

MINUTES of October 16, 2014

Members present (12): Ashok Chawla, Charles Crawley, Brian Daugherty, Allen Fisher, Alan Fletcher, Susan Liddell, Brenda Mitchell, Hassan Selim, Jim Siegling, Todd Thalblum, Joan Thaler, and Jen Yukl

President Todd Thalblum called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

INSPIRATION

Challenges for this Imam – Hassan Selim

"It was narrated that Muhammad (May God send his peace and blessings to him) was once stopped by an elder who asked him to pray for her to be granted heavens or paradise. He, jokingly, said to her, "Don't you know that elders do not enter paradise?" The woman was shocked, but then the prophet explained to her that it was just a joke.

It was also narrated that Muhammad said: "Smile, for the smile is a form of charity."

When I first became an Imam, I was faced with some challenges. One of these was how to bring people closer to their religion and tradition enough to lead a good life, but not to the point where they become fanatics and extremists. Everything is a subject to becoming extreme, and everyone is subject to becoming an extremist – if we don't follow the right approach to religion. Another challenge was how to bring the youth back to the congregation.

After a couple of trials and errors, the secret I discovered to overcome my challenges was laughter! I made it a point to tell a joke in all of my services and religious classes.

Mulla Nasrudin, an important but not very well-known Islamic figure, used humor to spread laughter and religious teachings. I would like to share with you one of his jokes/religious teachings:

A neighbor called on Nasrudin, "Mulla, I want to borrow your donkey." "I am sorry," said the Mulla, "but I have already lent it out." As soon as he had spoken, the donkey brayed. The sound came from Nasrudin's stable. "But Mulla, I can hear the donkey, there!" As he shut the door in the man's face, Nasrudin said, with dignity: "A man who believes the word of a donkey in preference to my word does not deserve to be lent anything."

MINUTES of September 18, 2014

Motion by Allen Fisher to approve with one spelling correction – Second by Brenda Mitchell – Carried

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Alan Fletcher, Treasurer/Chair

1. **Financial Report:** Itemized receipts & disbursements – 9/18 thru 10/16 – reviewed.
Cash balance as of 10/16/14: \$16,719.79 [Checking = \$1,104.13 / Money Market = \$15, 615.66]
\$500 grant from Rockwell, for EPON closed captioning service, has been received and deposited.
Alan noted that he will begin work on the budget for 2015 and will have this ready for the annual meeting, as well as the annual financial report. Motion to approve financial report was made by Allen Fisher – Second by Joan Thaler – Carried.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE – Brian Daugherty, Chair

1. **Children of Abraham**

Schedule of events:

- **“Concepts of God”** – Sun., Nov. 9 (2:00 to 4:00 pm) at St. George Eastern Orthodox Church
Speakers: Fred Shaheen, Taha Tawil, and Todd Thalblum
- **“Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran: What makes us different?”** – Within the Tradition (new series)
When: Thurs., Nov. 13 (7:00 to 9:00 pm)
Location: Flaherty Community Room, second floor of Basile Hall, Mt. Mercy University
Panel: Mr. William Mulcahey, former Director of Campus Ministries at Mt. Mercy University; Father Fred Shaheen, St. George Eastern Orthodox Church; Rev. Cedric Lofdahl, retired Lutheran pastor

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE continued...

2. Ethical Perspectives on the News / Sundays, 11 am on KCRG, Channel 9:

Cedric Lofdahl emailed the following schedule prior to this meeting.

The Ethics of Political Ads (10/19); *The Militarization of the Police* (10/26);

Drawing the Line on Discipline (11/2); *Responding to ISIS* (11/16); *Co-Opting Culture* (11/23)

[Note: Program for Nov. 9 is being arranged.]

3. University of Religion on Buddhism – The Life, Teachings, and Legacy of the Buddha:

February 2015 (four Saturday afternoons) Presenter: Zuiko Redding of Cedar Rapids Zen Center

Brian Daugherty reported that the location is not yet determined. Cost for entire course is \$20.

Addendum: Location confirmed as Mt. Mercy University (Flaherty Community Room in Basile Hall).

Time will be 2:00 to 4:00 pm on these Saturdays – February 7, 14, 21, and 28.

EVENT COMMITTEE – Charles Crawley and Allen Fisher, Co-chairs

1. Thanksgiving Service – Monday, Nov. 24 (7:00 pm) – at Unity Center of Cedar Rapids:

Charles Crawley gave a brief planning update. He will be contacting *Hoopla* and *The Gazette*. An announcement w/ flyer has been posted on the website and emailed to those on our master email list. Ashok Chawla volunteered to assist with greeting. See September minutes for other planning details.

2. Annual Meeting – Thursday, Dec. 18 – Dinner at 6 pm – at Islamic Center

- Reminder given that this is an open meeting. Invite spouses and interested persons.

Cost of the meal is \$10, payable at the door.

Please RSVP to Hassan Selim at hmhmselim@gmail.com or (319) 440-7514 by Monday, December 15.

- Todd Thalblum will put together nominating committee to prepare for annual meeting election.
- Brenda Mitchell suggested that we encourage attendance of board members at monthly meetings.

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE – Brenda Mitchell and Jen Yukl, Co-chairs

1. **Newsletter:** Plan is to get next one out in January. The main article – “March Madness” – is ready and was written by Charles Crawley.

2. **Website:** Jen asked for feedback about our website’s format and content.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Inspiration for next meeting:** Ashok Chawla will give the inspiration at the annual meeting.
2. **5 to 10 minute presentations by representatives of community organizations:** Contact Todd if you know anyone who would like share at one of our meetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS of other events in the Cedar Rapids area

1. Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, Nov. 7 (11:45 am to 1:00 pm)

Location: First Presbyterian Church, 310 Fifth St. SE

“The New Jim Crow” – Harvey Harrison, retired attorney

See <http://interfaithallianceiowa.org/events/intersections/> for details about registering.

2. Women in Interfaith Dialogue – Saturday, Nov. 22 (10:00 am to 3:00 pm)

Theme: Water: All Water is Holy Water Cost: \$15 (includes lunch) Location: Prairiewoods

REGISTER: Call Prairiewoods at 319-395-6700 or Barbara Schlachter at 319-351-4380.

3. Judaism 101 series with Rabbi Todd Thalblum – Sundays in January (Noon to 1:30 pm)

Location: Christ Episcopal, 220 40th St. NE

**Next Board Meeting: Annual Meeting & Dinner – Thursday, December 18 – Islamic Center
6:00 pm dinner with meeting following**

The annual meeting and dinner is open. Please extend invitations to all who may be interested.

(Note: There is no November meeting because of the Thanksgiving Service on November 24th.)

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Motion to adjourn was made by Allen Fisher – Second by Joan Thaler – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary