

M inistering Together

“News, comments and events of concern to the religious community”

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

Fall Edition 2013

Message from Executive Director, Rev. Will McGarvey

Dear Interfaith Friends,

Just over a year ago I was asked to serve as your Interim Executive Director. It's been a full year spent listening to you and visioning about what the future of the Council can be. I'm happy to announce that the search committee and Council have named me your Executive Director. I will be installed at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 3rd at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church - LOPC (details below).

Because the Interfaith Council spent time visioning and restructuring for the future, I believe we will be able to move together into the future with a clearer sense of our purpose and in a more streamlined manner. Of course, there may be some growing pains, among them an increasing shift to electronic communications with one another. In the long run, I think we will be able to include more young and middle age people in our programs and service opportunities. We always rely on our congregations sharing our common work together, whether that is Winter Nights, Singing Messengers, Mt. View Shelter, or the Juvenile Detention Center.

One new area we need greater congregational involvement in is encouraging high school aged teens to get involved in our new Youth Council. We tried to get enough teen participation in the leadership to plan an Interfaith Youth Camp for this November but we haven't found a time that works to get a critical mass together to do the planning together. Since the planning itself is some of the most important part of the leadership development component of the program, we will have to postpone the Interfaith Youth Camp until the weekend of February 21-23, 2014. We hope that as teens meet each other at our October 27th and Jan 26th Youth Council Events (see interfaithccc.org/events/). If you know one or two 9-12th graders in your community who has leadership skills or could develop their skills, please ask them to call me at 925.597.9797 for more information.

All are invited to our ICCCC Annual Meeting Sunday, November 3rd at LOPC. The potluck begins at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a vegetarian or halal/kosher dish to share. The program begins at 7:00 pm where we will have reports from Dr. Charles Tinsley, Gwen Watson & Judy Stillman and myself, as well as recognizing our Making a Difference honorees. This year we will also be electing members to serve on the Elected Council. If you need child care, please call me at 925.597.9797. Please make sure there are representatives from your congregation in attendance!

We Belong To Each Other,

Peace stream.....

Will

Rev. Will McGarvey
Executive Director

"We Belong to Each Other"

Religious and Cultural Observances

November 2013

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Saints Day - Christian • Samhain and Beltane - Wicca/Pagan
1-5	Northern and Southern hemispheres
2	Deepavali - Hindu
3	All Soul's Day - Catholic Christian
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diwali - Deepavali - Hindu - Jain - Sikh • Jain New Year - Jain
12	Hijra - New Year - Islam
13	Birth of Baha'u'llah - Bahai
4	Ashura - Islam
14	Christ the King - Christian
17	Winter Lent begins to 12/25 - Orthodox Christian
21	Guru Nanak Dev Sahib birthday - Sikh
24	Yule - Christian
26	Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom - Sikh
28	Day of the Covenant * - Baha'i
28—Dec 5	Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha * - Baha'i
30	Thanksgiving - USA - Interfaith
	Hanukkah * - Judaism
	Saint Andrew's Day - Christian

December 2013

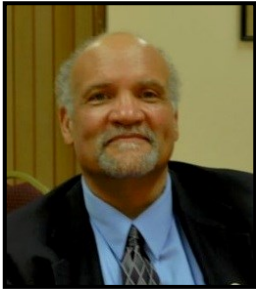
1 through 24	Advent (first Sunday) - Christian
6	Saint Nicholas Day - Christian
8	Rohatsu - Bodhi Day ** - Buddhist
12	Immaculate Conception of Mary - Catholic Christian
16-25	Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe - Catholic Christian
21	Posadas Navidenas - Christian
	Solstice
	Yule * - Wicca/Pagan northern hemisphere
	Litha * - Wicca/Pagan southern hemisphere

24	Yule - Christian
25	Christmas Eve - Christian
26	Christmas * - Christian
28	Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra)** - Zoroastrian
29	Holy Innocents - Christian
31	Feast of the Holy Family - Catholic Christian
	Watch Night - Christian

January 2014

1	Mary, Mother of God - Catholic Christian
	Feast of St Basil - Orthodox Christian
	Gantan-sai (New Years) - Shinto
	Holy Name of Jesus - Orthodox Christian
5	Twelfth Night - Christian
6	Guru Gobindh Singh birthday - Sikh
	Epiphany - Christian
	Feast of the Theophany - Orthodox Christian
	Nativity of Christ - Armenian Orthodox Christian
	Dia de los Reyes - Hispanic Christian
7	Nativity of Christ ** - Orthodox Christian
12	Baptism of the Lord Jesus - Christian
13	Mawlid an Nabi * ** - Islam
16	Maghi - Sikh
16-19	Tu BiShvat * - Jewish
17	Mahayana New Year ** - Buddhist
18-25	Blessing of the Animals - Hispanic Catholic Christian
19	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Christian
25	World Religion Day - Baha'i
28	Timkat - Ethiopian Orthodox Christian
	Conversion of Saint Paul - Christian
	Feast of the Holy Family - Catholic Christian
	Chinese New Year - Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist

Chaplain's Corner



*Rev. Dr. Charles Tinsley
Juvenile Detention Chaplain*

Nearly twenty years after accepting, however reluctantly at the time, God's gracious call to this remarkable opportunity to serve, I still wake up every morning with great anticipation of the day's work ahead.

One probation department institutional supervisor once most accurately labeled the population served by the department and this chaplaincy ministry, as "the hurt and hurting babies of our community."

Admittedly, many of those who find themselves in custody have hurt other people. It has been my experience though, the vast majority were hurt first--some even violently attacked while still in the womb, via the daily introduction of poison into their vulnerable developing bodies through the umbilical cord!!

These we seek to nurture, to hug, to embrace and to love are the very ones in most serious jeopardy of "graduating" down into the sewer, into the vicious, violent, dangerous and potentially deadly adult prison system. This is gravest of reality checks.

To do our job with this beaten, battered, abused and broken population of God's children, is to strive hard to break the chain of ignorance, to educate, to suggest and to help young people to explore new and positive life perspectives, to seek peace and justice in their lives and to share God's love (and ours) with these "hurt and hurting babies."

One teenager, who is now in his late twenties, some years ago expressed his appreciation, rather succinctly, this way:
"...you have showed me and taught me a lot of things including how to keep my lips zipped when I have something to share with people when really I shouldn't share my thoughts that could hurt me in the long run. It was music to my ears when you told me that my dad was missing out not being there for me and not being able to watch me grow into a young man. I love you a whole lot for that and I thank you a whole lot for being that father figure in my life."

Homeless Veterans in Need of Housing

Shelter, Inc. of Contra Costa County provides supportive services for veterans in need of housing. www.shelterincofcc.org, (925) 957-7579
Contra Costa County Homeless Services
(800) 799-6599

Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 3rd at 6:00 pm
Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 49
Knox Ave., Lafayette
A true potluck begins at 6:00 pm. The meeting begins at 7:00 pm. We will have reports from Rev. Dr. Charles Tinsley, Rev. Will McGarvey, and Gwen Watson & Judy Stillman of Winter Nights. We will be voting in new members of the Elected Council that evening. Like last year, we will be recognizing those who have "**Made a Difference**" in Contra Costa County.

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

♦ **Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris** **Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist, Walnut Creek**

On the morning this column was due, I chaired a meeting of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. We have a new practice of beginning with a question inviting us to share some aspect of our personal beliefs. On this day, the question was "What does your tradition teach about how to approach conflicts among people and peacemaking?"

The testimonials around the table were powerful—as people related their strong feelings about how their faith calls them to seek alternatives to war. I was particularly proud to be able to speak of the role of our congregation in creating the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center and the staunch activist history we have inherited.

Also poignant were the stories shared by our Muslim members, two of whom were brought to tears as they related the stories they have heard from their family and friends in the Arab states—or by watching You-Tube. One of our leaders said he couldn't sleep after watching how his religious values were being misrepresented in support of the violence in Syria.

If ever we inhabited world in which we find places where we can learn to talk across difference, this is that time and this is that place. I am proud that our youth have taken part in the new county interfaith youth initiatives and that we continue to speak out so strongly for the rights of those so often scorned—those living on limited means, immigrants, and those different for reasons of gender identity or sexual preference.

As we appear to moving towards involvement in yet another armed conflict, may we all recommit to the values of peace. To this end, we will have a labyrinth walk to mark the International Day of Peace on Saturday, September 21. This is a good chance to restate our intention to work towards connection and to work against acts of violent, be they individual or state-sponsored.

Your Words — *Windows on each other's lives of faith*

◆ Rev. Glenda Wilson

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek

Have you ever met anyone who actually admits to being wealthy? I haven't. It doesn't matter where I've lived or who I have spent time with, no one admits to having money - this includes all the people I've known with multiple homes and cars, people that don't actually 'have' to work for money in order to live, the numerous landowners I've known who own thousands and thousands of acres of some of the best farm land in the country, no one has ever said they are rich. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that we are not, for the most part, terribly comfortable with money. Whether or not we feel we have enough money, it is something we think about, want to keep, and could always enjoy a little more of.

Jesus spoke about money a lot. He spoke more about money than love or prayer. He spoke a lot about wealth, but they are jarring passages to read. He said, things like, "*It's hard for a rich person to get into heaven. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom.*" (Matthew 19:23)

It appears that money is a mixed blessing. Money can take up so much room in our lives that it squeezes out things of greater importance; things like learning how to grow into more generous, giving people. In principal, we all can agree that money can become too important to people, but, if we don't classify ourselves as rich, we can slip out of that stereotype.

Warren Buffet is making good on his promise to giving most of his fortune, 44 billion dollars, to charity, and has already given 1.52 billion to the Bill & Melinda Gates charity. The world's second richest man is giving to the richest man in the world. Buffet for years said he wasn't going to part with his money until he died, but apparently, he has changed his mind. He liked what he saw when he looked at the Gates Foundation. He wants his money to fight poverty and disease around the world. I have no idea if Bill and Melinda Gates or Warren Buffet believes in God, but I do know that these acts of generosity are acts of love that Jesus calls us to do. No, we may never have to consider what to do with 44 billion dollars like Warren Buffet but, we will have to consider if we have been faithful with what we have been given. As far as Jesus was concerned, it's not the amount that's important (remember the women with the two copper coins?) it's the generosity of heart that leads to life both here and now, and in the next life.

◆ Rev. Kathleen McShane

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

Ahh, August...the month of mixed feelings. I wonder if you're hoping, as I am, that every day is long and slow; and at the same time looking forward to the newness of all that begins again in September.

I am really looking forward to being with you in a pastoral role beginning September 1. As you may already

know, I have had several incarnations at this church—as a member, as a candidate for ministry, as associate pastor and now as co-pastor. It's an unusual thing in our United Methodist system for a pastor to have such an extended relationship with a single congregation, and I'm grateful. This feels much more to me like the experience of Dorothy getting to go home again to Kansas than it does Groundhog Day!

This time, I bring with me lots of thinking about how the church might make a difference in its community and in the world. I've spent the last three years in administration at *Pacific School of Religion* in Berkeley; and in my most recent position, I led a strategic change process that had us thinking broadly about the future of theological education. Specifically, who, besides people preparing for ordained ministry, might the study of religious traditions and intentional spiritual formation have value for? Our answer, at least tentatively, was, people who want to lead change in the world out of their own sense of spiritual calling; people who believe that the tradition of Christianity—the life and teachings of Jesus—offer a way and a set of values that can make social transformation more inclusive, more loving, and more sustainable. In short, *spiritually-formed, theologically-rooted changemakers*.

I'm pretty sure that phrase describes people who are not only seminary students; they're people who come to faith in search of meaning in their lives. Sometimes they're adults, sometimes they're youth and young adults, and sometimes they're children. In fact, I'm wondering whether *spirituallyformed, theologically rooted changemakers* isn't another way of describing "*disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*"

I believe the work of making change for good in the world doesn't always happen in, or even through, the church; it happens in our homes, our offices, our schools, our neighborhoods. Sometimes this work uses religious language, and sometimes it doesn't. I believe the church's most important work is to inspire and prepare and equip people for this work wherever they live and work and play.

What drew me to ministry was the opportunity to be with people at the most important moments of their lives, and to talk about how we might shape the stories of our lives to reflect a deeper meaning, a larger truth. I am a *United Methodist* minister because I believe that the metaphors of the Christian tradition and the story of Jesus' life offer the most truthful framework for that meaning, and the power to change our lives.

Let's talk more about all of this, and about what you're thinking. I'm so looking forward to being in conversation with you, to walking alongside of you, and to working together toward change for good in this valley and in the world.

Your Words—*Continued*

◆ **Rabbi Judy Shanks** *Temple Isaiah, Lafayette*

Where does your curiosity take you? To museums, libraries, the blogosphere, hiking trails, classrooms? What do you want to learn? Who will teach you? My nephew recently showed me a card trick he had mastered by watching a YouTube video (that happened to be in German) over and over until his sleight of hand matched the one on the screen. We learn best when we are eager to know, when curiosity fuels exploration.

And as we enter a New Year, I would ask, “Where does your Jewish curiosity take you?” Is it our history you want to learn, or does great literature draw you in? Are you a seeker of spiritual experience, eager to try new paths to a connection with God? Do you wish you knew the stories of the Torah, or knew them better? Is Hebrew still Greek to you?

Each year we try to pique your curiosity by offering many opportunities and venues for high-quality adult Jewish learning here at Temple Isaiah, and this coming year will be no exception. In fact, it should be a particularly stellar year in which to learn a wide variety of topics from many different teachers. What will make it the best year, however, is if you are here. Yes, you. You, who will deepen the class experience with your thoughtful questions. You, who will challenge us to relate ancient wisdom to modern, complex moral dilemmas. You, who will bring the perspective of growing up in another faith, or no faith. You, who are passionately curious, fueling the curiosities of your fellow learners and teachers, so that we can all reach higher, and still higher. You, who have been curious for so long, here at last, learning.

We can learn a lot about a lot of things sitting at home, in an office, or even at a coffee shop in front of a computer screen. But Jews have always satisfied their craving for knowledge by the energetic give-and-take of opinions and perspectives sitting together in twos, threes, and classrooms full of learners. Friendships and the sense of belonging to a caring community are the added blessings of learning together with others.

Are you curious yet about how Jewish learning might change your life? I sure hope so!

L’shanah tovah – May we be written and inscribed for a year of life, health, learning and joy.

◆ **Fr. Brian Joyce** *Christ The King Parish, Pleasant Hill*

The big news for the last few months has been watching the new Pope, Pope Francis, his comments and behavior.

One reporter covering his recent World Youth Day visit to Brazil commented that in most respects the flight from Rio to Rome was nothing to write home about. The seats in economy class were fairly uncomfortable and the main course was a lukewarm square of lasagna, roughly the size of a Ritz cracker; however the in-flight

entertainment was spectacular. The press was treated to the Pope, standing in the aisle for an hour and twenty minutes, taking questions on every topic under the sun with no filters or limits. Speaking without notes and delivering straight answers. Among other things one had to be amazed by the energy of the seventy-six year old Pope who had just finished a grueling seven day trip to Brazil. While the headlines focus on the Pope’s comments on gays—“Who Am I to Judge”? - it was a sprawling conversation with a transcript extending to over 10,000 words. While it would be dangerous to try to summarize our Pope up to now in a word or two, I believe it can be done without leaving out anything important.

The one big phrase to Francis’ news conference and possibly his entire papacy up to date has got to be “**Joy and Mercy**”. It seems to me that each recent Pope has had a catch phrase that represents his core emphasis. For John Paul II it was “Be Not Afraid”, a call to receive the Church’s outreach and missionary swagger after a period of introspection and self-doubt. For Francis, his signature is “Joy and Mercy”.

A recent statistical analysis of the words used most frequently by Francis since his election has found that the single most commonly used term is “joy”, used more than a hundred times, followed closely by “mercy”, which the Pope has used close to one hundred times. Francis is not a doctrinal radical and there will be no substantive change of the Church’s position on issues of gender and sex or anything else, nor would you expect him to alter Church doctrine in an in-flight news conference. The revolution under Francis is not one of content but of tone. Regardless of whether there will be big change in Church teaching, the tone has changed significantly. This a Pope who will look for every chance to express compassion, staying clear of finger wagging unless he feels it is absolutely necessary.

In the popular press Francis has been dubbed the “Pope of the Poor” and the “People’s Pope” and both are important, but if you want a formula that clearly expresses the beating heart of Francis’ papacy, my candidate is the “Pope of Joy and Mercy”.

◆ **Sister Ann Weltz** *Bay Area Crisis Nursery, Concord*

Due to a financial crisis in October of last year when funds for payroll were in question, I set two major financial goals for 2013; FIRST – increase donations so that the two and a half months of reserves would remain untouched SECOND – increase the reserve fund to a safe level of at least six months by the end of the year. We reached out to the faith communities and organizations that have supported us, asking for the opportunity to present our mission, invited individual members to join our ministry and asked for the financial support needed to keep a safe place available for the children of our community. So many of you welcomed us and responded to our plea for help. Thank you!

Seven months of the year have passed and the reserves are still untouched. Historically this has never happened! We are not yet OK but we are headed in the right direction. Hopefully we can leave the reserves untouched and add to them during the upcoming giving season. Thank you for your generous support – your overwhelming response to our needs.

I would love to share our story with your community, your organization or a neighborhood gathering. It is not too late to set up a speaking engagement this year. Your support, your generosity, will enable us to serve the families of our community and keep their little ones safe during times of crisis.

The most important link to turning this year around so that BACN will be able to continue serving the children of our community in the future years is you. For over 32 years I have been privileged to work with so many of you whose heartfelt responses to my pleas have kept the children of our community safe. Today I would like to introduce you to just one of these very special BACN supporters. Meet Bill Gallagher, a husband, father, grandfather, childcare volunteer, Board member, and now President of the BACN Board of Directors. Bill's favorite role is childcare volunteer. His love of play, his willingness to listen, and his calming effect makes him a favorite among the little ones. The children find a friend they can love and trust so they often share their stories with Bill. Generously Bill shares with us these special moments through poetry. Following this message is Bill's poem "Sierra's Story". It comes directly from his heart as does the request that follows. I hope that this will give you a small glimpse of the great good you are doing through your support of the Bay Area Crisis Nursery.

May God bless each of you, your families, your friends and your loved ones. May we respect love and care for each other as we journey through life together.

◆ **Dr. Amer Araim**

President of the Islamic Community Outreach of California, member of Walnut Creek Islamic Center

Joyful Religious Occasions, and Sad Realities of the World

On Tuesday, October 15, 2013 Muslims all over the world celebrated Eid Al-Adha (the Feast of the Sacrifice) connected with the saving of the life of Prophet Ismail, the first son of Prophet Ibrahim (Peace be upon them), as well as the Hajj (pilgrimage) of Muslims to Mecca. The specific related verses of Quran state: "Undoubtedly the first House of worship of Allah (God) ever built for humankind is the one in Mecca, a blessed site, and guidance for all the worlds. In it are clear signs, and the station of Ibrahim, where he used to worship, whoever enters it is safe." "Remember! We (God) identified the site of the Sacred House to Ibrahim, saying "Worship none beside Me, sanctify My House for the wor-

shippers, who would be circulating around it, and stand in prayers, bow, and prostrate themselves, and make a proclamation of pilgrimage to humankind..." In accordance with Quran also, Prophet Ibrahim made a supplication to Allah (God) saying: "Our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley near Your Sacred House (in Mecca.) I have done this in the hope that they would establish prayers, therefore turn the hearts of people toward them, and provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks."

Millions of Muslim men and women gathered in Mecca chanting " O' Allah (God)! We are responding to Your call, You have no partner. All praise, bounty and domain belong to You. You have no partner." Muslims have two feasts, this one it is called Eid Al-Adha. Muslims celebrate the Hajj, and distribute meet to the poor and the needy. In accordance with Islamic beliefs Allah commanded the Archangel Gabriel to take a ram to be sacrificed, in fulfillment of the dream Prophet Ibrahim (Peace be upon them.) The Hajj rites are connected with Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail, and later on Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon All of them) came to confirm the traditions of the Prophets before him. Muslims in America and all over the world, who did not perform pilgrimage this year, followed the tradition by fasting on Monday before the feast, that is called Arafat, the name of the mountain in Mecca. On that day all pilgrims gathered on that mountain, and pray together. On Tuesday Muslims in America, and all over the world went to the masjids (mosques) or in certain cases, and due to the great numbers of people participating in prayers, Muslims pray in parks or large halls. On that day Muslims try to wear something new, or wear the best clothes they have. Children were given gifts on this blessed occasions. Remembrance of and giving to the poor are parts of Islamic worship and practice.

The other feast is called the Feast of breaking the fast which took place seventy days before this feast. Both occasion are celebrated in accordance with command of Allah.

As stated before, we are celebrating, in the meantime our hearts are bleeding for the continuing upheavals, deaths and destruction in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Pakistan, Afghanistan and other parts of the Muslim world. In addition, we were worried about the consequences of the stalemate in our government, and the attempts in Congress to derail the health care reform, as well as other social and economic programs directed mainly to help the poor and the needy. We are pleased that an agreement reached, and hope that there will be further agreements will be reached to avoid attempts to politics with basic needs of the American people.

We as people of faith should continue to demand peace, and justice in America, and all over the world.

◆ **Warren McGuffin**
Thomas Food Project
San Ramon Valley UMC

Making Progress in Haiti

I am happy to let you know that Ecole Methodiste de Thomas was able to benefit from the Intel Foundation Grant.

The *Intel Foundation Grant* is focused on providing basic computer training to vulnerable populations, especially women and young girls in rural Haiti to help them gain skills that make them more employable and to help schools develop models to earn some money by offering computer classes to the community. The participants are asked to pay a small amount so that the school can prepare and pay trainers for future courses.

Through the program the schools receive a curriculum, coaching for the organization of the training and two trainers for the first two courses. At many of the schools we also trained teachers to deliver the program in the future on their own. More than 25 schools benefited from the program.

Michelet worked with James, our project manager, to prepare for the course, and James promoted the training in the community and recruited participants. The basic course was offered to two groups in the lab at Ecole de Thomas. Rico Mondesir and two additional trainers who had been trained through the grant delivered the training. The fee for each participant was 250 HTG (equivalent to \$6 US). The participants were teachers, business women, nurses and students from nearby schools. More than half of the group had no prior knowledge of computers. A total of 30 community members received a certificate at the end of the course, 19 of them were women.

"I came to take this course because I did not know anything about computers, but now thanks to this course I know a lot about computers. Everything I learned in this course is important. It will help me to do my job," explained Claudine, a 30-year old nurse.

"I knew some things about computers, but I wanted to learn more as I feel it will make me more competitive. Important things I learned include how to save documents and how to save on external hard drives and how to research on the Internet. I know these things will help me in my work," said Sylvain, a student searching a job.

I am very proud of James Lazarre and the Thomas Food Project staff in Thomas. Through your giving these things are possible.

◆ **St. Anselm's acquired an AED and trained people to use it**

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) claims over 350,000 lives in the United States each year. The most common cause of SCA is ventricular fibrillation—when the heart's electrical impulses become irregular and the

heart is unable to pump oxygen-rich blood through the body. If left untreated, death occurs within minutes. Because SCA is one of the leading causes of death in our nation, it is a major public health problem. Traditionally the ability to defibrillate outside of the hospital setting was solely the responsibility of emergency medical services (EMS) personnel. Survival was dependent on early activation of the 9-1-1 system and early arrival of EMS first responders. Today, the new generation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), make it possible for lay people to provide defibrillation. These new AEDs are safe, effective, low maintenance, and easy to use. Approximately 10 to 20 lives are saved each year in Contra Costa County alone. Many people are alive today because someone started cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and used an AED on them when they experienced SCA in a public setting. St. Anselm's has purchased an AED. In June and July, 17 parishioners were trained in its use and in the use of CPR. These people took an online course, passed an online test, and took a live two-hour hands-on course.

The course was taught by our own Chris Young, an 8 o'clocker experienced in the science and application of emergency medical response. Trainees were Carol Fontana, Fred Toney, John Sutton, Sheila and Norm Gorsuch, Doug Merrill, Sara and Al Swimmer, Wynne and Gary Bacon, Sally Roberts, Michael Hollinger, Art Clarke, Diane and Tim Brown, and Martha and David Watson. We can turn to these people, and of course, Chris Young, for help in the event of a cardiac emergency at church. Janet Nadol, who was on the Contra Costa Sheriff's Search and Rescue team for six years (with Chris Young), is another person we can count on. The AED is currently hanging on the north wall of the main room in Jackson Hall, near the fire extinguisher and temperature controller.

With Gratitude

■ **Children's Toy and Clothing Boutique**

Thanks to Reverend Will McGarvey, who sent out news of the free Children's Toy and Clothing boutique, sponsored by the Saranap Community Association at Lafayette's Meher Schools on October 6. And thanks to all who passed that message to members of your congregations.

Thanks to the efforts of churches, food pantries, homeless, shelters, and other agencies that reach out to low income people, attendance at the event tripled, jumping to 518 parents and children, who came from Bay Point, Concord, Vallejo, Richmond, and many other cities. One homeless woman came to the event by bus.

Two thousand items of clothing and thousands of toys and books were given away. The boutique was founded five years ago by Murshida Carol Weyland Conner, spiritual director of Sufism Reoriented, with the hope of providing gently used children's items to families and to help realize a goal of universal prosperity. The Saranap Community Association will hold the next boutique on December 22. Donations of children's clothing, books, and toys may be requested.

For more information, call Susie Kohl at 925-451-0668.

■ Shelter Inc.

Here's an update as to the success of Shelter Inc.'s SSVF program this past year serving Contra Costa County. Since Oct. 1st, 2012 we have served 262 veteran households, including 402 family members. Our target was to serve at least 225 households. 92% of our clients were housed at the time of exit (86% is the national average).

All of us here at Shelter Inc. very much appreciate the strong collaboration and support you provide with your programs for our veterans.

General Announcements

California Council of Churches Covered CA

Health Care Education Bay Area Events: The "Covered California" health exchange will soon be operational, and the California Council of Churches is one of the 48 recipients of major grant funding to help you, your congregational members, communities that you serve, your friends and family all sign up for health care coverage through the Covered CA health exchange.

The California Council of Churches has six regional Certified Educator partners available to come to your church, social justice meetings, ecumenical and interfaith gatherings, campus ministries, ministerial associations, interfaith labor organizations, or denominational conferences.

The Educator for the Bay Area is Marijke Fakasiieiki who will be leading presentations in September to offer basic information on how the new health care exchange operates, how to obtain subsidies and supports for the costs of individual and family health care, how to obtain enrollment assistance during the Open Enrollment period starting this fall through the end of next March 2014, and she is available to answer many of your questions.

Marijke is available to present information in your congregation: Contact: Marijke Fakasiieiki, (510) 529-5011, marijke@calchurches.org

Coming Events

■ A Talk on "If God is All, Where is He at this Moment?"

on Friday, November 8, at the Danville Senior's Center (Veterans Memorial Bldg.), 115 E Prospect Ave., Danville from 7:30 to 8:30 pm. The First Church of Christ, Scientist is sponsoring this free talk for the community and child care will be provided. The speaker is John Q. Adams, an international speaker and a practitioner and teacher of Christian Science healing, from New York. The lecture will also have simultaneous Spanish translation. For more information call 925-837-1081.

■ Curious About Islam?

Friday, November 8th from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm
San Damiano Retreat Center, Danville
Let by Brother Mike Minton, OFM

"...we are called to respect the religions of the other, its teachings, its symbols, its values." – Pope Francis

For many, Islam is a foreign or even scary religion. This day is designed to be a relaxed introduction to Islam. The day will include resources calling Catholic Christians to interreligious dialogue, the basics that Islam teaches about Christianity, and an opportunity to process your own feelings and thoughts about Islam.

Because we will be attending the Mosque in the afternoon, please be able to drive yourself and possible offer transportation to another for carpooling. Since we will be their guests, it is important to be aware of basic norms about clothes. It is appropriate to wear loose-fitting clothes. For men, a long sleeve shirt and pants. For women, long pants or a full-length skirt and a long sleeve shirt that covers the chest. It is not a requirement for female guests to cover their heads. However, many do and it adds positively to their experience. If you want to wear a head covering, please bring a scarf of about 56" x 24". Br. Michael will help you put it on. For further questions, concerns, or fears about the day, please contact Br. Mike. Register online at www.sandamiano.org.

■ The Barbara Lee and Elihu Harris Lecture Series

Daughters of the Civil Rights Movement Speak

Saturday, November 9th at 7:30 pm
Oakland Marriott City Center
1001 Broadway, Oakland

Four women share views as daughters of participants in Civil Rights struggles that changed America:

- Donzaleigh Abernathy
- Luci Baines Johnson

Coming Events *continued...*

- Kerry Kennedy
- Peggy Wallace Kennedy

Moderated by Melva Davis. The East Bay Commemorates 50 Years: 19963 Events of the Civil Rights Movement. Limited Seated. RSVP today at 510.434.3988. Droberts@robertsevents.com.

■ Habitat for Humanity

Muslims, Jews, Christians, and people of other faith traditions will gather in Bay Point to work on building a home for a family of six, a project of Habitat for Humanity. Faith in action calls for helping others, especially the poor and vulnerable, and learning from and about one another. Participants will share a meal and reflect on their experiences.

This project will include some light construction work. Participants are encouraged to bring tools.

This is one of five interfaith service days to be held this year at different locations throughout the Bay Area. This project is sponsored by Islamic Networks Group (ING) and funded by the San Francisco Foundation, Silicon Valley Foundation and the One Nation Bay Area Program.

This event is free, but advance registration is required with ING Programs Manager Henry Millstein: Serviceday@ing.org This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. or 408.296.7312.

Date: November 10, 2013
Time: 8:30 AM-4:00 PM
Location: Bay Point

<http://www.ing.org/component/content/article/181-events/1090-interfaith-service-day-habitat-for-humanity-walnut-creek>

■ Interfaith Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 24th at 4:00 pm
in the Social Hall at
East County Shared Ministry
(CPC & FCCA)
200 E Leland Rd., Pittsburg

*Bring a side dish or dessert to share
(vegetarian, kosher/halal are all welcome).*

East County Shared Ministry will provide halal/kosher and traditional turkey, with stuffing, potatoes and gravy to share.

This is an East County Wide celebration. Interfaith Clergy and Faith Leaders will be given a chance to share thanksgiving blessings from their traditions.

Please RSVP to Jessica Natal at 925.439.9361 or cpcpittsburg@sbcglobal.net. All are invited.

■ Interfaith Thanksgiving and Chanukah Celebration

Congregation Beth Chaim
1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville
Wednesday, November 27th at 7:00
Interfaith San Ramon Valley will gather for a delicious way to enter into Thanksgiving and light candles on the first night of Chanukah. For more information call (925) 736-7146.

We will also have barrels from the food bank to fill with non-perishable groceries and a collection will go to Shelter Inc. Bring your joyous spirit.

■ Community Thanksgiving Meal

Volunteer Opportunities
November 28th from 1 - 3 PM at
St Paul's Episcopal Church in Walnut Creek,
1924 Trinity Ave. Walnut Creek

Share Thanksgiving with those who are living without homes or far away from friends and family. Trinity Center's Community Thanksgiving Meal is in the planning stages. It was successful last year because of you. Won't you join us once again this year? Currently, there are plenty of volunteer positions open.

See more information online and click here to let Pam McGrath know which positions you will fill.

Other ways you can help:
share this opportunity with your neighbors, co-workers, church or family donate financially to Trinity Center for this meal or other needs

Volunteer Opportunities

■ Bay Area Crisis Nursery Volunteer Opportunities

From Sat. Dec. 7 through Sun. Dec. 22 there will be four shifts each weekday and three shifts on weekends to wrap presents for BACN's children:

Weekdays	Weekends
9—11 am	9—11 am
12—2 pm	12—2 pm
3—5 pm	3—5 pm
6—8 pm	

These times are designed to provide an opportunity for all groups to participate—students, working people, retired people. Groups of up to 12 are welcome. Smaller groups will share a session.

Two sessions for those not affiliated with a group will be available—an evening session on Tuesday evening 12/17 from 6—8 pm and a daytime session on Thursday 12/19 from 9—11 am.

Coming Events *continued...*

Sign-ups this year will be done online via SignUpGenius. We will send an email on October 11 giving the link to SignUPGenius and the information on how to sign up.

Please email events@bacn.info with your email address so we can get this important info to you. If you don't have email, please call Sandy at (925) 685-6633.

Please do not call us to select a date—dates will only be available through SignUPGenius beginning October 12.

■ **Contra Costa Interfaith Housing Opportunities for Involvement Fall/Winter 2013**

Adopt-a-Family for the holidays: We are beginning preparations for our annual adopt-a-family drive. We ask that your congregation adopt families in need at Garden Park (Pleasant Hill), Lakeside (Concord) and our East County (Pittsburg and Bay Point) programs. Profiles of each family will be provided, along with a wish list and guidelines on how to help. We match up individual families with each donor to ensure that each of the residents receive something special for the holidays. Although details of the families and their needs are provided, anonymity will need to be preserved in order to protect confidentiality.

Ruby Boots 2014: There are many ways to get involved and support this important and festive annual fundraiser. You can join the planning committee, become an event sponsor, donate a live or silent auction item, or volunteer at the event on February 1st.

Be a Volunteer Tutor: We are in urgent need of your help in our afterschool tutoring program. Volunteers are needed in our Concord, Pleasant Hill, and Pittsburgh locations to help provide academic support to at-risk children in elementary, middle and high school. The commitment is for one afternoon per week.

Provide a meal for a monthly tenant meeting: Every month, residents of Garden Park Apartments attend a tenant meeting and share a meal with each other. These community meetings are essential in building the community, reinforcing the tenants' roles as stakeholders in their community and allowing them to learn important skills needed to continually improve their lives. Congregations provide a meal to feed 35-40 people. We are currently looking to fill the 2014 calendar.

Conduct a seasonal event for the tenants: In December, with the help of a group or family, we host a holiday dinner at each of our sites. Residents participate in the planning and execution of the event and we often have activities for the kids, music, and fun. These festive events help develop community cohesion and provide good memories for all.

Business Advisory Board: Join this dynamic group of local business people who come together to support residents and the work of CCIH. The purpose of this board is to enhance business relationships and support for CCIH and the people we serve.

Volunteer/Outreach Steering Committee: Be a part of this dynamic and growing group of congregation representatives and individuals who provide ongoing guidance, support and review of CCIH's current volunteer and outreach programs.

GPA community building project: As construction of the new community center at GPA nears completion, we will be in need of many volunteer groups to help on a variety of service projects including: assembly and arrangement of furniture, landscaping including laying sod, planting, and garden creation, painting, and many more fun tasks. These projects will take place in late November and December.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Joe Golinveaux at joe@ccinterfaithhousing.org or call (925) 944-2244. We need your help!

Save The Date

■ **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**

Monday, January 20th at noon
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1924 Trinity Ave., Walnut Creek

The Social Justice Alliance has decided to move this event from Civic Park to St. Paul's Episcopal for many reasons, including more accessible parking (across the street). Save the date now with a reminder that we will be at St. Paul's Walnut Creek. There will be a Gospel Choir from St. Benedict's Catholic Church in Oakland and Rev. Kamal Hassan from Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church in Richmond will bring the message.

■ **Interfaith Youth Film Night**

January 26th 5:00 to 8:00 pm with dinner.
Also for 6-12th graders. Please RSVP for your group.
Free food, site to be determined.

■ **Interfaith Youth Camp**

February 21-23
This camp is for 9-12th grade Interfaith Leaders who want to grow in their Interfaith immersion and leadership skills. Application forms will be available soon.

Social Justice Alliance Of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

***All are welcome at the November 13 SOJA Meeting
7:00 pm, WC United Methodist Church, Wesley Room***

SOJA Members and Their ACTION Agenda

Immigration, CROP Walk, MLK Celebration, SOAW, and Winter Nights Shelter, and Mid-East were among the topics discussed at the October Meeting.

Homelessness. SOJA, the Interfaith Council, and Trinity Center were represented at a meeting with Walnut Creek Police Lt. Bryan Hill concerning the plans to move homeless individuals from encampments in the city. Another meeting is being planned, as is the closing of the encampments without provisions for the homeless who are living there.

The Winter Nights Family Shelter opened for 2013-2014 Session at St. Anselm's Episcopal Church on Monday, October 7. By mid-week the shelter was full: 27 clients, 12 parents and 15 children (9 boys, ages 1, 1, 1, 2, 6, 7, 7, 8, 13; 6 girls, ages 2, 3, 10, 11, 11, 12). Lafayette United Methodist provided meals, volunteers, and services for the second week at St. Anselm's. The families are currently at a church in Concord. For reasons of safety and confidentiality, the host site is not publicized. Thank you, St. Anselm's and Lafayette United Methodist Churches.

CROP Walk. **Anne Crisp** reported that the CROP Walk's new route through downtown Walnut Creek seemed to be more popular with the participants than the Iron Horse Trail. She said it was well attended, the tee shirts for the first hundred people to register got the event off to an early start, Will McGarvey's guitar and songs added a festive air, and treasurer Kathy Evans and the registrars were pleased with the donations. The total funds collected will be announced as soon as all walkers collect from their donors. CROP Hunger Walk changes lives by providing one-year nutrition packets for children, seeds and tools to help a family grow their own healthy food to eat and to sell at market, pigs in a pair, 10 meters of a borehole well for a community, and other Church World Service food and water programs.

MLK Celebration. Natalie Russell announced that the January 20, 2014, MLK Celebration will take place at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hall, instead of at the Walnut Creek Civic Auditorium. She and her Planning Committee are finalizing the arrangements and will produce a save-the-date flyer.

Immigration. Dean and Chris Coons, Delores Loague, and Michael Fischer continue to work with other members of the MICA program to help pass a fair immigration law with a path to citizenship. They consider the passage of the Trust Act and the Drivers License for non-citizens two major accomplishments for California. Natalie Russell, Chris and Dean Coons, and Gwen Watson attended the monthly prayer vigil at the Richmond Detention Center on the first Saturday of October.

Middle East Matters. The SOJA Statement on Syria was sent to the Contra Costa Times for the Op-Ed page, but it was not printed.

HR 35 Higher Ed Legislation is being followed by **Doug Sibley**, who will update the members of SOJA in November on its progress.

SOAW. The Vigil to close the School of the Americas Watch will be held the weekend of November 22-24 in Columbus, GA, at the gates of Fort Benning. Two members of SOJA are considering attending.

- Gwen Watson, Chair

The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

1543 Sunnyvale Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA 94597
<http://interfaithccc.org>

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Please send copy marked to the attention of:

Interfaith Council Newsletter, 1543 Sunnyvale Avenue, Ste. 103 Walnut Creek, CA 94597-1903

PH: (925) 933-6030 FAX: (925) 952-4554 E Mail: eye4cee@aol.com

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■ The Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County depends on contributions from member congregations and individuals who support our mission of promoting interfaith understanding. To make a tax deductible donation, please make your check to Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and mail it to our office at 1543 Sunnyvale Avenue, Suite 103; Walnut Creek, CA 94597. For credit card donations, please visit our web site: <http://interfaithccc.org/>. Thank you!

THANK YOU CORNER:

The Interfaith Council is blessed to have dedicated volunteers who come together to collate, fold, sticker and label our newsletter in preparation for mailing. If you are interested in being part of this joyous band or in being the mail out coordinator, call Jessica at (925) 933-6030. Thanks to all who made the Walnut Creek Crop Hunger Walk a success. We had 182 walkers! A total of giving will be reported at the Annual Meeting. Please turn in any other donations to the office by Nov. 4th.

PLEASE PRAY FOR (in our rotating circle of prayer):

San Ramon Valley UMC, Alamo • First Baptist Church, Antioch • First Congregational Church of Antioch • Interfaith Peace Project • St. George's Episcopal Church, Antioch • St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Church • St. John's Lutheran Church, Antioch • Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Bay Point • The Chaplaincy Institute, Berkeley • Brentwood Community UMC • Awakening, Brentwood • St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Brentwood • For those that experience Islamaphobia • For the new Interfaith Youth Council • Congregations going through clergy transitions. The kind-hearted souls who deliver Meals on Wheels. Those seeking employment.