

**ANNUAL MEETING
December 17, 2015**

President Todd Thalblum called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Board Members of 2015 present (13):

Erin Broich, Charles Crawley, Brian Daugherty, Allen Fisher, Alan Fletcher, Susan Liddell, Cedric Lofdahl, Brenda Mitchell, Hassan Selim, Todd Thalblum, Joan Thaler, Nathan Williams, Jen Yukl

Guests (17):

Ayman Amer, Adam Blyth, Alan Diehl, Aaron Doolin, Roxanne “Rocky” Gissler, Jan Griffith, Joy Lapp, Dennis Lynch, Meredith Mitchell, Paul Pompei, Zuiko Redding, Nancy Rhodes, Laila Selim, Joe Stutler, Bob Swem, Sabrina Thurman, Eugenia Vavra

INSPIRATION

A Message on Christmas

– prepared by Ashok Chawla and presented by Nathan Williams

It’s Christmas once again – the time to celebrate.

As we decorate the Christmas tree, let us remind ourselves:

The tree is a symbol of humanity.

The trunk is when we were all united in one religion of peace, love, and truth.

We then divided into branches of different religions and then each religion divided into twigs.

The leaves of the tree represent each soul of humanity.

The Shining Star on top is God, who is now giving us the message to unite once again.

As we decorate the tree, let us decorate the soul with virtues of compassion, forgiveness, and trust.

Santa Claus symbolizes The Supreme Father, who comes in these times of darkness, into the dirty old world (chimney), to give us the gifts of Purity, Power, and Peace.

Christmas is the time of Angels.

We have always looked for our guarding angel, one who would always be there for us, to guide and love us.

Today, let us start becoming an angel instead of looking for angels.

When we remember our original nature of love and purity, we accept each one as they are.

We love them, and our love and acceptance protects them and empowers them.

We then become an angel to them,

An angel who is a parent, a spouse, a boss, a friend...

When we live by our virtues, we are angels to each one around us.

Source of passage: There is an institution in India which encourages better living through meditation, peace, and service. Brahmakumari is a non-denominational organization that sends out an inspiration daily. This article came from them last Christmas. Ashok changed it a little for our audience.

MINUTES of Previous Meetings

- Minutes of the October 15, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting:
Motion made by Brenda Mitchell to approve as submitted – Second by Cedric Lofdahl – Carried.
- 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes (December 18, 2014):
Motion made by Joan Thaler to approve as submitted – Second by Hassan Selim – Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Alan Fletcher, Treasurer/Chair

1. **2015 Financial Report:** A two-page report was provided and reviewed. Summary is below.

Page one

Receipts & Disbursements – 9/1 thru 12/17:

Cash balance as of 12/17/15: \$17,117.27 [Checking = \$603.92 / Money Market = \$16,513.35]

Alan highlighted that the 2015 Thanksgiving service offering was \$1,870.

[Checks payable to IRCLC and cash collected totaled \$1,260; checks payable to Linn Community Food Bank totaled \$610.]

Page two

Receipts & Disbursements Detail – 1/1 thru 12/17: This page lists all contributions and payments made this year. [Total receipts/deposits = \$6,056.50 / Total disbursements = \$4,735.57]

Motion made by Charles Crawley to approve 2015 financial report as submitted
– Second by Nathan Williams – Carried.

Addendum to 2015 Finance Report:

On January 2, 2016, Alan submitted an updated report showing receipts and disbursements after the annual meeting (12/17 thru 12/31). The following summary reflects the new dollar amounts for 2015.

Cash balance as of 12/31/15: \$17,276.50 [Checking = \$762.03 / Money Market = \$16,514.47]

Total receipts/deposits = \$6,207.62 / Total disbursements = \$4,727.46

This report also noted that a disbursement check for \$256.51, written in 2014, never cleared and the bank will no longer honor this check. This vendor is out of business.

2. **2016 Proposed Budget:**

Motion made by Allen Fisher to approve this budget – Second by Erin Broich – Carried.

	Actual 2015 thru December 17	Budget for 2016
Receipts		
Dues and donations	\$ 3,958.80	\$ 4,000.00
Thanksgiving offering	1,260.00	1,200.00
CR Community Foundation	504.35	485.00
Class registration fees	320.00	300.00
Interest income	13.35	15.00
Total receipts	6,056.50	6,000.00
Disbursements		
Linn Community Food Bank	1,260.00	1,200.00
Office rent	1,200.00	1,200.00
Transcription services	960.00	1,200.00
Postage	364.90	400.00
Insurance	340.00	350.00
Donated registration fees	320.00	300.00
Printing	183.00	200.00
Supplies	107.67	150.00
Total disbursements	4,735.57	5,000.00
Receipts less disbursements	\$ 1,320.93	\$ 1,000.00
Cash balance, beginning of year	\$ 15,796.34	\$ 17,117.27
Cash balance, end of year	\$ 17,117.27	\$ 18,117.27

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE – Brian Daugherty, Chair

1. Children of Abraham:

Brian Daugherty summarized the CoA events offered in 2015. This programming is in three categories.

⌘ Among the Traditions – Three programs in this series were offered:

“Prophecy, Revelation, and the Scriptures” on April 26

“Marriage in the Modern Era” on August 23

“Kingdom of God” on November 15

Speakers at each event: Fred Shaheen, Taha Tawil, and Todd Thalblum

Location: Coe College, Hickok Hall

⌘ Between the Traditions – Two programs offered:

“Scripture & Tradition: How Jews, Christians, & Muslims Preserve Each Other’s Memories”
July 11 at Mt. Mercy University [Presenter: Chris Seeman of Walsh University]

“The Crucifixion of Jesus? The Messiah? Who Died on the Cross & Why?”

November 9 at Coe College, Hickok Hall [Presenter: Brian Daugherty]

⌘ Within the Traditions – No programs in this series were scheduled this year.

Children of Abraham events planned for 2016

- “Marriage Today” – from the Roman Catholic, ELCA Lutheran, & Orthodox Christian perspectives [Within the Traditions series]

Sunday, January 31 (2:00 to 4:00 PM) – at Mt. Mercy University, Flaherty Room, Basile Hall

Panel: Bill Mulcahey – Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies, Mt. Mercy University

Rev. Cedric Lofdahl – Retired Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Father Fred Shaheen – St. George Eastern Antiochian Orthodox Church

- “Trinitarian & Unitarian Views of the Divine” [Between the Traditions series]

Sunday, February 21 (2:00 to 4:00 PM) – at Mt. Mercy University, Flaherty Room, Basile Hall

Presenter: Brian Daugherty – Past President, IRCLC

2. University of Religion:

A course on Buddhism – The Life, Teachings, and Legacy on the Buddha – was held in February 2015. Zuiko Redding of the Cedar Rapids Zen Center taught this course. Mt. Mercy Mission & Ministry was a co-sponsor.

Coming this spring – Hassan Selim and Brian Daugherty are planning a course about the life and example of the Prophet Mohammad.

3. Ethical Perspectives on the News / Sundays, 11 am on KCRG, Ch. 9:

Annual Report for 2015 – submitted by Cedric Lofdahl

Total number of programs aired in 2015: 51 (37 new and 14 reruns).

EPON was bumped by ABC-TV programming on one Sunday during the year.

Number of programs aired from 4/11/1999 through 12/27/2015: 842

Moderators and (number) of programs during 2015: Peter Welch (6), Scott Samuelson (5), Martha Rogers (5), Lynda Waddington (2), Karl Cassell (7), Heather Hayes (3), Leon Tabak (4), Bob Sessions (3), Craig VanSandt (2).

We are thankful for the moderators’ faithful and committed service over the years.

Producers: Cedric Lofdahl, Executive Producer, was assisted by Associate Producers Terry Boyden and Joe Stutler.

Closed captioning: The IRCLC covered the \$30.00 cost per program for closed captioning..

YouTube: To date, 87 programs have been uploaded to YouTube. As of 12-14-15 they have had a total of 3,858 views. The most viewed YouTube program with 433 views is the program “Prayer in the Peoples’ House.”

Recording studios, personnel, equipment, and free air time were contributed by KCRG-TV.

Community Relations Committee / Ethical Perspectives on the News continued...

EPON program schedule (12/20/15 through 2/14/16):

- Dec. 20 “Attitudes and Actions toward Immigrants and Refugees in the USA”
- Dec. 27 “Bakken Pipeline/Eminent Domain”
- Jan. 3 “Cedar Rapids Gun Violence” (rerun)
- Jan. 10 “The Right to Die” (rerun)
- Jan. 17 “The Ethical Issues of 2016”
- Jan. 24 “Religion as a Litmus Test”
- Jan. 31 “Attitudes and Actions toward Immigrants and Refugees”
- Feb. 7 “Political Censorship in Education”
- Feb. 14 “Mental Health: Parents and Adult Children”

A special thank you: Cedric Lofdahl was acknowledged for all his years of service on the IRCLC board of directors and for his work establishing and producing *Ethical Perspectives on the News*. Todd announced that Cedric will be stepping down from the IRCLC board, but will continue to serve as Executive Producer of *Ethical Perspectives on the News*.

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

Annual Report for 2015

The following is a report of the actions taken by the IRLC’s Event Committee during the year 2015. All of the members of the Event Committee deserve our thanks for a job well done: Charles Crawley, Co-Chair of the Committee; Todd Thalblum; Jim Siegling; Joan Thaler; and Susan Liddell.

As in the past, the Event Committee was at least partly responsible for planning and offering three events: first, the annual Service of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust, in April; second, the annual interfaith Thanksgiving service, in November; and third, the Annual Meeting of the Council, in December. In addition to these three events, this year, because of the initiative and expertise of Charles Crawley, there was a special program in April commemorating the 100th anniversary of the genocide of the Armenian people at the hands of the Turks of the Ottoman Empire.

First, the Service of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust was held on April 12, 2015, at Mount Mercy University Chapel in Cedar Rapids. The guest speaker was Renata Laxova of Madison, Wisconsin. She gave a moving speech about her escape from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia as a child in 1939 – one of the 664 children to be saved through the efforts of the late Nicholas Winton, a man who is sometimes called England’s Schindler. We thank Mount Mercy University for hosting this inspiring event, and we thank The Thaler Holocaust Memorial Fund – especially Joan Thaler – for co-sponsoring the event, and Rabbi Todd Thalblum for coordinating the service.

Coming in April 2016: This coming year’s Community Yom Shoah Service of Remembrance will be held on Sunday, April 17th, 2016, at 7 P.M., at Christ Episcopal Church, 220 40th St. SE, in Cedar Rapids. Magda Brown, who is originally from Miskolc, Hungary, and now lives in Skokie, Illinois, will be the speaker. In 1944, when she was 17 years old, she was deported with her entire family on one of the final transports to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where her parents died in the gas chambers. In March 1945 she was sent on a death march from the factory in Germany where she had been working, and she was eventually liberated in a nearby forest by the Sixth Armored Division of the U.S. Army. In 1946, she came to America and settled in Chicago. We look forward to her visit to Cedar Rapids in April and to the opportunity to hear her inspiring personal story.

Second, the IRLC’s 23rd annual interfaith Thanksgiving service, “Gratitude and Hope in Violent Times,” was held this year at the Islamic Center on Monday evening, November 23rd. We thank Imam Hassan Selim for so graciously hosting us; this was the first time that this event has been held at the Islamic Center.

Event Committee Annual Report continued...

...The service included readings about Thanksgiving from all seven of the faith traditions that are currently included in the Council, and also an address by Dr. Carlos Grant, the Principal of Metro High School in Cedar Rapids, titled "Taking Charge of Our Circumstances." More than 150 people attended the service, and a strong spirit of goodwill prevailed. Special thanks go to Charles Crawley and Rabbi Thalblum for their extraordinary efforts in the planning for this service.

Third, the Annual Meeting and Dinner of the IRLC was held on Thursday, December 17th, at Mount Mercy University. Our thanks go to Erin Broich and Mount Mercy for making these arrangements.

In addition to these three programs, the Event Committee organized a special event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the genocide of the Armenian people by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire. The main perpetrators of this genocide were never punished, their crimes have never been officially acknowledged by the Turkish government, and the victims were never compensated for loss of life and property.

This special program took place on the evening of April 30, 2015, in Beems "A" Auditorium of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. About 70 people gathered to view a PBS documentary "The Armenian Genocide" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLYrpaTKCCE>] and to engage in a lengthy and informative discussion of it. Special thanks go to Charles Crawley for initiating and organizing this excellent program.

Once again, I am grateful to all of the members of the committee for a very successful year.

Respectfully submitted,
Allen Fisher
Co-Chair, Event Committee of the IRLC

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

Annual Report for 2015

The communications committee is responsible for the newsletter and the website. Three editions of the newsletter were distributed this year.

In 2015, Rodney Bluml, Erin Broich, Ashok Chawla, Brenda Mitchell, and Jen Yukl served as members of the communications committee, but thanks go to several others who have made our task easier.

Thank you to Charles Crawley for writing an article on Lenten Madness for our Winter 2015 newsletter as well as an article regarding the Armenian Genocide in the Summer 2015 edition, and to Todd Thalblum for an article on the Holocaust Commemoration Service, which was also in the Summer 2015 edition. The "IRCLC Resolution Concerning Racial Tension and Police-involved Violence" was written mostly by Nathan Williams with input from many of the board members. This resolution was the main article in our Fall 2015 newsletter and was also printed in *The Gazette* on September 22.

Thank you to Gina Taylor and Christ Episcopal Church for printing and doing the first folding of the newsletter and to Carolyn Johnson of Kenwood Park United Methodist Church for printing our mailing labels.

Our website, www.IRCLC.org, has been kept up to date by Jen Yukl. Thanks, Jen.

A welcome letter has been written and will be sent to all new members of the IRCLC beginning in 2016.

We plan to have an IRCLC Facebook page in the near future, with the help of Hassan Selim, and we would love to have an official IRCLC photographer.

Brenda Mitchell
Co-Chair, Communication Committee

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **President's Report:** Todd Thalblum gave a brief review of 2015, thanking all who have worked to plan and present a variety of programs. Todd noted that for such a small group, we provide and are involved in quite a few programs. Every year, something new comes up. In 2015, there were three new items we participated in:

- Armenian Genocide of 1915 Commemoration held on April 30 at the CR Public Library (Allen Fisher spoke of this event earlier this evening in the Events Committee report.)
- Vigil Recognizing Gun Violence held on July 12 – Groups walked from Sokol Park and Newbo Market to meet at Riverside Park, where about 150 gathered.
- “IRCLC Resolution Concerning Racial Tension and Police-involved Violence” – published in *The Gazette* on September 22 and in our autumn newsletter.

2. **Nominations:** Todd thanked the four board members who will be stepping down this year. These four are Rodney Bluml, Cedric Lofdahl, Jim Siegling, and Jen Yukl. Six people have accepted nomination to serve as directors. Two current board members have accepted nomination to serve as vice-president and secretary; those officer terms are ending this year.

Officers (2016-2017)

Vice President
Hassan Selim
Secretary
Brenda Mitchell

Directors thru 2016

Catherine Quehl-Engel
- 1 yr. left in term of
Rodney Bluml
Nancy Rhodes
- 1 yr. left in term of
Brenda Mitchell

Directors thru 2018

Jerome Deister
Alan Diehl
Aaron Doolin
Eugenia Vavra

Motion was made by Allen Fisher to approve the director and officer nominations listed above –
Second by Brian Daugherty – Carried.

3. **Special Meeting to update IRCLC bylaws to be held on January 21, 2016 (7:00 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center, 601 Second Avenue SE:** Todd provided copies of the proposed bylaw changes. An email announcement, with these proposed changes, will be sent to all members tomorrow.
4. **Protest of Donald Trump's Islamophobia is being held on Saturday, December 19 (at Noon) across from Veteran's Memorial Coliseum, where Trump will be speaking that afternoon:** Charles Crawley asked if we would consider participating. Discussion led to the decision to do so. To clarify that we are not protesting Donald Trump, we will advertise our participation as a peaceful assembly with an email announcement stating the following: “The Inter-Religious Council stands in solidarity with Muslims, refugees, immigrants, and all minorities.” A sign-making session will be held tomorrow night at Charles' home. Motion was made by Cedric Lofdahl to spend up to \$200 for sign-making materials – Second by Nathan Williams – Carried.
5. **Inspiration for next meeting:** Todd Thalblum will provide this.

Next Meeting: Special Meeting of the Assembly to Update Bylaws

Thursday, January 21 (7:00 pm) at Ecumenical Community Center

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 pm.

Motion to adjourn was made by Joan Thaler – Second by Brenda Mitchell – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary