

Living Interfaith Church

Monthly Newsletter

The struggle for justice is perhaps our greatest calling. How we answer that call determines who we are. It is not our race, our religion, our gender, our economic status or our education, but how we answer the call to justice that defines us.

May Calendar

Vol. 6 #9 May 2017

May 13th — Service: 10:30
"Anticipating Ramadan and Lailat al-Qadr"

May 27th—Service 10:30
"The Ascension of Baha'u'llah"

[More Details...See page 2 below](#)



June Calendar

June 10th—Service: 10:30
"Shavuot"

June 24th—Service: 10:30
"Seven Years of Living Interfaith"
Annual Meeting After the Service

Sermon Podcasts

LivingInterfaith.Podbean.com

Interfaith Q & A

If you have an Interfaith question of general interest, e-mail us your question at Livinginterfaith@frontier.com.

"Our Differences Are Not a Threat—They're a Joy!"

[More Details ...See page 3 below](#)

Know A Good Accompanist?

We need your help! Contact LivingInterfaith@Frontier.com

The Struggle to Overcome Hunger Reaching a Milestone

Every time Living Interfaith meets for a service, we have boxes at the back of the sanctuary. The boxes are for donations of food for our local foodbank. During the winter we add a box for cold weather shelter items, like socks, gloves, blankets and coats. We have also participated in hunger walks to bring more awareness to the issue.

As a small church, there's nothing we can do to end all hunger. But that must not stop us from doing what we can, **and it hasn't**. Indeed, this year we are approaching a milestone.

Our church year is from September to June. And we only meet twice a month. But this year, for the first time, Living Interfaith is closing in on a **1000** pounds of food collected and donated to our local foodbank. No one should have to go to bed hungry. No one. Thanks!!!!

April Services

May 13th, "Anticipating Ramadan and Lailat al-Qadr" - Sameer Merchant will share his experiences of Ramadan and honoring the night that the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) received the first verses of the Qur'an.

May 27th "The Ascension of Baha'u'llah" - Mary Ellen Togtman-Wood is our guest speaker—details to come. Stay tuned!

Living Interfaith At Work in the Community Interfaith Curriculum Part One Available

We have made the curriculum available free of charge (when downloaded from our website) to any school, spiritual community or other interested group that is committed to teaching our children not only to respect our diversity but how to be able to talk about it.

It might best be described as a teacher's handbook. It walks the reader through how to teach our children about both our common humanity and our diverse spiritual paths and traditions. It provides lesson plans and lists the materials a teacher needs to put together meaningful, respectful classes, including important content.

Such a curriculum has *never* been more needed.

Again, Part One is complete and available. It covers grades 1-3. Our beautiful hard copies are available either by hand delivery (if you live nearby) or for the cost of printing and postage (\$13.00) if you would like the curriculum mailed to you. **Electronic copies ARE NOW AVAILABLE for downloading for free from our website!**

Again, THANK YOU to all who contributed to funding Part Two—grades 4-7! We are hoping to have it available in June of 2018. With your help, in a few years after that we will have an entire curriculum to offer: grades 1-12!

Burrito Rolls Continue!

Saturday, May 20th! We are celebrating the Burrito Roll's 4th birthday! Instead of 500-600 we want to roll 1000. PLEASE HELP!! The roll will take place at first Baptist Church at 1:30 PM and generally lasts 1 1/2 hours.

Not into rolling, or have something to do on Saturday? The fixings for the burritos will be prepared on **Friday May 19th. AND PLEASE NOTE** that if there isn't enough help on Friday, we can't roll all the burritos we want to on Saturday!!!

And help is also needed in distributing the burritos after the roll.

For further information, or to sign up and get on the e-mail list, please contact our own Rebecca Alder at:

burritoroll1@gmail.com

Interfaith Q & A/Musings

Seeing Difference As a Joy Not a Threat

There's a very human instinct that has caused problems for our species for a very long time. Perhaps the first step in overcoming that instinct is to name it. It's the fear of "other." Let's be clear. It's naming it is only the first step, the very first step.

We've talked about this before. One thing humanity has been very good, indeed ingenious at is creating categories of "other." And along with those categories have come walls of division—wall after wall after wall.

Many of us feel strongly that this is not at all helpful. But I think most of us have learned that just shouting "You're wrong!" or "Don't do that!" doesn't tend to move people to change. So what might?

Interfaith addresses one aspect of our fear of other—the fear of a spiritual path different from our own. I'll speak much more deeply about this at our concluding service in June. But fear of "other" goes well beyond our spiritual traditions.

Some feel that fear of other is programmed into our DNA, that it's a part of our survival instinct. This may well be true. Certainly from the earliest times human societies have gathered in tribes. Trust your own tribe. It's been suggested that we are programmed to be wary, if not indeed fearful of someone who belongs to another tribe. This may also be true.

Still, I don't believe complaining about tribalism will help. And I make this admission as someone who has complained rather vehemently about tribalism in the past. So again, what might we do?

I believe a more positive place for us to focus our efforts may be to work towards redefining our tribe. With that in mind, what will it take for us to see all of humanity as our tribe? That seems worth pondering. When I spiritually self-identify, I will say my faith is Interfaith; my spiritual path is Judaism, my tribe is humanity. This acknowledges that while I have faith in Interfaith (that there is no single "right" spiritual path), and my personal spiritual path is Judaism, I see neither as my "tribe."

If humanity is my tribe., then women as well as men are a part of my tribe. People of all races, religions, and ethnicities are a part of my tribe. What does this mean? For me it means drawing joy rather than fear from our differences. We're not alike? Cool. Share with me. This is one of the foundation stones of Living Interfaith: that we come neither to convert or convince but to share. And sharing means talking about, not hiding from our differences. We are of the same tribe. We have nothing to fear from a person being different. Indeed, we might actually learn from it!

This may sound simple, but I think we all know it isn't. We will encounter a tradition of both ignorance and bigotry—perhaps daily. It will take work— a lot of work. It will also take time—a lot of time. Still, I deeply believe that making a sustained effort to grow our perception of "tribe" is not only positive work but very much worth a lifetime of dedication.

Imagine how much more loving and joyful all of our lives would be if we could explore our differences without hierarchy or passing judgment. Let's be clear and honest about this. Expanding our perception of tribe will not solve all our problems. We'll still argue. **We're human!** We're going to disagree. It's what we do! But if we can keep our disagreements from devolving into "them and us" we will be able to turn down the heat a whole lot more easily. Let's keep it in the family. Even when we disagree with passion, let's keep it in the family. The human family.

Your Ongoing Support is Appreciated!

Do You Shop at Amazon.com?

If you don't, no worries. But if you do shop at amazon.com, please consider shopping at smile.amazon.com. Why? If you do, Amazon will contribute a small amount from most purchases to the charity of your choice. You can designate the Living Interfaith Church as your choice. It's only .5% that's donated, but still, every little bit helps. For more info on Amazon Smile visit: smile.amazon.com for FAQ's and more info.

Support Living Interfaith

Our church expenses are not huge, but we do have them. We have begun another ambitious year, but thanks to your help we remain in an excellent position to accomplish our goals.

Any and all contributions are welcome and very much appreciated. For those who might want to use a credit card to help support us, by going to our web page www.livinginterfaith.org and clicking the donate button, a safe contribution may be made through PayPal.

If you prefer not to use the web, checks are also welcome. They should be made out to "Living Interfaith Church" and sent to PO Box 2352, Lynnwood, Washington 98036. And yes, Living Interfaith is a 501 (c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

If you are contributing to the Education Project, please put "Education" in the memo section of your check, or on PayPal.

THANK YOU!!

