

MINUTES of August 20, 2015

Members present (14): Rodney Bluml, Erin Broich, 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

Todd Thalblum shared that we are in the Hebrew month of Elul, which precedes the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This is a period of reflection and contemplation, a time to look inward and prepare for the holidays in order to experience them as fully as possible. Psalm 27 is read daily in Elul.

Psalm 27

God is my light and my help. Whom shall I fear?

God is the strength of my life. Whom shall I dread?

When the wicked, my enemies and foes, come upon me to devour me, they shall stumble and fall.

Should an army camp against me, my heart will not fear; though war should rise against me, still I would be confident.

One thing I ask of God, only this do I seek: to live in the house of God all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Eternal, and to frequent God's temple.

God will shelter me in a pavilion on the day of evil; under the cover of God's tent will I be protected. The Eternal will lift me up on a rock.

And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies all around me; and I will offer prayers in God's tent with shouts of joy; and I will sing, I will sing praises to God.

Hear, O God, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me, answer me.

Of You my heart says, Seek my face; Your face, O God, do I seek!

Hide not Your face from me; do not put Your servant off in anger; You have ever been my help; do not abandon me, nor forsake me, O God, my deliverer.

Though my father and mother may forsake me, God will take me in.

Teach me Your way, O God, and lead me on a level path, because of my ever-watchful foes.

Deliver me not to the will of my enemies; for false witnesses have risen up against me, and they breathe out violence.

Had I not the assurance that I should see the goodness of God in the land of the living?

Look to God; be of good courage and your heart shall be strengthened; but look to God.

MINUTES of May 21, 2015

Motion made by Jim Siegling to approve as submitted – Second by Brenda Mitchell – Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Alan Fletcher, Treasurer

1. **Financial Report:** Itemized Receipts & Disbursements – 5/21/15 thru 8/20/15 – reviewed.
Cash balance as of 8/20/15: \$16,881.35 [Checking = \$372.40 / Money Market = \$16,508.95]
Motion made by Charles Crawley to approve financial report – Second by Hassan Selim – Carried.
2. **Approval of new delegates/members:** none this month

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE – Brian Daugherty, Chair

1. Book recommendation: Miracles–Wonder and Meaning in World Religions by David L. Weddle
2. **Children of Abraham:**

Brian reported that “Scripture & Tradition: How Jews, Christians, & Muslims Preserve Each Other’s Memories” (July 11) had around 18 people and that positive feedback was given. The plan is to continue a summer event in the Between the Traditions series with Chris Seeman as presenter.

Schedule of upcoming events:

Among the Traditions: Sundays (2-4 pm) at Coe College, Keslar Auditorium in Hickok Hall

Presenters: Rabbi Todd Thalblum, Imam Taha Tawil, and Father Fred Shaheen

- August 23 – “Marriage in the Modern Era”
- November 15 – “Kingdom of God” [Note the date change to Nov. 15 from Nov. 8. A Between the Traditions event will be held on Nov. 8. See below for information about that event.]

Between the Traditions:

- Nov. 8 (2-4 pm) – “The Crucifixion of Jesus? The Messiah? Who Died on the Cross & Why?”
Coe College, Keslar Auditorium in Hickok Hall / Presenter: Brian Daugherty
- Feb. 2016 – “Trinitarian & Unitarian View of the Divine” / Exact date, time, & location TBA /
Presenter: Brian Daugherty

Brian shared the following about the history of Children of Abraham and the reasoning for the choice of topics for the two Between the Traditions programs listed directly above.

The Children of Abraham began as the result of a challenge made by Dr. Charles Vernoff at the end of his lecture series in 2005, "Reconciling the Children of Abraham". Charles said to me, “To truly reconcile the Children of Abraham, it isn't enough to focus on what they have in common, but also to deal with the difficult subjects.” Before his passing in 2013, I related to him that we had started doing programs called "Between the Traditions," with that aim in mind.

Dr. Chris Seeman and I have been working to bring to light connections that exist between the Abrahamic faiths, often beneath the veneer of accepted dogma and, for my part, also parallel with other traditions.

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of Dr. Vernoff's lectures and the formation of Children of Abraham, I'm planning two programs, dealing with what are arguably the two most controversial subjects that exist between the Abrahamic traditions: the Trinity and the station of Jesus. Both were touched on by Charles in his lectures.

3. **University of Religion:** The last course was held in February 2015 on Buddhism. There is not yet a plan for scheduling another course. Please send any suggestions to Brian.
4. **Ethical Perspectives on the News:** No report in Cedric's absence.

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

1. **Thanksgiving Service: Monday, November 23 (7:00 pm) at the Islamic Center of CR**

Theme: “Gratitude & Hope in Violent Times”

Guest Speaker: Dr. Carlos Grant, Metro High School Principal

Planning details:

- Each faith tradition represented on the IRC has been asked to share a brief reading on the theme. Former board member, Nancy Rhodes, will be available to present a Native American piece. The name of the reader and the reading (no longer than a quarter of a page) should be submitted to Todd by Nov. 1. In the past, we have encouraged children to be involved in these presentations; however, we are asking for adults this year due to the nature of the theme.
- A flyer will be made with original artwork by Joan Thaler.
- Respecting the Islamic community's tradition, we will not be having Mt. Mercy's bell choir this year. Hymns will be sung a cappella.
- Todd will not be able to attend to give the “Welcome from the President”. Our vice-president, Hassan, will be hosting the event. The remaining officers were asked if one of them could give the welcoming remarks and will make a decision before September's meeting.

- The offering has usually been given to Linn Area Community Food Bank. This year we are considering donating proceeds to Family Promise of Linn County. FPLC is a nonprofit and non-denominational organization for families in transition. Church congregations house these families. More info can be found at <http://www.familypromiseoflinncounty.org/>. FPLC is struggling financially and their executive director has resigned; thus their future is uncertain. They are currently housing only one family. Final decision tabled until September meeting.
2. **Annual Meeting and dinner:** Planned for Thursday, December 17. Erin Broich will check if Mt. Mercy is available on that date. She will also let us know cost for dinner.

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

1. **Newsletter:** Target date is October. Plan is to use recent IRLC resolution as main article and advertise Thanksgiving service in the space usually used for Holy Days.
2. **Website:** Nothing new to report. Jen continues to update this.
3. **IRCLC Facebook page:** Hassan will create and begin making posts.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Vigil Recognizing Gun Violence on July 12 – recap:** Todd reported that this event went very well, with around 150 in attendance. News coverage was good. Jen asked if someone took a video or photos that could be posted on our website. Todd will check on this. He encouraged us to use our cell phone cameras at the events we attend; then forward photos to Hassan and Jen.
2. **Resolution concerning Racial Tension and Police-involved Violence – update:** Revisions from the suggestions of last month’s guest, Chad Simmons, were made and sent out. Further editing was done throughout the summer from input received via email from board members. The latest draft was reviewed at this meeting and several more changes were suggested.
Motion was made by Brian Daugherty to approve the resolution with amendments –
Second by Jim Siegling – Carried.
Jen will email final version to board members and post it on website. It will be the main article in our next newsletter. Todd will send it to The Gazette as a guest column or letter to the editor.
3. **\$500 grant request from Rockwell Collins:** Charles Crawley has submitted the application.
4. **Inspiration for next meeting:** Hassan Selim volunteered for September 17.
[Note: Ashok Chawla will be available to give the inspiration at the annual meeting in December.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS of events, sponsored by other organizations, in the Cedar Rapids area

1. **Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, September 4 (11:45 am to 1:00 pm)**
Topic: “Iowa Caucuses, and Candidates, and Religious Freedom! Oh, My!”
Presenter: Dennis J. Goldford, Professor of Political Science, Drake University
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 310 Fifth St. SE Cost: \$10 per person (payable at the door)
Registration required: See <http://interfaithallianceiowa.org/events/intersections/> for more details.
2. **Sweetgrass Flute & Nature Festival – September 25-27**
Location: Prairiewoods, 120 Boyson Rd., Hiawatha
Gate Fee: \$5-adults / \$1-children (Nature Fest is FREE on Sunday)
Schedule & Workshop Registration: <http://www.sweetgrassfest.com/> – This website contains details for this three day event – including schedule, workshop registration, and volunteer opportunities.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, September 17 (7:00 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center
Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm: Motion to adjourn by Hassan Selim – Second by Susan Liddell – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary