

**Inter-Religious Council of Linn County,  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Minutes from Thursday, April 5, 2018**

Attendees: Bob Buntz, Charles Crawley, Brian Daugherty, Aaron Doolin, Rebecca Hinds, Gina Kendall, Susan Liddell, Nancy Rhodes, Hassan Selim, Taha Tawil, Todd Thalblum, Ritva Williams, Leif Zalewski, Ashok Chawla, Steve Knudson, Bhim Magar, Alan Diehl  
Absent: Krishna Iyer, Afnan Elsheikh  
Visitor: Sue Reider (Temple Judah), Pete Deegan (attorney for northern district of Iowa)

Charles Crawley, president, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**INSPIRATION**

Hassan Selim provided the inspiration on the subject of the untapped power of smiling, including a quote from the prophet Muhammad: "your smiling in the face of others is charity." Forbes magazine reported on a UK study which found that smiling stimulates our brain more than chocolate does (one smile is the equivalent of 2000 chocolate bars and/or \$25k!

Ashok Chawla will provide the inspiration for the May meeting.

**GUEST PRESENTATION - Pete Deegan** (US Attorney for Northern District of Iowa for the last 6 months)

- US attorneys handle drug, gun, immigration, fraud/financial cases, and civil rights cases (including hate crimes).
- Religion is protected under federal law: it is illegal to (a) threaten or assault anyone because of their religion, (b) damage to places of worship, (c) interfere with the free exercise of religion, (d) interfere with a person's housing rights because of race or religion, (e) burn a cross on someone's front lawn: this is an example of sending a message of hate to the residents.
- People are more aware and are getting better at reporting incidents than in the past.
- Imam Taha asked about when someone hacks your website, and knocks it down many times - what recourse is there? Pete responded that interfering with a computer system is federally prosecutable, but it wouldn't necessarily fall under civil rights legislation that typically protects persons rather than their property (the main exception being houses of worship).

Pete has a PowerPoint presentation, which goes into greater detail about these matters. Charles will email to members of the board.

**INTRODUCTION & NOMINATION FOR IRCLC BOARD: Sue Reider**

Sue is a member of Temple Judah. She wants to learn about other religions and to be an advocate for other religions as well as her own. Rabbi Todd and Charles both commended her to the board.

Nomination of Sue Reider to the IRCLC Board:

Moved by Imam Taha Tawil. Seconded by Nancy Rhodes. Unanimous approval.

**OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:** members of the Embassy of Indonesia, who are doing research for a video project on the lives of Muslims in America.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Evaluation of "Know Your Neighbor" at the Cedar Rapids Public Library:** meeting with Amber Mussman

and Kevin Delecki on 3-27-18 (Charles, Taha, Bob, Nancy, Rebecca, and Alan).

Library staff was excited by the success of the series, how well these sessions were attended, and eager to brainstorm further collaborative programming. Possibilities include:

- Video recording the sessions so they can be put on YouTube channel
- "Know Your Neighbor - Part 2" with more varieties of religion OR University of Religion OR Inter-Religious Dialogue - should do something once a month on a Monday evening
- Incorporate some food, especially ethnic dishes associated with the particular religion(s) that are being discussed
- Each religion could do a series about their culture and traditions, including special foods and an invitation to visit their places of worship
- Events like 'Know Your Neighbor,' "Food for Thought," or Interreligious Dialogue around a particular issue can show how we discuss, disagree, yet work together for the common good. People are intrigued to see a Jew talk to Hassan, a humanist taking to religionists.
- People want more dialogue and the ability to engage the speakers.

The board affirmed that we are ready to go forward with planning a second series in collaboration with the library. Charles will send out another Doodle poll to set a date for the next meeting with library staff.

***Thank to Imam Hassan Selim for preparing a survey of attendees for the final session of "Know Your Neighbor."*** Charles' question: Who will tabulate these for us?

- Nancy Rhodes volunteered.

***Report from Mission/Vision Taskforce: Bob, Charles, Gina, Susan, and Taha***

- Met at the Mother Mosque: one more meeting and then they will be ready to bring draft mission and vision statements to the board in May

***Report from Membership Taskforce: Charles and Ritva***

- Work on the database continues. A draft will be ready mid April.

***Report on hiring part-time staff: Bob and Todd, & Taha***

- Met a couple of weeks ago to look at a job description for First Lutheran Church's Communications Director (to oversee email, website, FB, monthly newsletter, video, FB live at a cost of 10/hour a week at \$20/hour for a total of \$10,000 per year). The issue is how to fund it. Recommendation: we try to find a grant to cover the salary (or part of the salary) for a year or two, e.g. Cedar Rapids Community Foundation or Rockwell Collins, while we work on increasing dues and funding in general including inviting non-faith groups to be members and/or sponsors of IRCLC. Since we are a 501(c)3 some businesses might be willing to support us.

**ACTION:**

- Gina: contact Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to identify the grant cycle.
- Todd: table further discussion until we the database and mission/vision work is complete.

***List of visitation opportunities at IRCLC Member Faith Communities: Gina***

- Gina will set up a Google doc

**Other Old Business?**

- April 22 is Earth Day. It is suggested that we sponsor a FB post encouraging prayer for climate change.

ACTION: Communications Team

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Johnson County Interfaith Cluster; Quad Cities Interfaith**

- A Gazette article on March 14 featured the organization of the Johnson County Interfaith Cluster in Iowa City, a branch of Quad Cities Interfaith. They are looking to expand into Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, or Waterloo. We need to invite them to meet with us and learn about what IRCLC has been and is doing.

ACTION: Ritva will contact the founder of Quad City Interfaith and invite him to meet with us.

**Other New Business?**

- Steve: acknowledge that we received \$500 from First Presbyterian Church
- Request for membership for John Williams: moved by Steve; seconded by Hassan. Approved.
- NAACP request for sponsorship
- ELCA Policy on Inter-Religious Relationships - Ritva will email to all members of IRCLC Board

**Minutes of March 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting:** Review and Approval: Moved by Bob. Seconded by Hassan. Approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Finance Committee - Steve Knudson, Treasurer

The financial report for March 2018 was reviewed:

March Receipts	\$ 50.90	Year to Date:	\$ 787.61
March Expenses	\$ 717.08	Year to Date:	\$ 936.27
Totals	\$(666.18)		\$(148.66)

Checking Account Balance \$217.92 Money Market Account Balance: \$13,292.59

Alan recommended that we use FB to receive donations. They have a 4-step process of 501(c)3s that includes identifying the organization's director and providing banking information. There are no fees.

**Motion to approve the February financial report: Moved by Taha. Seconded by Gina. Approved.**

Community Relations Committee - Brian Daugherty (Chair)

- Ethical Perspectives on the News (Alan Diehl)
- The Inter-Religious Dialogue (Brian Daugherty):
- Four Approaches to Religious Pluralism, Chris Seeman, June 3
- "Who do you say I am?" Views of Jesus, within the Christian Tradition & Beyond, Aug 26 and Sept 2, 2-4 (Coe College); "Idols, Icons, Statues & Symbols," Oct 28 and Nov 4, 2-4. (Location TBD)

Discussion around the need for more structure and collaboration on this committee.

ACTION: members will set a date to meet before to discuss Inter-Religious Dialogue Topics.

Event Committee – Todd Thalblum (Chair)

- Holocaust Remembrance Service, April 16, 2018, Mount Mercy University Chapel of Mercy, 7: 00 pm. The IRCLC has offered to usher at the event.
- “Annual” IRCLC Picnic (June or July?)
- Thanksgiving Service: November 19, 2018 at First Lutheran Church. Suggestion for speaker, Lori Erickson, author of *Holy Rover: Journeys in Search of Mystery, Miracles, and God* (lives in Iowa City)
- Annual Meeting: December 10, 2018 (location TBD)

Communications Committee - Gina Kendall (Chair)

Communications Committee Proposed Activities  
Newsletter, Website, Facebook

**Announcements/Forthcoming Events/Deadlines:**

- Intersections, “Fighting for Access: Women’s Reproductive Healthcare in Iowa,” Lynda Waddington: Friday May 4, noon (RSVP by May 1 to crintersections@infaithallianceiowa.org or 319-364-6148) – **Note that this event is scheduled to occur during Friday prayer time for our Muslim neighbors!**
- Hinduism with Ashok Chawla, Christ Episcopal Church: April 8, 15, 22, and May 6, 2:00-3:30 pm
- Faith Climate Action Week (Interfaith Power & Light): April 14–22 (Gina)
- Holocaust Remembrance Service: April 16, 2018, Mount Mercy University Chapel of Mercy, 7: 00 pm.
- Four Approaches to Religious Pluralism, Chris Seeman, June 3, 2:00-4:00 pm, Mount Mercy University, Flaherty Room
- Operation Overnight (Geonetric website makeover): Application process opens in July
- “Who do you say I am?” Views of Jesus, within the Christian Tradition & Beyond, Aug 26 and Sept 2, 2-4 (Coe College)
- “Idols, Icons, Statues & Symbols,” Oct 28 and Nov 4, 2-4. (Location TBD)
- Parliament of World’s Religions, Nov. 1-7, 2018, Toronto
- IRCLC Annual Thanksgiving Service, Nov. 19, First Lutheran Church
- IRCLC Annual Meeting, Dec. 10, Location TBD

**Next Meeting:** May 5, 2018, 7:00 PM. Meet at Via Sofia’s (1125 1st Ave SE, Cedar Rapids—across from Coe College) at 6:00 PM for dinner.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ritva Williams