

Inter-Religious Council of Linn County, Board of Directors Meeting  
Minutes from Thursday, May 4, 2017

Attendees: Bob Buntz, Ashok Chawla, Charles Crawley, Brian Daugherty, Alan Diehl, Afnan Elsheikh, Eugenia, Kendall, Steve Knudsen, Susan Liddell, Brenda Mitchell, Nancy Rhodes, Hassan Selim, Joan Thaler, Leif Zalewski. Unable to attend: Rebecca Hinds, Nathan Williams, Todd Thalbus. Absent: Erin Broich, Aaron Doolin.

Guests: Doug Anderson ((Neighborhood Meals and Enrichment Program), Meredith Mitchell.

Charles Crawley opened the meeting at 7 pm.

Charles introduced Doug Anderson, a representative of the Neighborhood Meals and Enrichment Program in Cedar Rapids. Doug stated that the purpose of the program is to provide lunches, Monday through Friday, to children and adults from the Monday after school ends in June until the Friday before school starts in August. The program has been in place for 30 years, and currently the meals are served at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. In the summer of 2016, 6,218 meals were served to children and adults. NMEP needs volunteers and finances to keep the program running smoothly.

Motion to donate \$100 towards the meals was made by Leif Zalewski and seconded by Nancy Rhodes. Carried.

#### **INSPIRATION**

Charles Crawley reported on his visit to the Iowa Interfaith Exchange Conference in April in Des Moines. It was a very positive experience, and he hopes that Eboo Patel, the guest speaker, will be able to come to Cedar Rapids to talk with us.

Bob Buntz shared the following about his visit to a conference held in Albuquerque:

*On April 6, 7 and 8, I attended the "Trinity: The Soul of Creation" conference sponsored by "The Center For Action And Contemplation" of Albuquerque, New Mexico, founded by Franciscan Priest Fr. Richard Rohr.*

*The Center has inspired me in its beliefs and practices of extensive inclusivity, bridging the gaps within the spiritual and justice communities, building a rhythm of contemplative prayer and Zen meditation.*

*The following question captures the essence of the center's mission: "Is it possible to craft a space for community and conversation free of the divisiveness of politics or religion, or ideology...a space to explore life, God, the world and what it means to be fully human, and to do so alongside a growing group of friends"? This Center believes and practices "yes" to the question.*

*This year's conference presenters were: Fr. Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault (Episcopal Priest) and William Paul Young ( author of the book "The Shack" now a movie "The Shack").*

*This conference focused on various approaches to differing faiths, cultural similarities and differences as well as "acceptance" and "love of all".*

*As one of the 1800 participants, I came away with a renewed sense and belief that authentic conversations with the "Other", whomever they may be, and finding our common ground is necessary for the well-being of the "All".*

Hassan Selim will bring the inspiration during our September meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Religious Literacy at the Cedar Rapids Public Library:** Two possible projects were presented—panel discussion on our faith backgrounds; selection of books representative of our faith traditions. The decision will be made at a later date.

**Abdelkader Education Project:** Anyone who is interested in volunteering time or donating money for the event should contact Kathy Garms at kathygarms@yahoo.com. Bob Buntz moved and Alan Diehl seconded a motion that the council donate \$200 in support of the event. Carried.

**Honoring of Cedric Lofdahl and Taha Tawil:** the event committee will bring suggestions to our September meeting of ways in which we can honor the service of these men on the council.

**Summer meetings:** It was decided that we would meet at 4 p.m. July 23 for a family picnic. Location will be at the Bever Pavilion in Bever Park. Hassan Selim and Alan Diehl will be in charge of planning the event.

Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be held September 7.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Communication committee:** Afnan Elsheikh will be a member of the committee.

**Shoulder to Shoulder:** Hassan Selim presented the aims of Shoulder to Shoulder , which is a network of organizations trying to bring civility to the nations. We are asked to look at the handout (copy attached) and check the website, [www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org](http://www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org), so we can discuss, at our next meeting, whether we want to be a part of this network. Contact will be made with interfaith groups in Iowa City and Des Moines to see if we can work together to meet our mission and vision.

**Parliament of World Religions** (flyer attached): Charles stated that some of our group may be interested in attending the international gathering to be held November 1-7, 2018, in Toronto.

**IRCLC** will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018.

## **MINUTES**

Hassan Selim moved, Ashok Chawla seconded acceptance of the April minutes as presented. Carried.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Financial Report: Nathan Williams was unable to attend, but each member had received a copy of the April report.

Income: \$1,150.98 Disbursements: \$221.

Balance in checking account: \$1,480.23, money market account: \$15,032.20.

Brian Daugherty moved and Hassan Selim seconded approval of four new members:

Hope United Church of Christ, Hiawatha.

First Presbyterian Church, Mount Vernon.

Hugh and Carol Mackintosh (Christian)

Sara Thompson (Christian)

Motion carried.

Community Relations Committee:

**Inter-Religious Dialog Group:** Brian Daugherty stated that about 20 people were in attendance at the last meeting. The topic was “Stewardship of the Environment”.

Between the Religions program, “Muhammad in the Bible, Jesus in the Qur’an”, has been postponed until the fall.

**University of Religion:** Nancy Rhodes will teach the course on Native American Tradition during October and November at Mt. Mercy. Dates are yet to be finalized.

Brian is trying to get all programs moved back to Coe College.

**EPON:** Alan Diehl stated that a list of upcoming programs has been sent to Nathan Williams for inclusion in the newsletter. He will forward the list to Eugenia Kendall to be included on the website. We need to find more ways of advertising our programs. A suggestion was made that Makayla Tendall of **The Gazette** be contacted regarding a possible article. The programs on YouTube are receiving approximately 50 views per program.

Event Committee: Hassan Selim reported.

**Holocaust Service:** was well attended and organized. Dr. Eisenbach spoke at several colleges and high schools in the area. Charles Crawley suggested that the IRCLC be in charge of seating and handing out programs at future services.

**Thanksgiving Service:** will be held at Mt Zion Baptist Church, 6621 C Ave. NE, November 20, at 7 pm. Stacey Walker will be the speaker.

**Annual Meeting,** December 11: will be held at Prairiewoods, 120 E. Boyson Rd, Hiawatha. The meal will begin at 6 pm and the business meeting will begin at 7 pm. The committee will check on room capacity as we would like to invite former board members who served with Cedric Lofdahl and Taha Tawil.

Communication Committee: Eugenia Kendall reported.

The committee will meet soon to discuss the content of the summer newsletter.

In April, the website received 1511 visits. FaceBook has 110 likes. Four posts were added to FaceBook, with the Holocaust Remembrance Service notice receiving the most views at 226 and the picture post from the event receiving 120 views.

The website is being updated with the latest information. If changes or updates are needed, please let Eugenia know.

Children of Abraham also has a FaceBook page, which was set up by Father Fred Shaheen. The name needs to be changed [change made] and the page possibly integrated with the IRCLC FaceBook.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**May 6:** Class Conscious: Class and Classism in Congregational Life offered at People’s Church from 10 am to 1 pm.

**June 2:** Last **Intersections** program until the fall. 11:45 am to 1 pm at First Presbyterian Church. Former Congressman Jim Leach will be the speaker. His topic is, “Civility in the Public Arena”.

***Fifth Saturday of the month:*** Women's Interfaith Dialog group meets at Prairiewoods from 10 am to 3 p.m. Lunch included. Contact Susan Liddell or Nancy Rhodes for more information.

**OTHER**

The next meeting is September 7, 2017 at 7 p.m. Those who wish may meet for dinner at 6 p.m. at Via Sofia's.

Hassan Selim will bring the inspiration.

Motion to adjourn at 8:15 pm by Hassan Selim, seconded by Alan Diehl.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Mitchell, secretary.