFTS, where I attended, and she was as much a Christian Educator as a Church Music professional, and she was devastated when our Presbyterian Church took away the standing of the Certified Christian Educators in our local Presbyteries. I agree that it was unjust.

Jackie's love of music came through when she led and taught, and you could see her eyes light up with creativity and expression as the Singing Messengers shared your programs. You could tell how much joy she got from creating, teaching, and sharing these programs.

You all, the members of the Singing Messengers, are an expression of her musical and ministerial legacy. May you be blessed as you too find joy in sharing presence, music, and humor with those who live in the senior homes you visit.

Gifts in Jackie's memory can be directed to the Singing Messengers fund at the Interfaith Council item by putting Singing Messengers or Jackie Wan in the memo line or designate your gift to them online at our secure giving portal: <http://interfaithccc.org/donate/>



Photo courtesy of East Bay Times

"Envisioning a World of Interfaith Peace..."

~ Rev Will McGarvey

Executive Director's Letter (continued)

people or so out of 2 million would have been prepared, and that would be great. But, what if each of our members used disaster preparedness as an excuse to meet their neighbors, get to know them more deeply, and even made emergency preparedness plans together in their small portions of the county? Then, we all just might be able to make it.

What if all our congregations went through the process to become a Red Cross emergency shelter or joined the County VOAD? What if we all created an emergency plan for our congregation – and, what if we did what most congregations never do and actually practice our evacuation plans during a service each year?

Sure, it's easy to get depressed about the fires, or even the cloudy futures we see for our homes and state, but what if we used this one sacred, scary opportunity to rebuild a culture of caring, compassion and kindness by talking to our neighbors about how we are getting prepared and our hope that they are prepared as well?

I bet it could be life changing. It could be county changing. We've put together some of our Interfaith Disaster Preparedness Network resources at this site (also accessible from our homepage) and we hope you can put them to good use:

<https://www.interfaithccc.org/interfaith-disaster-preparedness-network-resources/>

"Envisioning a World of Interfaith Peace..."

~ Rev Will McGarvey



**November 14th at 6 pm potluck - 7 pm
Program in Wesley Hall at San Ramon
Valley UMC, 902 Danville Blvd. Alamo**



**We will let you know if we
will have to move the
meeting to an online,
Virtual Annual Meeting!**

**This November 14, ICCCC will
be hosting our Annual Meeting!
The only questions is if we will
also be able to have potluck
meeting beforehand, or it will
be fully online.**

**The meeting portion will
begin promptly at 7:00 pm.**

Help support our mission and activities to
counter religious exclusivism while we
continue to learn how to serve together
with our ICARE Program!

*We will be electing new members of
the Elected Council, and thank our
outgoing Board Chair, Dr. Erica Bains
for her year of leadership.*

*We will have short reports on our work together
over the last year, and we will play together in
small groups - like being at the same table -
and share about our hopes for the coming
year.*

*We will learn more about our new Interfaith
service teams, called ICARE, and we will
celebrate those receiving our annual Making a
Difference Awards!*

*For more information, please contact our new
Office Manager Charlotte Ginn at our new
office number - 925.822.3744 - or at
eye4ceenoffice@gmail.com*

ICHANGE Mentoring Program:

**Interfaith Chaplaincy
Affirming a New Generation of Excellence —
A Healing Centered Program
for Justice-Involved Youth**

ICHANGE is an initiative of the diverse faith and cultural community of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County (I4C) and the Chaplaincy of Juvenile Hall. ICHANGE committee members include Rev. Will McGarvey, Director of I4C; Rev. Julius Van Hook, Chaplain of Juvenile Hall and ICHANGE Director/Committee Chair; community members: Meg Keeley (Co-Chair), William Bruegmann, Mary Taylor, Tina Brier, and others; and Denise Van Hook, representing Gettin' Outta Dodge, which was developed by former Chaplain, Rev. Tinsdale.

During the past year, this committee has reimagined the ICHANGE program in response to the changing needs of the Juvenile Justice System of Contra Costa County. Attendance at local Juvenile Justice meetings and webinars and an extensive review of literature and evidence-based programs has led the committee to develop a healing centered training program that both reflects the beliefs and values of the interfaith community and addresses the intersectional issues and barriers experienced by justice-involved youth.

In September and October 2021, the committee will meet with volunteers who have previously served in Juvenile Hall to seek their wisdom, to update them on new challenges in the Juvenile Justice System, and to introduce our newly developed training. In addition, committee members will join Rev. Van Hook as he meets with leaders in the faith community to inform and to encourage volunteers for our programs and will publish a training schedule. Covid protocols are currently prohibiting volunteers from entering Juvenile Hall, but we hope to resume our services with youth before the end of this year.

Are you interested in becoming a mentor or volunteer with ICHANGE?

We are seeking adults who wish to help youth address the issues that led to justice involvement and to develop the skills necessary to succeed as an adult in the community. Mentors will be asked to commit to one year of service to youth both during their incarcerated and reentry to community. Persons not able to commit to a year will be offered other opportunities to volunteer. Adult mentors and volunteers will receive gratification as they engage in relationships that supports trust and personal growth, and successful reentry to the community.

Training for both mentors and volunteers incorporates the values and mission of ICHANGE and responds to the needs of justice-involved youth. Training will be offered both in-person and in Zoom sessions during a

(continued on pg 4)

ICARE (continued)

*Opening Hearts—
through Caring, Diversity
and Compassion*

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Danville and Concord stakes
- San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
- Unity Center of Walnut Creek
- Islamic Center of Walnut Creek
- Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS)
- Bay Point Sikh
- Christ the King Church
- First Christian Church of Concord
- St. Isadore
- Hillcrest Congregational Church
- Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
- Hindu Community of San Ramon and Danville
- Christ the Lord Episcopal Church
- First Church of Christ Science
- Church of Santa Maria
- Temple Isaiah
- Peace Lutheran Church



Interfaith Women's Circle - Breakfast Bags at Trinity Center



And this was during a pandemic! Imagine what we can do post-pandemic!

Thank You ICARE Team

ICARE's success would not be possible without all of you who participated and donated to ICARE. It would also not be possible without our ICARE team:

- Dave Longhurst: Outreach to nonprofits
- Greg Kremenliev: Outreach to I4C members
- Anita Weil: Sign Up Genius genius
- Terri Moss: ICARE Coordinator
- Rev. Will McGarvey: Overall guide and relationship facilitator

What's Next

We have programs coming up this fall. We need co-sponsors and volunteers. For details and to sign up go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084ea5ab28abff2-icare>

In order to continue this work, we need donations and your hands-on support. Please go to <https://www.interfaithccc.org/donate/> to donate directly to ICARE.

CARE is truly a program of pragmatic spirituality. Please add your spirit to ours in the coming year to meet new friends in our interfaith community and to make a difference in the lives of those in need in our county.

~ Terri Moss, Vice Chair



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.

ICHANGE Mentoring Program (continued)

four-week course of (2) two-hour sessions per week for a total of 16 hours of training. Content will provide background in the intersectional issues and barriers for justice-involved youth and their needs for support as they reenter community. Training will focus cultural competency and humility, principles of restorative justice, and preparation in reentry issues including independent living, education/training opportunities, employment readiness and job search skills, and community resources for ongoing support. Participants will also be instructed in protocols for working with youth both in Juvenile Hall and in the community.

Upon completion of training, mentors will be scheduled to participate in group sessions with Rev. Van Hook and youth at Juvenile Hall followed by matching with individual youth. Once matched, mentors will meet weekly for one hour with youth while they are at Juvenile Hall and in the community once released. Ongoing support will be provided to mentors through group meetings, consultations with Rev. Van Hook and committee members, and through provision of resources and materials for ongoing self-education as well as additional training opportunities.

We welcome interested individuals who are committed to the mission, vision, and values of ICHANGE and dedicated to companionship with youth to address the issues that led to justice involvement and to help them develop the skills needed to succeed as an adult in the community.

For more information, please contact: Meg Keeley, ICHANGE Co-Chair through the I4C office 925-822-3744.

THE RESPECT PROJECT

The Respect Project is a special project of The Christian Science Monitor, a weekly magazine published by The Christian Science Church whose stated purpose from its beginning in 1908 was "to injure no man, but to bless all mankind." The Monitor doesn't exist to just tell the news but to engage in such a way as to prove the power of journalism to uplift the world. Every day, Monitor reporters and editors begin their day with a simple question, "What does the world need most from the Monitor?" One day, the answer came to start a new project on respect. While undoubtedly the high goal is to love one's neighbor, sometimes a simpler first step is needed – to develop respect. So with the goal of helping to bridge the conflicts that divide us, whether they be in education, politics, race, religion, etc. the Monitor published quite a number of articles on people holding quite different beliefs but coming together in more thought-provoking and constructive ways to aid their communities. Respect is a core value in American democracy and many thinkers believe the need for respect is most urgent in order to reestablish the shared purpose of a common humanity.

ICCCC became interested in The Respect Project once we learned of the TRP's Masterclass on Respect offered live online. Monitor journalists told stories about individuals who had been adversaries had opened their hearts and gained respect for one another so that they were able to build a more humane community. Stories were told of two politicians of opposing political parties in Canada who were able to transform their relationship when they learned they were parents of special needs children; of Palestinian and Jewish women who formed a support group for peace in Israel. For more examples, the Masterclass can still be viewed on YouTube. (Just type in The Respect Project Christian Science Monitor).

This Masterclass resonated so deeply with some ICCC members that they wrote the Monitor expressing appreciation for the class. This ultimately ended up in an hour conversation with 2 Monitor staff members who showed such genuine interest in many of the activities ICCC is doing such as the Non-Violent Communication training, Diffusing Hatred, Compassionate Listening, ICARE, ICHANGE, etc. During the conversation, Will mentioned the Platinum Rule: "*Treat others the way you want to be treated*". The Diamond Rule was also mentioned: "*Think about others the way you'd like them to think about you.*"

Both the Monitor and ICCC participants in this conversation left wanting to keep in touch and wanting to find ways to work together. Perhaps ICCC can be a local example of The Respect Project. Perhaps we already are! The next online Monitor Respect Project presentation will be sometime in September. We'll try and keep you informed.

~ Nancy Battey

SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE (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=WEEwZGNVcFpobS9qazNIbG5EYS9EZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/94533838950?pwd=WEEwZGNVcFpobS9qazNIbG5EYS9EZz09)

Meeting ID: 945 3383 8950 / Password: 5878423

One tap mobile:

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

Meaningful Mondays

an ICCC 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: ICCC Meaningful Mondays

Time: 12:00 PM Pacific Time

Bring a prayer or short reading from your tradition(s) to share. **Register in advance for this meeting:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqdOmprjIjHd0upoM17uzGXXnmgljIyDqr>

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.



INTERFAITH WORKSHOPS & PROGRAMS



I4C is offering ongoing 90-minute workshops to our congregations and partners. *For health and safety purposes, we are offering our workshops via ZOOM in an online environment.* Most of our programming has been recorded after moving to online meetings during C-19. To see the recordings on our YouTube Channel – including our Anti-Racism Trainings – please visit here: <https://tinyurl.com/I4CYouTubeChanel>.

Our *Interfaith Skills Training Series* teach non-violent communications skills in a safe environment and develop tools for responding to uneasy situations and interrupting harassment and hate speech. Enjoy an informative, visual presentation followed by conversation and hands on experience through role-play.

We host these programs with the hope of building communities of care and protection of the vulnerable around us, especially in this time of heightened tension and public acts of aggression. We will share institutional and personal forms of interruption of cultural oppression, followed by role-playing different situations, to discuss how best to be present for others. We will do a quick survey of history of hate crimes in CCC and then review the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

All programs are available at your congregation or small group by signing up a team from the Interfaith Council. Contact Rev. Will McGarvey at 925-933-6030 or eye4cee@gmail.com. Please share with your congregation's education forums.



Interfaith Skills Training Series:

- **Defusing Hatred Program (part 1):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PULJub12Eg> Recorded July 21, 2021. Teaches non-violent communication skills in a safe environment and develop tools for responding to uneasy situations and interrupting harassment and hate speech.
- **Everyday Peacemaking (part 2):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIyDmLizTmo&t=100s>. Recorded July 28, 2021. Explores practical ideas for staying in conversation with others, conflict management, and how our spiritual practices help us stay calm in tense situations.
- **Courageous Conversations (part 3):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9fN960C-4M&T=6s>. Recorded August 18, 2021. Teaches Compassionate Listening Project Skills by exploring ways to hear more deeply; the necessity to set ground rules; not about changing minds; and the ability to really hear others and be heard by others. If you would like to have an experience you have had of a time when you have been discriminated against, please email Rev. Will at interfaithcccc@gmail.com.

Coming this Autumn from ICCCC and the Interfaith Peace Project —

"Coping With Nationalisms: Searching for the Soul of a Nation — Religion, History, and Politics"

Join Father Tom Bonacci and members of our Interfaith Council exploring the rise of nationalism in our time, the differences between nationalism and patriotism and the idea of exclusion, superiority and identity. Then we explore the Doctrine of Discovery, and the impacts of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny from the past to today. We then explore the relationship between systemic racism and nationalism, the 1619 Project, Critical Race Theory and current manifestations of racial animus. We wrap up the series considering anti-racist responses to the issues of identity, politics, and religion. Reclaiming the ideals of America helps us answer the religious call to systemic justice in each of our traditions. This series will be shared after the readings are finished and will be on our YouTube channel.

2021 Interfaith Council Retreats!

NURTURING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

Third 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.

Third Retreat on Sunday, September 19, 3-8 pm, at San Damiano Retreat Center includes dinner: Led by Dr. Ejaz Naqvi, from the Islamic Community of Zahra, Pleasanton. This month we will explore Islamic conceptions of the Beloved Community and the relationship of Malcom X with Dr King and Howard Thurman.

Readings will be shared before the retreat — **\$40-\$60** sliding scale. *Online registration will conclude Sept 18.* <https://tinyurl.com/BelovedCommunityRetreat>. After Sept 18, please email interfaithcccc@gmail.com to register. Give yourself a break! Join us online for an afternoon of conversation, art, silence, music, gardening, journaling, ritual and sharing spiritual practices from different faith traditions.

All are invited to participate. Handouts are included in the fee. A bibliography will be available at the event for further study.

Fourth Retreat on November 7, from 3-8 pm at San Damiano includes dinner: Led by Rev. Kamal Hassan, Pastor of Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church in Richmond, CA. This month we will explore Black Church conceptions of the Beloved Community.

2021 Interfaith Council Retreats!

Nurturing the Beloved Community.

beloved

COMMUNITY

Third 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.

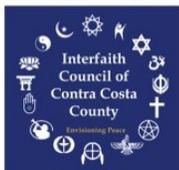


Third Retreat on Sunday, September 19th from 3-8 pm, hopefully at San Damiano Retreat Center includes dinner: **Led by Dr. Ejaz Naqvi, former member of the I4C Gov. Board and leader at the Islamic Center of Zahra, Pleasanton. This month we will explore Islamic conceptions of the Beloved Community, and the relationship of Malcolm X with Dr. King.**

Readings will be shared before the retreat.

Sunday, September 19th from 3 to 8 pm at San Damiano – \$40-60 sliding scale – includes dinner. Registration online will conclude Sept 12th.

<https://tinyurl.com/BelovedCommunityRetreat> • After Sept 12th, please email interfaithcccc@gmail.com to register. Give yourself a break! Join us online for an afternoon of conversation, art, silence, music, gardening, journaling, ritual and sharing spiritual practices from different faith traditions.



All are invited to participate. Handouts are included in the fee. A bibliography will be available at the event for further study. See the back side of this flyer for future leaders and themes. (We hope to be able to be back at San Damiano Retreat Center for the Sept. and Nov. retreats.)

Sliding scale and scholarships available for the regular program. Questions can be answered by email at interfaithcccc@gmail.com or by calling Rev. Will McGarvey, Exec Dir. of the Interfaith Council at 925-933-6030.

<https://www.interfaithcccc.org/event/nurturing-the-beloved-community-retreats-sept-19th/>

ICAN Corner

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



October's ICAN meeting will be on Zoom
October 21 @ 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 ICCC YouTube Channel at:

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

This summer, we've also recorded our Interfaith Skills Training Series and place them on our **YouTube Channel** for your use in religious education circles. The Series includes three programs, including the *Defusing Hatred* program, the *Everyday Peacemaking* program, and the *Courageous Conversations* program (introduces Compassionate Listening skills).

We are partnering with Father Tom Bonacci's Interfaith Peace Project in creating a four-part series called *Coping with Nationalism* that will be available in the same place in late September. Please take advantage of these resources.

Fall Events. . .



* **Sept 19, 3-8pm—Nurturing the Beloved Community, (see left)** We will be following best practices from the Health Department. If we need to make this an online retreat, time will be 3-6 pm. See our links for updates. Register at <https://www.interfaithcccc.org/event/nurturing-the-beloved-community-retreats-sept-19th/>

* **Sept 20, Oct 18, Nov 15, 2 pm—Big Question "What is the Purpose of Life"**, online at <https://www.interfaithcccc.org/event/big-questions-series-2021-what-is-the-purpose-of-life/2021-02-15/>

* **Sept 21, 7 pm—International Day of Peace Program**, online at <https://www.interfaithcccc.org/event/2021-icccc-international-day-of-peace-program/>

* **Oct 17-18—Parliament of the World's Religions**, online: Registration cheaper now than just before <https://parliamentofreligions.org>

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

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

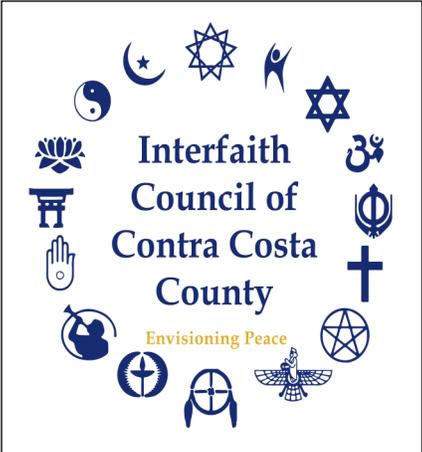
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Office Manager.....Charlotte Ginn
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Interfaith Council Newsletter, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
Office: (925) 822-3744 Mobile: (925) 933-6030 E-Mail: eye4ceeoffice@gmail.com**
Ministering Together is published four times a year by the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, a non-profit organization. For up to date information, visit www.interfaithccc.org.
**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!



PLEASE PRAY FOR... (in our rotating circle of prayer):
Stewart Memorial CME Church, Pittsburg • Baha'i Spiritual Assembly, Pleasant Hill • Christ the King Catholic Church, Pleasant Hill • Covenant of the Goddess, Pleasant Hill • Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Pleasant Hill • Faith Lutheran Church, Pleasant Hill • First Church of Christ Scientist, Pleasant Hill • Hillcrest Congregational Church (UCC), Pleasant Hill • St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Pleasant Hill • St Mark's Lutheran Church, Pleasant Hill • Islamic Center of Zahra (SA), Pleasanton • For those that experience Islamophobia 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 • Refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan.