

# INTERFAITH EXPLORER

## SAN FRANCISCO INTERFAITH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

### March 2008

OUR MONTHLY GATHERING - ALL ARE WELCOME  
THURSDAY, March 13, 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 Pastor Donna Wood

SPEAKER: Jessica Brown, Outreach Director  
The Regeneration Project  
Interfaith Power & Light

The Regeneration Project is an interfaith ministry devoted to deepening the connection between ecology and faith. Its goal is to help people of faith recognize and fulfill their responsibility for the stewardship of creation.

Specifically, the Interfaith Power and Light campaign is mobilizing a national religious response to global warming while promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation. People of faith have an opportunity to put their faith into action and help reduce the devastating effects of global warming.

For more information on The Regeneration Project visit:  
<<http://www.theregenerationproject.org/>>

FAITH JOURNEY: Sister Joan O'Donnell, RSM  
Alma Via Residential Home Chaplain  
[http://www.almavia.org/san\\_francisco/index.htm](http://www.almavia.org/san_francisco/index.htm)

#### SAN FRANCISCO INTERFAITH COUNCIL PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

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.

Four Ugandan farmers (Jewish, Muslim and Christian) from the Cooperative will be touring San Francisco from March 19-23, 2008. They will be meeting with the San Francisco Interfaith Council, the Interfaith Youth Group, and congregations. Their tentative schedule is as follows:

March 19/ Noon Welcome Luncheon

SFIC Board of Directors & Faith Community Providers Interfaith  
Center at the Presidio

March 20/ 10:30am Lecture, Jewish Community High School of the Bay

6:00pm Purim Celebration, Temple Emanu-El

March 21/ 1:00pm Friday Prayers, Islamic Society Mosque

5:30pm Shabbat Celebration, Temple Emanu-El

March 22/ 10:00am Shabbat Celebration, Sherith Israel

March 23/ 9:00am Youth Group Service @ Sherith Israel Soup Kitchen

March 24/ 11:00am Easter Celebration, Grace Cathedral, 11am

March 24/ 5:00pm Youth Group Meeting, Grace Cathedral

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/](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.

#### SPIRITUAL WOUNDS OF WAR:

#### CLERGY AS FIRST RESPONDERS TO RETURNING VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES

The SFIC, in partnership with *Swords to Plowshares*, is sponsoring a sensitivity training seminar  
for San Francisco area clergy to the complex and multifaceted needs of returning Iraq and  
Afghanistan veterans and their families. The seminar, which will be both didactic and interactive,  
will take place at the Interfaith Center at the Presidio on April 16, 2008 from 9:00am – noon. All  
clergy are invited and encouraged to attend. There is no cost for the seminar.

Please visit: <http://swords-to-plowshares.org/> to learn more about the important work being  
undertaken by *Swords to Plowshares*.

A *Swords to Plowshares* YouTube segment can be viewed at: [http://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=qpdfOZgVnTI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpdfOZgVnTI)

#### RECLAIMING ABRAHAM: MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS AND JEWS IN DIALOGUE

The next in this important series of interfaith panel discussions will take place on Sunday, April  
6, 2008 from 4:30 - 7:00 pm at the Islamic Society of San Francisco (20 Jones Street at Market).  
The evening's theme will be "Fractures Within The Abrahamic Faiths: Can We Heal Our Own  
Families?" Featured speakers are James A. Donahue, President of the Graduate Theological  
Union, Rabbi Marvin Goodman, Director of the Board of Rabbis of Northern California and  
Mahmoud Ayoub, Olton Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religion at the

Pacific School of Religion. Following the presentation, attendees will engage in a facilitated dialogue, followed by a delicious vegetarian meal. Tickets are \$20 per person. Seating is limited. For more information contact:  
Abby Porth at [aporth@jcrc.org](mailto:aporth@jcrc.org)

## CREATING A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CONGREGATIONS WORKSHOP

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." **This event is scheduled to take place on May 9, 2008, at St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco.**

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](mailto:michael@sf-interfaith.org).  
**PLEASE PUT THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDARS.**

## SFIC SEEKS TO BECOME A UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE (URI) CIRCLE OF COOPERATION

Since creation of the United Religions Initiative (URI), the SFIC has had a close affiliation and working relationship, yet never officially become a member. At its March 2008 meeting, the SFIC Board of Directors voted to formalize its relationship with the URI by seeking to become a Circle of Cooperation.

United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded in 2000 by an extraordinary global community committed to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation and to ending religiously motivated violence. Today the URI includes thousands of members in over 65 countries representing more than 100 religions, spiritual expressions, and indigenous traditions.

URI is a global community with spiritual heart. Members from diverse backgrounds pioneer interfaith dialogue and peace-building skills. Its core organizational principles include inclusive membership, self-organizing initiatives and decentralized governance. Together, we are designing an effective communications and knowledge sharing network and exchanging best practices for local, regional and global organizing. We are deepening friendships and fostering solidarity. URI believes that people everywhere when inspired to cooperate for the common good, will find solutions to end religiously motivated hate and violence and will create initiatives that build cultures of peace, justice and healing.

URI membership groups are called Cooperation Circles because they are created by people of different traditions who come together to initiate acts of interfaith cooperation. CCs, which are the basic unit of URI membership, consist of local or virtual groups that include at least seven members and at least three different religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions.

Individuals, associations or organizations seeking membership in the URI join an existing CC or create a new one. In addition to new groups that come into being as CCs, many already organized interfaith groups apply to become a CC in order to be part of URI's global network. The SFIC finds itself in this latter category.

For more information regarding the United Religions Initiative, visit:

<http://www.uri.org/>

**SFIC LISTENING TOUR UNDERWAY:** In an effort to further build relationships with member congregations, SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas, along with members of the Board of Directors have embarked upon a *Listening Tour*. The aim of these visitations is to learn directly from clergy and lay leaders how the Interfaith Council might better serve the needs of their congregations and the larger city community. In addition, these gatherings offer the occasion to apprise congregations of the many SFIC activities and services being offered. If your congregation would like to be included in the *Listening Tour*, please contact Michael Pappas at [michael@sf-interfaith.org](mailto:michael@sf-interfaith.org).

**WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM:** The San Francisco Interfaith Council has, for 20 years, co-coordinated winter shelter for 60-90 men from mid November to the end of February. Congregations that offered their facilities as shelter sites, as well as the many faith communities and agencies that provided and served meals, will be recognized and honored at a special observance on Thursday, June 12, 2008, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church (8:00am-9:30am).

**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.

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

#### 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, \$42,200 has been raised for 2008, with an additional \$16,900 pledged. This brings us to 60% of the projected goal. We urge congregations and agencies to include the SFIC in their 2008 budgets. Individual contributions are welcome!

#### COMMUNITY EVENTS:

#### **GRACE CATHEDRAL HOSTS A PEACE VIGIL TO MARK THE 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR IN IRAQ, MARCH 19:**

Grace Cathedral will host *A Prayer for Peace*, a remembrance of all the dead on the 5th anniversary of the war in Iraq, Wed., March 19, 6-7 p.m. Members of San Francisco's interfaith community will read the names of both U.S. military and Iraqi civilian war dead at this peace vigil. Pairs of shoes will line the Cathedral's Great Steps in remembrance of all those who have died in the conflict. Inside the cathedral, "Eyes Wide Open," an exhibit on the human cost of the Iraq War, featuring dozens of pairs of army boots signifying fallen California soldiers, will be on display on the labyrinth. All are welcome to attend this special service of lamentation, which expresses sorrow over the brokenness of the world. The event is free of charge. A traditional Ten-brae service follows immediately at 7 p.m. in Grace Cathedral.

For more information, please contact: Heidi K. Zuhl, Manager of Public and Media Relations, 415-749-6364 / [heidiz@gracecathedral.org](mailto:heidiz@gracecathedral.org) / [www.GraceCathedral.org](http://www.GraceCathedral.org), 1100 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94108

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](mailto:INFOSFVIGIL@mac.com). All are welcome to join them.

#### RED CROSS OFFERS FREE CPR TRAINING Saturday, March 8 – 15 Locations in the Bay Area

The American Red Cross Bay Area is partnering with sister chapters in northern California to provide free CPR training to 3,000 people in the Bay Area on March 8, making it one of the largest single-day trainings in the state. The event is designed specifically to provide life-saving training to members of vulnerable communities, including low-income individuals and speakers of languages other than English. More information and registration is online at [www.redcrosscpraturday.org](http://www.redcrosscpraturday.org). If you're interested in promoting this event within your community or would like to be considered as a site for next year's event, please contact Emily Seidel at (415) 427-8044 or [seidele@usa.redcross.org](mailto:seidele@usa.redcross.org).

CINEMA VITA FILM FESTIVAL: Friday, March 7, 2008, Delancy Street Theater, 600 Embarcadero, San Francisco, from 6:00pm-10pm. <http://www.wignatius.com/cinemavita/>

EARTH HOUR SAN FRANCISCO: On March 29, 2008, San Franciscans will join millions of people around the world to "turn off the lights" for an hour from 8-9 p.m. - making a bold statement about climate change. Earth Hour will demonstrate that by working together, each one of us can make a positive impact on this global issue. Governments, business, communities and individuals on six continents will participate in Earth Hour and agree to make changes that will curb their carbon dioxide emissions.

In the United States, San Francisco joins Chicago, Atlanta, and Phoenix as lead cities participating in Earth Hour. Grassroots community groups, local businesses and committed individuals are also organizing Earth Hour events in their cities and towns.

Everyone Can Have an Impact. We're asking everyone to take part in Earth Hour:

- Sign up at [earthhour.org](http://earthhour.org)
- Turn off your lights from 8-9 p.m. local time on Saturday March 29, 2008
- During that hour replace your old light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs
- Commit to reducing your energy consumption in the year ahead

- Visit **earthhour.org** to find out how to make a difference in the fight against climate change

Earth Hour San Francisco is a partnership with World Wildlife Fund and the City of San Francisco. To help with coordination, education and participation, we are pleased to have support from the San Francisco Steering Committee, which includes: the City of San Francisco, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, BOMA, PG&E, the Rainforest Action Network, Coalition for Better Housing, SF Public Utilities Commission, the Port of San Francisco and many others.

#### INTERFAITH CENTER TO CONVENE

#### BAY AREA INTERFAITH COUNCIL MINI-SUMMIT

(Wednesday, April 9, 2008, 5:30-8:00PM/Interfaith Center at the Presidio)

Guest speakers from Bay Area Interfaith Councils will address the topic, “*Interfaith Work In the SF Bay Area.*” Attendees will be informed of the vision and work of interfaith councils in the Bay Area, as well as the Interfaith Center at the Presidio and its connection to local interfaith councils.

Web: : <http://www.interfaith-presidio.org/>

#### HOSPICE BY THE BAY TO HOST APRIL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE IN SF:

Hospice By The Bay (*formerly Hospice of Marin*) will host an interfaith, memorial Service of Remembrance for all community members on April 13th, at 4:00pm at St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church, 101 Gold Mine Dr. Come together in spirit through music, prayers, readings, and the ritual of flowers to offer comfort and healing for those who are grieving. A social gathering will follow. Contact HBTB Spiritual Support Services Manager Evan Ardley, (415) 526-5638, for more information.

Web: [www.hospicebythebay.org](http://www.hospicebythebay.org)

#### CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES/HOMILIES OF NOTE:

SF Chronicle Religion writer Matthai Chakko Kuruvila reports on interfaith coalition, which recently met at USF, lobbying the U.S. government to increase its foreign aid spending up to a total of 0.7 percent of the gross domestic product by 2015.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/02/21/BAP6V5VJ8.DT>

[L](#)

SF Chronicle Religion writer Matthai Chakko Kuruvila reports on national survey of religious affiliation statistics that twenty-eight percent of American adults have left the faith in which they were raised, switching to another religion or no religion at all.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/02/26/MN18V8DHG.DT>

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“Resisting Propaganda” was recently published in the San Mateo Times. It was penned by Iftekhhar Hai, President of United Muslims of American Interfaith Alliance in South San Francisco and SFIC Board Member. Iftekhhar Hai, writes a monthly column in that newspaper.

[http://www.insidebayarea.com/search/ci\\_8259249](http://www.insidebayarea.com/search/ci_8259249)

Rabbi Stephen S. Pearce, PhD (Congregation Emanu-El) delivered a sermon, entitled, “ECO-REVERENCE OR ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS STRIFE,” on Sunday, January 20, 2008 at Third Baptist Church. The sermon was offered the occasion of the annual Martin Luther King pulpit exchange between these two houses of worship. (Special thanks is extended to St. Francis Lutheran Church for posting the sermon on their website)

[http://www.st-francis-lutheran.org/sermon\\_pearce.pdf](http://www.st-francis-lutheran.org/sermon_pearce.pdf)

INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL / IOCAL INTERFAITH WEBSITES:

(Please note: SFIC Website: [sf-interfaith.org](http://sf-interfaith.org), is currently under construction)

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-network.org](http://www.peninsulaclergy-network.org)

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

The INTERFAITH EXPLORER, the monthly newsletter of the SFIC, keeps over 700 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](mailto:michael@sf-interfaith.org). Deadline for submission is the first day of each month.

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