



Interfaith Community of Schenectady, Inc.

January 2012

Vol. 40, No. 4

Goal:
Sharing together,
One God —
One Community

Interfaith News

~ Celebrating Forty Years ~ 1971-2011 ~

January Event

Sunday, January 15, 2012

First United Methodist Church

603 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305

Schenectady County Human Right Commission presents

the Martin Luther King, Jr. 2012 celebration

*"Celebrating Local Leaders; Courage and Commitment in the
Spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.!"*

2:00 pm Honorary March, Veterans' Park, downtown Schenectady
(across from First UMC)

2:30 pm Program at First UMC featuring keynote speaker Dr. Allen B. Ballard,
award winning African-American historian and novelist;
UAlbany Professor, History and Africana Studies.

Enjoy the King Community Choir!

This is a free event...a free-will offering will be received.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Our February Dinner Meeting and Program

Thursday, February 16, 2012

Emmanuel Friedens Church

218 Nott Terr., Schenectady, NY

"Current Relevancy of NAACP"

Program by Rev. Theodore Ward

Theodore Ward is founder and pastor along with his wife, [Yolanda Ward](#), of the [Koinonia Christian Center](#). The couple have 7 adult children.

He currently serves as president of the Schenectady [NAACP](#).

Dinner is \$12. Program only is free. If you require a vegetarian or kosher meal, please let us know when you make your reservation. Reservations due to the IFC office by Friday, February 10 to 370-2150 or schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com



From your co-president...

As Nikos Kazantzakis walked along a dusty path in his native Crete, an elderly woman was passing by, carrying a basket of figs. She paused, picked out two figs, and presented them to the author. "Do you know me, old lady?" Kazantzakis asked. She glanced at him in amazement. "No, my boy. Do I have to know you to give you a gift? You are a human being, aren't you? So am I ... isn't that enough?"

Many people view their faith as a journey seeking spiritual fulfillment for their own inner person. They believe religion calls them to a life of prayer, praise, fasting and devotion which is rewarded with spiritual quietude, comfort and reassurance. For them the purpose of faith-fellowship is to provide personal comfort and contentment. They separate their faith from all other aspects of life.

Others think that prayer, praise and devotion are hollow, if not selfish, activities unless they move people to become involved in alleviating the world's pain. For them the purpose of faith and fellowship is to challenge people to healing and uniting action in response to needs around us.

According to the oral history used by the writer of the Gospel of Luke, it is recounted that Jesus takes Peter, James and John to the top of a mountain. The disciples see Jesus' appearance change from the inside out – becoming brilliantly radiant. Then they become aware that Moses and Elijah are in deep conversation with Jesus. Peter is so enamored by this religious experience that he wishes it to continue. He suggests building some dwelling places there so that they could remain for some time ... disengaging from ordinary daily life so as to remain in this comfortable spiritual realm. While Peter is babbling, the tradition observes that a "light-radiant cloud" envelopes them. Sounding from deep within the cloud a voice says: "This is my beloved, marked by my love. He is the focus of my delight. Listen to him." The disciples fall down in fear. Jesus, however, reaches out and touches them gently, tenderly, saying, "Do not be afraid." Then, Jesus engages the entire episode with his kind of faith. He leads them back down the mountain and back into the more full reality of daily life.

"Listen to The eternal." Each of our faiths has some essential story/illustration calling for us to "listen to The Eternal." How we wallow in brokenness and draw others into brokenness when we choose not to listen to The Eternal. When we simply listen to the human dimension, we say: "Be afraid. Protect. Isolate. Strike out." Afraid in daily life, we create an environment of faith as "comfort" only. We take a stance of either/or: "either" like us, "or" against us. Our faith causes division.

Nevertheless in sacred texts of most faiths we are invited to "listen to The Eternal." When we do so listen we hear, "Do not be afraid." And as fear is displaced with trust in the goodness of life, we are led back into the reality of daily living as it is intended for us to live it. Within interdependence. Mutual affirmation and acceptance. Intentional hospitality and generosity. "We" thinking, instead of "us" and "them." To express God-goodness in our daily interrelationships. And compassionate, fair, sacrificial love seeking the well-being of all others.

As we move into 2012, may it be our commitment to listen together, with one another, to the "ways-in-which-life-works-for-all" offered by the Creator and Celebrant of all of life. Those ways bring challenge out of comfort and comfort through challenge. The person and congregation that bridge the deep comfort and significant challenge of The Eternal will come to affirm and cherish the inner ways of life at its best:

fulfilled life comes to us on its way to someone else;

life receives joy and peace as it focuses outward as well as inward;

the fellowship of comfort and challenge exists for those who are not yet a part of them;

life is to be given away and not kept; and,

The Eternal honors individuals/congregations that look to each others' mutual welfare.

Shalom, Salaam, the peace which passes understanding, *Bob Long*



From your co-president...

Dear Friends,

A blessed New Year to all! Let it be one filled with good health, joy, peace and memorable good times.

Please forgive your IFC Council for not having dialogue programs in December and January. The former, traditionally co-sponsored with the Jewish Federation in celebration of human rights, did not materialize as planned. Since January always honors the legacy of Martin Luther King and February, Black History, we felt it would be acceptable to combine both those themes into one dinner/dialogue program. So I am pleased that the Rev. Theodore Ward, the new president of Schenectady's NAACP, will take on that challenge for a program set for Thursday, February 16th at Emanuel Friedens Church. Rev. Ward is also the founder and president of the non-denominational Koinonia Christian Center. Since there is no formal program in January, we urge our membership to attend the annual Martin Luther King program at listed on the front page.

It is a time of joy for Catholic Christians who received word recently that Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, a Mohawk Indian woman who lived during the 1600s in the villages around Auriesville and Fonda, will be canonized (elevated to Sainthood) sometime in the coming year. She was declared "holy" in 1980. Verification of a documented miracle was the final step in formally declaring Kateri a saint, the first Native American to reach that status.

Best wishes to our part-time office manager Barbara Paul, who has left Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church to take a similar administrative position with SICM. As in the past, Barbara will be able to continue working for us as well. On behalf of IFC, I would like to extend our appreciation to Eastern Parkway for all the help they gave us while Barbara was employed there.

All non-profits are feeling the loss of revenue because of the economy. That includes us too. Help us have a 41st year....renew YOUR membership and ask a friend to join us. Interfaith dialogue is most essential in 2012. Anti-Semitism and hate crimes, especially against the Muslim community, continue to rise. As people of faith, we are challenged to eradicate these blights through education, compassion and non-violent action.

Peace, Shalom, Salaam, **Audrey Hughes**

Upcoming events....

Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area invites you to join them for stories of Strong Women: Under the Tent of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar on Tuesday, February 7, 6-8:45pm at the Islamic Center of The Capital District, 21 Lansing Road N, Schenectady. The Abrahamic family has crystallized mainly into three religious communities -- Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our Tent of Abraham series began in 2006 when we celebrated the confluence of our holy days with stories from our faith traditions. Now, in our sixth year of coming together, we will share stories about the strong women in our scriptures, histories, and communities, welcoming your stories as well. All members of the human family are welcome! Program 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. – Welcome and Pot-Luck Supper, Please bring a vegetarian dish to share: 7:15 - 8:45 - Stories of Strong Women- All storytellers and listeners are welcome! Stories should be under 10 minutes and may be personal in nature. This circle will be facilitated by Dr. Mussarat Chaudhry, Nancy Marie Payne and Audrey Seidman For additional information, please call Gert Johnson, 374-0637

Jewish Community Center of Schenectady presents "Inside Hana's Suitcase"

Sunday, February 26, 6pm (optional pizza and salad dinner at 5pm) 2565 Balltown Rd., Niskayuna, NY. Tickets: JCC members: \$7, non-members \$8, students \$3—Dinner an additional \$6

"Inside Hana's Suitcase" is the inspiring documentary about the delivery of a battered suitcase from Auschwitz to the Tokyo Holocaust Museum. A name scrawled on the suitcase leads a Japanese teacher to unravel the mystery of its owner. Based on the best selling book, the 60 minute film is one of astonishing power and hope.

Reservations to the JCC, 377-8803.

One Mountain, Many Paths In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the quick reaction was to take sides. Words spoken by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at a public address in NYC in 1998 became prophetic. He said, "To be kind, to be merciful. No single religion can claim a monopoly on such teachings. The problem, as I see it, is not with the faith; it is with the faithful ... From war to discrimination, and other violations of human rights, what we see all too frequently is a lack of tolerance and understanding between religious traditions. There is a tendency to think of *us* and *them*. People fear what is different and demonize the *other*." Dr. Patrick Swift has given us the book whose title leads this article. In it are references from the major religions of the world giving bases for peace. You will find a few of the listings below:

"Religions are different roads converging upon the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal."
Mahatma Gandhi

"There is only one God and He is God to all; therefore it is important that everyone is seen as equal before God. I've always said we should help a Hindu become a better Hindu, a Muslim become a better Muslim, a Catholic become a better Catholic. We believe our work should be our example to people."
Mother Teresa

"All men approach me, so I receive them. All paths, Arjuna, lead to me."

Bhagavad Gita 4:11 Hinduism

"We shall worship thy God, the god of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, One God, and unto Him we have surrendered."

The Meaning of the Glorious Quran 2:133 Islam

Confucius said, "There are many different roads in the world, but the destination is the same. There are a hundred different deliberations, but the result is one."

I Ching, Appended Remarks 2.5, Adapted. Confucianism

"One universal Creator God. The name is Truth. Creative Being personified. No fear. No hatred. Image of the undying, beyond birth, Self-existent."
Shri Guru Granth Sahib 1:1.1 Sikhism

"He is the one God, hidden in all beings, pervading the universe, the inner Self of all beings, the witness, overseer of the work, dwelling in all beings, free from all qualities, the only one."

Svetasvatara 6:11, Adapted Hinduism

"Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?"

Malachi 2:10 Judaism

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

I Corinthians 12: 4-7 Christianity

And so it is within the sacred texts of varying faiths the world over. Will we be faithful to the essence of each others' faiths and see that our differences are actually blessings to one another?

Share Your News with Interfaith Individuals, congregations and community groups are asked to share their news with Interfaith: notices and articles, awards, birthdates, special anniversaries, deaths, hospitalizations or illness. It is wonderful to share good, as well as sad, news – especially because it opens the way for the healing love among us to flow like refreshing streams.

Recently received

Memberships: Audrey Hughes, Marilyn Soffer, Neil and Jane Golub, Dot Thompson, Linda Dollase, Miranda Rand, Angela Marczewski, Erica & Len Berger

Institutional Memberships: Faith United Methodist Church, First Reformed Church Schenectady

General Donation: GE Matching Funds

Thank you for your support!!

Offered by Dominican Retreat and Conference Center:

Chicken Soup for the Body and Soul

Thursday, January 26, 6:30pm

We'll start with homemade hot chicken soup with warm, crusty bread followed by a presentation nurturing your relationship with God and concluding with evening prayer in the spirit of Taize.

Presenter Monica Murphy, CSJ is a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet who is presently director of Pyramid Life Center.

Fee is \$20. Reservations to 393-4169

Visit dominican-spiritual-life-center.com for info on other DRCC offerings.

Offered by Capital Region Theological Center:

Befriending Our Inner Teacher

Thur.-Fri., March 8-9, 9am-4pm (register for one day or both)

Rev. Marjorie Thompson, author of *Soul Feast*, will lead a two-day workshop designed to help us gain a deeper understanding of ourselves, those around us and the Christ who dwells within each of us.

"I am convinced that for those who take this book seriously and apply it to their individual as well as communal lives, a true transformation will take place." Henri Nouwen

Fee is \$85 for one day and \$165 for two days. Reservations to 462-2470

Visit www.crtc.org for info on other CRTC offerings or for on-line registration.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!! SPRING IFC DINNER MEETINGS:

Wednesday, March 14, 2012

Church of the Immaculate Conception

400 Saratoga Road (Route 50), Glenville, NY

Dinner 6:30pm; Program, 7:30 pm

"Jesus from the Perspective of Three Faiths"

Father James Kane, Rabbi Beverly Magidson and Imam Djafer Sabkhaoui, presenters

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Location tba

Dinner 6:30pm; Program, 7:30 pm

"Wisdom Tales"

Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area, presenters

IFC'S Annual Meeting in May: date and location tba



ENSEMBLE CONGEROS



**P
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**AnNur
Islamic
School
Children's
Chorus**



**Pakistani Choir
Emmaus UMC
Noah Luft-Weissberg**



Albany District Zion



**Special thanks to all of our
2011 Interfaith Concert
participants!**

Interfaith Calendar for January 2012

- 1 Mary, Mother of God -- **Catholic Christian** -- a celebration of the mother of Jesus.
Feast of St Basil -- **Orthodox Christian** -- commemoration of St Basil the Great, who wrote a Eucharist Liturgy which bears his name.
Gantan-sai (New Years) -- **Shinto** -- New Year festival observed with prayers for inner renewal, prosperity and health.
Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus -- **Orthodox Christian**
- 5 Twelfth Night -- **Christian** -- observance of the close of Christmastide and prelude to Epiphany which begins the next day.
Guru Gobindh Singh birthday -- **Sikh** -- honors the birth of the founder of the Khalsa who lived from 1469 -1539 c.e.
- 6 Epiphany -- **Christian** -- commemoration of the manifestations of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The homage of the magi to the infant Jesus is honored by some. For others the Baptism of Jesus is the remembered event. A season of the Christian year from the close of Christmas to the beginning of Lent.
Feast of the Theophany -- **Orthodox Christian** -- Feast to recall the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the baptism of the Lord.
Dia de los Reyes -- **Hispanic Christians** -- Hispanic Celebration of Epiphany ... also a time of giving/receiving gifts to celebrate the gift of God's love for us.
Nativity of Christ -- **Armenian Orthodox** -- 12 Days of Christmas -- An Armenian tradition that places the holiday on Jan. 6 expands celebrations.
- 7 Feast of the Nativity -- **Orthodox Christian** -- the remembrance and glorification of the Nativity in the flesh by the Most Holy Virgin Mary of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 8 Baptism of Jesus -- **Christian** -- commemoration of the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus.
- 9-12 Mahayana New Year -- **Buddhist** -- In *Mahayana* countries the *new year* starts on the first full moon day in January.
- 13 Maghi -- **Sikh** -- commemoration of a battle in which forty Sikhs died for Guru Gobindh Singh Ji.
- 15 World Religion Day -- **Baha'i** -- day dedicated to the unity and oneness of all world religions.
- 17 Blessing of the Animals -- **Hispanic Catholic Christian** -- observance of showing respect for the domestic animals that mean much to people. Observed on various dates -- especially related to St. Francis.
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity -- **Christian** -- observance with prayer for the restoration of unity between the churches of the faith.
- 20 Timkat -- **Ethiopian Orthodox Christian** -- Epiphany celebration of the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River.
- 23 Chinese New Year - **Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist** -- Begins a fifteen Day Festival for Chinese people of all religions. Family reunions with thanksgiving and remembrance of departed relatives take place. Traditionally a religious ceremony honors Heaven and Earth.
- 25 Conversion of Saint Paul -- **Christian** -- observance of the experience of the Paul when he was confronted by a vision of Jesus while on his way to persecute Christians and became a leading presenter of Jesus. Observed at worship services.
- 28 Vasant Panchami -- **Hindu** -- celebration dedicated to Saraswati, goddess of learning.

**Be always at War with your vices,
at peace with your neighbors,
and let each New Year find you
a better person.**

~ **Benjamin Franklin**



IFC OF SCHENECTADY

811 N. Brandywine Ave
Schenectady, NY 12308

Phone: 518-370-2150

E-mail:
schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com

Office hours:
M, W, Th.—3-4:30pm
Fri.—1-2:30 pm

Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com

Mailed January 6



Next Coordinating Council Meeting

January 13, 2012

Future 2012 meeting dates coming soon!

All meetings are held at Faith United Methodist Church, 811 Brandywine Avenue, Schenectady, and begin at 11:00 am.

You may attend Council Meetings if you are interested. Members and friends are invited to attend any Council Meeting to observe. If there is an interest that you would like considered, please contact Audrey Hughes, 393-5121 or Bob Long, 377-7732 at least two weeks ahead. Thank you.

Do we have your email????

**Please send your email address
to us at
schdyinterfaith@yahoo.com!**

We're on the web!

**Check us out at
Schenectadyinterfaith.weebly.com**

Event info!

Membership info!