



May-June 2017

Interfaith CONNECTION

Social justice and peace through interfaith understanding and cooperation.

IN THIS ISSUE

- ◆ GARDEN PARTY ON JUNE 3
- ◆ 2017 CROP HUNGER WALK
- ◆ "FIRST FRIDAYS" AT THE MOSQUE
- ◆ "STRENGTHENING SANCTUARY FAITH NETWORK"
- ◆ WARMING CENTER WRAPS UP
- ◆ SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK AT IW MEMBER CONGREGATIONS
- ◆ IN MEMORIAM: BARBARA GIBSON
- ◆ MILLERSYLVANIA 50/30/10K RUN BENEFITING IW SHELTER
- ◆ INTERFAITH SUMMER DAY CAMP
- ◆ OUR CALENDAR HAS MOVED

You Are Invited to Our Garden Party!

6-9 PM
Heritage Room
604 Water St. SW
Olympia

June 3, 2017

\$75 per person

Reserve on the Interfaith Works website at:
<http://interfaith-works.org>
or call the IW office at:
360-357-7224.

Garden Party is a Time to Celebrate

Join us on Saturday evening, June 3 for a celebration honoring volunteers and contributors to Interfaith Works. As we head into our 44th year, we remain deeply engaged in pursuing economic justice, building alliances, fighting prejudice and promoting interfaith relations. None of this work can be done without the dedication and energy of clergy, lay leaders, volunteers, community partners and our staff. Together we are sustaining the interfaith vision.

Reserve your ticket online today, and we look forward to seeing you on June 3!

Donate Online via **PayPal**

Donate

THANK YOU STATE EMPLOYEES!

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Our newsletter is published in electronic format.

You can subscribe here:

<http://interfaith-works.org/newsletter/>



See you Sunday, May 7th – CROP Hunger Walk

Registration opens at the North Steps of the Capitol at 12:30 for our 37th annual CROP 10K Walk that raises money for hunger relief locally and around the world. More than 28 teams have already registered! Please join us – all are welcome, pre-registered or not. Any money raised over what we raised last year will be devoted to refugee support. Thank you!!!

Open Hearts, Open Doors at the Mosque Interfaith Visitors Welcome on First Fridays

The Islamic Center of Olympia (*Masjid Al-Nur*) welcomes visitors to Friday services (1:00-3:00 PM) on the first Friday of every month. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience the worship traditions of Islam and to meet and greet with the diverse community of the Islamic Center. Following services, the group talks about the basics of Islam, followed by a question and answer session and a tour of the mosque. Please email info@islamiccenterofolympia.org for more



information.

Masjid Al-Nur is the center of religious, educational and social activities for the Muslim community in Olympia. During the early part of the 1980's, members of Cham Muslim community from Cambodia relocated here and established a temporary structure. The Cham community donated a 2-acre piece of prime real estate to build a more permanent Islamic Center to serve the growing needs of the greater Olympia area and vicinity, and a beautiful mosque is now completed. During the past few years, the community has attracted Muslims from many other ethnic groups including a growing number of new Muslims.

“Strengthening Sanctuary Faith Network” organizes in Olympia

Strengthening Sanctuary is a new group of Olympia-area residents who have come together to advocate for and support the needs of the vibrant immigrant communities of Thurston, Mason and Lewis Counties. The group was formed by a few individuals who worked hard to see that the City of Olympia pass the Sanctuary City resolution, which it did unanimously at the end of 2016. After its passage, the group has continued to work on issues that immigrant communities are facing today, working in close collaboration with the CIELO Project of Olympia. (For 20 years CIELO has provided services and information for predominantly Spanish-speaking immigrants, but is open to all immigrants of the South Puget Sound. See www.cielo.org)

A committee has formed, calling itself the Strengthening Sanctuary Faith Network, and has begun work on immigrant rights through local faith communities. The Faith Network has met a few times and is just at the beginning stages of educating itself and the involved faith congregations about immigrant issues in our region. Participants so far are from Unity Church, Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, St John's Episcopal Church, St Benedict Episcopal Church, and Temple Beth Hatfiloh. **This Sanctuary Faith Network is open to all local congregations and is actively seeking new members to join in this work.**

Examples of roles that new volunteers could fulfill are described in box at right.

Ways to Be Engaged

Know Your Rights Dissemination – learn how to give “Know Your Rights” presentations for individuals at risk of deportation (Spanish fluency helpful).

Family Safety Planning – be trained to help families complete emergency safety plans either at CIELO or at a planned event at another location.

Mental Health Support – volunteers with mental health/counseling experience, particularly bilingual, who are interested in giving mental health support to individuals in need. This could be either ongoing through CIELO, or for support in response to a specific traumatic event (such as a raid).

Ongoing support for CIELO – support the work that CIELO does. Particularly helpful could be someone with support service/social work experience.

Legal Support – Lawyers with immigration experience to answer questions at “Know Your Rights” presentations, provide legal support, etc..

Rapid Response Team – join the rapid response/sanctuary team to respond to raids on a local level.

Attend direct actions for immigrant support at rallies, marches, protests, vigils, etc..

Advocate in city, county, state, and federal government agencies for immigrants – for example write and/or meet with city councils, county officials, state and federal elected officials, and law enforcement leaders – to urge active immigrant support; or write letters to the editor (if you mention a politician, they will receive a copy).

For more information, please contact: Beth Halpern beth.halpern@comcast.net 360.357.8160 or 360.556.9786

Warming Center Wraps Up after Challenging Winter

This past winter, once again, Interfaith Works operated a full time daily Warming Center in downtown Olympia. In an unprecedented step, the cities of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater, along with Thurston County, joined together to



support the estimated cost. We opened on November 2, rotating five days per week between two caring and generous churches, First Christian and The United Churches. Over the initial weeks the number of guests and daily rhythm was similar to what we experienced the previous winter. When we relocated in mid-December to a seven day per week fixed site – the former Alpine Experience store near the Port – that pattern changed dramatically. We immediately

began seeing about 200 daily guest sign-ins across a much more diverse spectrum. This heavy use strained the facilities and posed a significant management challenge to our staff. It also contributed to a 50% increase over expected expenses, forcing us to dip into our reserve funds. We appreciate any support to help us cover Warming Center costs! Visit <http://www.iwshelter.org/contribute.html> to make an online contribution, or send checks to Interfaith Works.

The Warming Center served people in many ways: social & hospitality center, service hub, public bathroom, a place to catch undisturbed sleep, source for emergency supplies, and even a bike repair shop. The Warming Center provided comfort, social connection and, most critically, it saved lives during a colder- and wetter-than-normal winter. The streets of downtown Olympia were visibly different because so many street-dependent people chose to come in out of the cold. By the time we closed as planned on March 31, we had operated 135 days for a total of 1319 hours, serving many hundreds of unique individuals with 23,250 total sign-ins through the season. These accomplishments were possible because of our dedicated staff, which handled every sort of stressful situation with great patience, compassion and professionalism.

"Homelessness is not a choice. I didn't choose to be out here. My whole life was taken when I moved to Washington, I was a housewife, a mom, and it all got taken. It's hard to not have support out here. It's hard to find people who truly support you. But at the Warming Center, I can know that the staff is my friends, and they treated me as such. I love your guys' little thing, the whole Interfaith thing... The staff was really encouraging and trying to help me out." "

"Katherine," 31 year old guest

Social Justice Work at Interfaith Member Congregations

In March 2017, Interfaith Works staff conducted a short survey of its faith community members' work on social justice issues. Our purpose was to understand what social justice projects are underway by our member congregations, to ascertain the level of interest among members in collaborating on a social justice project, and, if so, whether there is a project that most would like to work on together.

Of our members, about two-thirds responded to our information request, and of those, nine completed the survey, and all of these said they would like to work with other IW faith communities on a social justice issue. Five additional congregations replied with information on their social justice work (but did not fill out the survey); three members said they had no social justice committee and no social justice contact; and two said they had no social justice committee but did provide a contact name.

Projects that congregations are interested in working together on include:

- Immigration & deportation and/or refugee sponsorship & support and/or sanctuary (8 votes)
- Race relations/ending racism (7)
- Environmental issues (7)
- Anti-hate; supporting marginalized groups; preventing hate speech/acts (7)
- Homelessness: First Christian and downtown faith communities (2)
- Criminal justice reform (1)

With a list of 16 different congregations who have committees or groups working on a variety of social justice issues, we can begin to explore opportunities for working together on a joint project to make an even bigger impact in our community. Let us know what you think! How can we make more of an impact?



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◆ IW COMMUNITY CALENDAR ◆

We have permanently relocated our Community Calendar to our website. It will no longer appear in the bi-monthly newsletter. Visit <http://interfaith-works.org/selections-community-calendar/> for a one page PDF file of selected postings of events, celebrations and gatherings of interfaith interest – and also see the regularly updated calendar on our website: <http://interfaith-works.org/events/>

In Memoriam: Barbara Gibson

We mourn the recent passing of our good friend Barbara Gibson. Barbara was a stalwart supporter of IW and all that it stands for. She began devoting her time and energy to our collective work beginning in 1998 (when we were still called "Associated Ministries"), serving over the years on our Board of Directors, as a delegate from her faith community, and on many projects and events, including our Moments of Blessing program. Barbara contributed to IW in so many ways, showing us how to love and respect our neighbors across cultural differences, live out a commitment to social justice every day, and celebrate life creatively and joyfully.



A beautiful and rich obituary can be read [here](#).
 A celebration of Barbara's life will be held on Saturday, May 27, 2017, 2PM, at the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2315 Division St NW.

IW is grateful to the following for their generous contributions to Interfaith Works in memory of Barbara:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Kathryn Hamilton Wang | Pam & Frank Turner |
| Leslie Gardiner | Sandy Plagemann |



Benefiting the Interfaith Works
 Emergency Overnight Shelter

Our 2nd Annual trail race featuring expanded options for runners. 100% of your entry fees will be donated by the race to the shelter.

Race Details: <http://outdoorartsandrec.org/m10k-race-info>
 To Register: <http://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=47676>

On June 3, run in the morning, rest up and then attend the Garden Party in the evening!

FAITH EXPLORATIONS

Play, explore, share, and interact – once again, children of any faith who are going into the 2nd through 5th grades are invited to join others for a week long interfaith day camp at Temple Beth Hatfiloh. This year, camp will be August 7 – 11 from 9:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m., and while the theme has not yet been chosen, children are sure to learn in fun ways about the traditions of

their friends and community members. There is no cost for the camp, although donations are always welcome. For more information and to register, contact Catherine Carmel at Temple Beth Hatfiloh at (360) 754-8519 or beitsefer@bethhatfiloh.org.

