

INTERFAITH EXPLORER

SAN FRANCISCO INTERFAITH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2008

OUR MONTHLY GATHERING - ALL ARE WELCOME

THURSDAY, May 8, 2008, 8:00-9:30 A.M.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Franklin & O'Farrell

Parking at St. Mary's Cathedral across the street

Continental Breakfast hosted by Sister Sukanya, Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center

SPEAKER: Kevin Bayuk started as an artist and filmmaker, explored an eight year meander as a technology entrepreneur (involved in starting three companies, most recently Clarus Systems www.clarussystems.com) and has now graduated into life as an activated advocate for ecotopian living. Currently he leverages his skills and relationships to develop organizations and projects that regenerate healthy ecosystems and socially just environments. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Urban Alliance for Sustainability and Daily Acts. He facilitates permaculture trainings, provide eco-systemic business consulting and share my skills in organic gardening and composting in community workshops.

Kevin was recently featured in the San Francisco Chronicle article written by Matthew Green on Saturday March 22, 2008, entitled: **FARMING THE CITY**
Can SF's Vacant Lots Become Garden Plots? The article reports on Kevin's ambitious program to create organic and sustainable gardens in San Francisco's many vacant lots:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/03/22/HOEIV3PM1.DTL>

Kevin's presentation promises to be of particular interest in this era of rising food cost and interest in preserving the environment. He will inform and challenge the interfaith community to participate in this important endeavor.

FAITH JOURNEY: Camilla Smith
Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saint

SAN FRANCISCO INTERFAITH COUNCIL PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

CREATING A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CONGREGATIONS WORKSHOP
May 9, 2008, at St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco 8:15am-Noon.

Since the devastating Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, the San Francisco Interfaith Council (SFIC) has been an instrumental stakeholder in the City's disaster preparedness equation. SFIC Board leadership and staff regularly attend and represent the SFIC at civic, foundation and agency meetings related to disaster preparedness. In its capacity as liaison to interfaith congregations, the SFIC is recognized as a vital participant in the City's coordinated preparedness and response plan.

Thanks to the generosity of the Walter and Elise Haas Foundation, in May of 2006, the SFIC was able to host a highly successful Disaster Preparedness Workshop for congregations. 107 congregations were represented.

In the past two years much progress and many developments have been made in this critical area. The SFIC, at its February 2008 Board of Directors meeting, voted to sponsor a follow-up half day workshop to be entitled, "Creating a Culture of Preparedness."

In addition to congregation clergy, lay leadership, clerical and facility staff, invitees will include organizations and agencies constituting the San Francisco Disaster Preparedness and Response System.

The half-day Workshop will be comprised of five elements: 1) Self-Preparation; 2) Staff Preparation; 3) Facility Preparation; 4) Managing the Immediate Aftermath; and 5) Managing the Long-term Aftermath.

There is no cost for the workshop. Congregation clergy, staff and lay leadership are urged to attend. For more information please contact Michael Pappas, michael@sf-interfaith.org.

Special Thanks are extended to the San Francisco Foundation FAITHS Initiative and SF Department of Emergency Management for their generosity in underwriting this important event.

SFIC REPRESENTED AT LOCAL SF ASSISI EVENTS

SFIC Executive Vice Chair Rita Semel and Executive Director Michael Pappas represented the SFIC on April 22 at the San Francisco Airport Mayor's Greeting Reception for Franciscan Friars who gifted the National Shrine of San Francis with a "rock" that Saint Francis himself used to build his Porziuncula (monastic cell) in Assisi. After the Assisi earthquake of 1997, during the retrofit of 1998, the "rock" was taken from the Porziuncola. The delegation of Franciscan Friars presented this relic to Mayor Gavin Newsom, Archbishop George Niederauer and Project Chair Angela Alioto. This important Franciscan relic symbolizes global peace, love for the environment, love for the sick and the poor, and, of course, love for all animals.

Among his many labors of love, St. Francis preserved and restored this small ancient chapel called the "Porziuncola" in Assisi in 1206. This is where he lived, created the

Franciscan order, and died. The National Shrine of St. Francis in San Francisco (at the corner of Columbus Avenue and Vallejo Street) is in the process of building the only replica in the world of St. Francis' Porziuncula.

Pappas was among those to speak at a reception celebrating this gift on the evening of April 24th at the De Young Museum's Wilsey Court. His remarks addressed the important interfaith efforts of the saint. SFIC Chair Rev. James DeLange and Board Members were in attendance.

SF INTERFAITH LEADERS INTERVIEWED ON VOICE OF AMERICA

Two Voice of America reporters visited the San Francisco Mosque and met with a group of interfaith leaders to learn about interfaith activities in the Bay Area. Participants included host Soulemein Ghali, Episcopal Bishop Marc Andrus, Sheila Andrus, Rev. Paul Chaffee, of the Interfaith Center at the Presidio, Rev. Keenan Kelsey of Noe Valley Ministry and one of her congregants, Rev. John Oda, Michael Pappas and Rita R. Semel of the San Francisco Interfaith Council. The conversation ranged from interfaith activities, locally and globally and personal stories.

MUSLIM LEADERS FROM EGYPT VISIT INTERFAITH CENTER

Ten sheikhs from Cairo visited the Interfaith Chapel for an hour and a half conversation with staff and board members from the San Francisco Interfaith Council and Interfaith Center at the Presidio on April 27. Our Muslim guests came to this country on a U.S. State Department-funded visit. These are engaged leaders in Cairo's community (academia, the press, television, business, engineering, and more) as well as spiritual leaders of particular

Sufi communities. They are intent on learning how we deal with grassroots interfaith relationships. An expert translator traveling with them kept the conversation quick and alive.

Egypt, we learned, is religiously diverse, but much less so than the Bay Area – that Sunnis can be Sufis, not just Shias – that most Egyptian Muslims (70 percent) affirm the peaceful, heart-felt approach of Sufism – and that fundamentalist Muslims get a huge press though they represent but a tiny percentage of the population.

Our Egyptian visitors learned about the kind of relationships we enjoy between and among followers of the Abrahamic traditions, to say nothing of the joy that comes from the wider diversity that defines us.

In 1992 Rita Semel and an ad hoc group of interfaith activists proposed having a place in the new Presidio national park where inter-religious dialogue could address the major issues of the day. This past April, along with our Egyptian visitors, the Chapel hosted interfaith conversations about... coordinating anti-poverty legislation; clergy as first responders to Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan; the place of Earth-based religions in the larger culture; and coordinating Darfur efforts.

SFIC TO CO-SPONSOR COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CA PROGRAM

The Commonwealth Club of California has graciously invited the SFIC to co-sponsor a lecture entitled, "Imaging Islam," given by Munir Jiwa, PhD, M.Phil, MTS on May 12, 2008, at 6:00pm at the Commonwealth Club (595 Market Street, San Francisco CA 94105 Next to Montgomery BART). Munir Jiwa is the founding director of the Center for Islamic Studies, at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. Reduced ticket price is available for those affiliated with the SFIC by making advanced online reservations (www.commonwealthclub.org) or by calling (415) 597 6700.

SFIC BOARD MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN TURKEY.

SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas and Board Member Abby Michalson Porth were invited by the Pacifica Institute to participate in the Intercultural Dialogue Trip in Turkey from May 15-26, 2008. The intent of the Intercultural Dialogue is for community leaders in both the public and private sector to build bridges and strengthen relationships between the people of Turkey and the United States. In addition to visiting historical and religious sites, those who attend visit local educational institutions, the headquarters of a national newspaper, meet with religious and governmental leaders, and interact with local Turkish families. Officials from SFSU, UC Berkeley, the City & County of San Francisco and other community leaders will join Pappas and Porth. Last year, SFIC Executive Vice Chair Rita Semel, and Board Members Rabbi Stephen Pearce and Rev. John Oda attended.

WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM

The 19th consecutive year of providing shelter by the SFIC ended March 1, 2008. During the shelter period the San Francisco Interfaith Council provided 8,427 shelter beds for homeless men at four congregation sites; Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Marks Lutheran Church, and First Universalist Unitarian Church. 24 congregations provided meals. Episcopal Community Services, once again, staffed this effort. A special observance to recognize host and provider congregations will take on Thursday, June 12, 2008, at the Urban Life Center of St. Mark's Lutheran Church (8:00am-9:30am). Thank you to all.

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT IN BAYVIEW HUNTER'S POINT

Wednesday, September 10, 2008

Partnering with the San Francisco Interfaith Council

Join the faith-based community and Project Homeless Connect in providing access to needed services for people experiencing homelessness in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood. The community of congregations will provide much needed volunteers, choirs for entertainment, staff for the spiritual area, and bible donations for the Book Area. Services offered at PHC include medical and dental, employment, legal assistance,

DMV IDs, and much more. PHC clients can access, in one day, what may otherwise take eight months to achieve.

Location is along Keith Street between Armstrong and Carroll Streets, including: SF Community Health Center, BVHP Foundation & Bayview Playground.

Rental Needs unique to PHC at Bayview for the day of the event are the following:

- 100 6'x18" tables
- 500 chairs
- 12-18 10'x10' pop-up tents
- 3 portable restrooms - ADA accessible

To volunteer, please register at: "<http://www.ProjectHomelessConnect.com>> or call 415.255.3674

"I've been homeless for five years, and I've never seen anything like this in my life...Project Homeless Connect must be serious." Red B, PHC Client

INTERFAITH FAIR TRADE COFFEE UPDATE

An important effort of the SFIC is promotion of the partnership between Thanksgiving Coffee Company and the 705 Jewish, Christian, and Muslim farmers of the "Delicious Peace" Mirembe Kawomera Cooperative in Uganda.

An outreach partnership effort initiated by Thanksgiving Coffee in Partnership with the SFIC is the *Interfaith Youth Group Service Project*. Continuing exploration of social justice as a foundation for interfaith relationships, our new youth group will devote a day to service in support of the Quesada Gardens Initiative in the Bayview Hunter's Point neighborhood. Youth and youth leaders from all of SFIC's member communities are encouraged to join this day of work in QGI's community gardens, as well as our ongoing efforts bring our young people together to explore the pursuit of justice as a foundation for peace. Our daylong service project will take place on Sunday, September 14. For more information on how to join our youth group, or participate in this day of service, please contact Michael Pappas (michael@sf-interfaith.org). This day of service is made possible by a generous grant from the Interfaith Youth Core, as part of their nation-wide effort to support the emergence of an interfaith youth movement.

To learn more about the good works being undertaken by THANKSGIVING COFFEE point your browser to: <http://www.mirembekawomera.com/blog/2008/01/03/interfaith-youth-group-launches-in-sf/>

Or view an informative YouTube segment at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rw4QcFtWio>

Please contact Rita Semel (rrsemel@gmail.com) or Ben Corey Moran

(bcm@thanksgivingcoffee.co) if you are interested in joining the faith communities and organizations currently purchasing and providing fair trade coffee from this unique interfaith cooperative.

<http://www.sfconnect.org/AboutUs/index.php/docs/BVHPVolFlyer.pdf>

SFIC TO CO-SPONSOR 2008 CROP/HUNGER WALK

Together with 125 walkers the 2007 Golden Gate Hunger Walk raised over \$17,000 for people served locally by the San Francisco Food Bank, the Interfaith Homeless Shelter of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, and for aid in global hunger and poverty alleviation by Church World Service and other international humanitarian agencies.

The 2008 Walk will be held - Sunday, Oct. 19, 1:30 p.m. Registration and 2:00 p.m. Walk at the West Bluff Picnic Area of Crissy Field.

We walk because they walk! We walk with hungry and homeless on the streets of San Francisco and with people affected by the World Food Crisis on the streets of Port Au Prince in Haiti and more than 80 countries around the world!

We are a "CROP" Hunger Walk! For more than 60 years, Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty has reached out to most vulnerable groups in the U.S. and around the world. To learn more go to www.cropwalk.org.

We are counting on you to help us reach Our Goal for 2008: 25 Groups with 250 walkers, raising \$25,000! Now more than ever, hungry people are depending on us to walk and to give generously.

Get started early:

- Save the 2008 Walk Date - October 19th - on your group's calendar.
- Walk on the Web at: www.cropwalk.org starting July 1st and register as an individual or group.
- Attend planning meetings and/or volunteer

For more information, please contact Marc Jung, Golden Gate Hunger Walk Coordinator at: (510) 848-7024, or marcauditor@juno.com.

PROGRESS ON FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR THE SFIC:

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Interfaith Council has set a goal to raise \$100,000 in each of the next three years to support the Executive Director position and administrative/operational costs of the organization. Since beginning the effort in November, \$62,900 has been raised for 2008, with an additional \$7,800 in committed pledges. This brings us over 70% of the projected goal. "If you would like to have a representative of the Interfaith Council talk to you or your congregation/organization about supporting the work of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, please contact the Chair, Jim DeLange, at jimdidl@aol.com or (415) 626-6497."

SAVE THE DATE:

SFIC ANNUAL MEETING / HONOR WINTER SHELTER SITE & MEAL PROVIDERS

June 12th 8:00-9:30am
Urban Life Center / Saint Mark's Lutheran Church
1031 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

SFIC MAYOR'S INTERFAITH PRAYER BREAKFAST

Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Cathedral Hill Hotel
1101 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA 94109

SFIC THANKSGIVING INTERFAITH PRAYER SERVICE

Thursday, November 27, 2008
First Unitarian Church
1187 Franklin St, San Francisco, CA 94109

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

HOTEL WORKERS' DINNER RECEPTION FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS
MAY 6, 2008, 6:30PM

UNITE HERE Local 2 and CLUE-SF (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) will host a Dinner Reception for religious leaders on May 6, 2008. Venue will be announced soon. This event seeks to build closer fellowship between the faith community and San Francisco's hotel, restaurant, and entertainment workers. To RSVP and for details, please contact Rev. Israel Alvaran at 415-864-8770 ext. 757 or email ialvaran@clueca.org

CONFRONTING ISLAMOPHOBIA & ANTI-SEMITISM:

Sharing Our Stories -- Building a Stand Against Racism

We invite you to attend a two-hour workshop sponsored by Muslim, Jewish and Christian advocates for justice and peace. People of all faiths are asked to rummage through their deeper thoughts and share your stories of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and through them, to find common ground in unifying against racism in our society.

Wednesday, 7PM on May 14th at Kehilla Synagogue, 1300 Grand Avenue,
Piedmont

Sunday, 3PM on May 18th at Universalist Unitarian Church, Geary and Gough,
San Francisco

Sunday, 3PM on May 25 at the Muslim Community Association, 3001 Scott Blvd.,
Santa Clara

There is no charge for these events however space is limited so information and reservations should be made by calling: 415-565-0201, x26 or emailing

asolomonow@afsc.org

Sponsors include CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations; Kehilla

Synagogue; the American Friends Service Community; the Muslim Community Association; Pax Christi; and several Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopal group and Interfaith Witness for Peace in the Middle East, United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance

For more information please contact Sandy Rechtschaffen, Social Justice Coordinator, Congregation Emanu-El Two Lake Street San Francisco, CA 94118 srechtschaffen@emanuelsf.org

MEMORIAL DAY INTERFAITH SERVICE: GRACE UNDER FIRE

Monday, May 26, 1:00 pm: Interfaith Center at the Presidio

1:00 pm

Service with Andrew Carroll, editor of best-selling books of letters home from American soldiers, speaking. Sally Porter Munro from the San Francisco Opera Chorus, Michelle Latimer, distinguished jazz & classical trumpeter, and the Sausalito Presbyterian Choir will provide music. Prior to the service, starting at noon, punch and nibbles will be available outside the Chapel.

4:00 pm

Andrew Carroll will read from *Grace Under Fire*, a collection of letters focusing on the faith and practice of American soldiers writing home. Mr. Carroll will also talk about The Legacy Project, the nonprofit he founded to collect letters home by American soldiers ranging from the American Revolution to Iraq. At a reception afterwards, Mr. Carroll will sign copies of *Grace Under Fire*. For more details, call 415-309-7004.

NORTH AMERICAN INTERFAITH NETWORK COMES TO SF

NAIN (North American Interfaith Network) will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year at NAINConnect 2008, to be held at the University of San Francisco, July 24-28. The theme this year is "Embracing an Interfaith Future," and the Interfaith Center at the Presidio is hosting the event. San Francisco Interfaith Council will cosponsor a final banquet at St. Mary's Cathedral. Professor Huston Smith, who turns 90 this month, will be given a special award for helping educate the thousands of religious leaders doing interfaith work today. To learn more about the conference or to register, go to www.nain.org/2008 <<http://www.nain.org/2008>> . You save \$75 by registering, which you can do online, before May 15.

MAY FRIENDSHIP DAY

"God's Wisdom Inspires Hospitality"
Saturday May 24, 10am to noon
Grace Cathedral
Chapter House Dining Room
1100 California St., San Francisco

May Friendship Day is an annual celebration by Church Women United. The event unites Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian Women in a common worship experience building and strengthening friendly relationships within our

community. Church Women United was formed in 1941 to strengthen the vision of Christian unity and prayerful action. see www.churchwomen.org

Program includes luncheon, donation requested
for directions to Grace Cathedral see www.gracecathedral.org

SUPPORT OUR PARTNER

Save the date: SummerTini, June 13, 6-9 p.m., Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, a benefit for Episcopal Community Services' CHEFS (Conquering Homelessness through Employment in Food Service). Hors d'oeuvres from top Bay Area restaurants, creative drinks, silent and live auctions. Price is \$85. For information on ECS and SummerTini, visit www.ecs-sf.org. SFIC and ECS have partnered since 1991 in sponsorship and staffing of the the Winter Interfaith Shelter.

THE NONVIOLENT VIGIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE: Every Thursday, Noon-1:00 p.m. at the Federal Building, Larkin and Golden Gate. The vigil is sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and the San Francisco Friends (Quaker) Meeting. This group has held vigil for nonviolence every Thursday since September 11, 2001.
INFOSFVIGIL@mac.com. All are welcome to join them.

UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE (URI) SUPPORTS LEGISLATION TO END DOMESTIC & GLOBAL POVERTY

United Religions Initiative supports a congressional resolution that proposes the U.S. dedicate 1%-2% of the GDP each year for the next 20 years toward once and for all eliminating domestic and global poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education, inadequate health care, and repairing the environment of the planet. In the language (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.RES.1078>:) it directly refers to the MDGs and our commitment to achieve them. This proposal is currently before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. URI advocates dissemination of this information, and encourages concerned citizens to contact their representatives in support of this legislation.

CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES/HOMILIES/STATEMENTS OF NOTE:

On April 2, 2008, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom hosted the Sanctuary City Press Conference to launch progressive immigration rights initiatives. The following coverage was given to the event:

SFGTV filmed the Sanctuary City press conference. It can be viewed at:
http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=18&clip_id=5151

The Mayor's Office of Communications posted Episcopal Bishop Marc Andrus' immigration rights statement on their website:

http://www.sfgov.org/site/mayor_index.asp?id=43504.

On April 6, 2008, the Islamic Society of San Francisco hosted the most recent "Reclaiming Abraham: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation." The theme discussed was, "Fractures within the Abrahamic Faiths: Can We Get Along In Our Own Families."

The following two articles, posted in Jewish News Weekly of Northern California, covered the event:

A Lifetime Of Dialogue: Muslim Community Honors Interfaith Pioneer Rita Semel by Andy Altman-ohr staff writer (Friday April 11, 2008)

http://www.jewishsf.com/content/2-0-/module/displaystory/story_id/34977/format/html/displaystory.html

Jew, Muslim, Christian Agree: Religions Must Heal Themselves / by Andy Altman-ohr staff writer (Friday April 11, 2008)

http://www.jewishsf.com/content/2-0-/module/displaystory/story_id/34978/format/html/displaystory.html

The following OPEN FORUM, submitted by Grace Cathedral Rector Alan Jones, appeared in the Thursday, May 1, 2008, San Francisco Chronicle:

Putting Jeremiah Wright and Patriotism in Perspective

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/05/01/ED2010DQND.DTL>

INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL / LOCAL INTERFAITH WEBSITES:

SAN FRANCISCO INTERFAITH COUNCIL WEBSITE

You are cordially invited to visit the newly launched San Francisco Interfaith Council website: sf-interfaith.org. Like all of us, this website is a work in progress; it tells our story, informs and engages. As GOOGLE has yet to detect us, please bookmark the site. You are also encouraged to forward it to friends in your email address book who would be interested in and benefit from our important work. Congregations, judicatories, agencies, FBO,s, non profits and all other organizations with websites are kindly asked to add us to your links! PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!!!

United Religions International: <http://www.uri.org/>

Interfaith Center at the Presidio: <http://www.interfaith-presidio.org/>

Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County: <http://www.interfaithcouncilofccc.net/>

Marin Interfaith Council: <http://www.marinifc.org/>

Peninsula Clergy Network: www.peninsulaclergy.org

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

The INTERFAITH EXPLORER, the monthly newsletter of the SFIC, keeps over 800 members on our email list informed of interfaith activities in San Francisco. Please include any of the information found in the INTERFAITH EXPLORER in your congregation's weekly bulletin or monthly newsletter. You are encouraged to forward this newsletter to interested persons on your email list. Feel free to forward the email addresses of prospective readers and noteworthy news items to my attention at: michael@sf-interfaith.org. Deadline for submission is the first day of each month.

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