

Inter-Religious Council of Linn County Board Meeting
Minutes from February 2, 2017

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

Guest: Meredith Mitchell

Charles Crawley called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

INSPIRATION

Alan Diehl presented chapter four of *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer* and led discussion based on the section entitled "Relationships Between Different Communities", p.93. He asked how we can support or build relationships. Suggestions were to have a religious exchange program and to visit other groups. It was agreed that meeting in a relaxed atmosphere, such as picnics, hikes, or lunches, would be a good beginning. Alan Diehl, Ashok Chawla, and Hassan Selim will bring ideas and information regarding possibilities for such events to upcoming meetings.

Ashok Chawla will lead the discussion on chapter five at our next meeting.

BUSINESS

Charles Crawley presented thank-you letters from the Linn Community Food Bank for our financial support during the Thanksgiving Service, and from Marian Patterson of Winding Pathways for our financial support of Light One Candle.

The Linn County Board of Supervisors is planning an event announcing the Welcome Proclamation (Cedar Rapids will become a Welcoming Community) and the IRCLC members are invited to attend and be a part of the welcome. It is planned for Wednesday, Feb 8 at 10 a.m. See Announcements for further information.

Charles suggested that instead of protesting as a response to the presidential executive orders regarding immigrants and refugees, we hold a prayer and meditation service focusing on how our faith traditions are reacting and offering support to immigrants and refugees and what our faith traditions teach about such actions. It would be a public event and the intent is to become a united community. After much discussion, it was decided that such a service would be held Thursday, February 16 at 7 p.m. location to be decided. [Update: It will be held at Community of Christ, 1500 Blairs Ferry Rd. Hiawatha] Any offerings received will be donated to the Catherine McCauley Center to help fund its refugee program.

Alan Diehl stated that the members of Secular Humanists of Linn County are formulating a letter to send to the Cedar Rapids City Council regarding the prayers which are offered at the beginning of each council meeting. The majority of the prayers are Christian and the SHLC will suggest that prayers from a variety of faith traditions be offered, if the council will not end the tradition of prayers. The IRCLC is willing to provide a list of names for the council's use of those willing to participate in the council's prayers, if the councilors agree to the contents of the letter.

MINUTES

Joan Thaler moved and Nancy Rhodes seconded the approval of the January 5th minutes as amended. Carried.

Amendments were: changing Cornell University to Cornell College and correcting the spelling of Qur'an.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nomination Committee: given by Charles Crawley.

Jerome Deister and Taha Tawil have agreed to be replaced on the board. The nomination committee will bring nominations to replace these men to the March meeting for the board's approval.

Financial Report: presented by Nathan Williams

Balances: Checking account \$(116.40); Money Market Account: \$17,027.99.

Although the financial report shows a negative balance in the checking account, the bank has assured him the bank's balance is positive because a check has not yet cleared the bank. Deposits made Feb 3 will more than cover the total of all checks written.

US Bank requires a letter stating the following:

Treasurer Nathan Williams is designated as the owner of the IRCLC accounts at US Bank. President Charles Crawley and Immediate Past President Todd Thalblum are designated as signers with authority.

Nancy Rhodes moved and Hassan Selim seconded a motion that we provide such a statement to the bank. Carried.

Community Relations Committee: report given by Brian Daugherty

Beginning this year, the name of the "Children of Abraham" dialogue group will be changed to "The Inter-Religious Dialogue Group". The programs for this year are:

April 30 Stewardship and the Environment

August 27 Defining Religion and its Purpose

October 29 Religious and Ethnic Pluralism in America

All meetings will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at a location to be determined.

The four traditions represented are all understood, within each of their traditions, to be part of the lineage and legacy of the prophet Abraham. They are: Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Baha'i. Changing the name will allow the flexibility to include other traditions and do a variety of programs. The Between the Traditions program will continue with the same name.

Between the Traditions: Muhammad in the Bible; Jesus in the Qur'an. Date and place are to be determined.

Ethical Perspectives on the News: Alan Diehl will be meeting with the committee soon.

Event Committee: reported by Charles Crawley

Todd Thalblum will call a meeting in February. Suggestions for a speaker for the Thanksgiving Service are needed as soon as possible.

Communication Committee: Eugenia Kendall's report was read by Brenda Mitchell.

-Membership renewal letter and form: 238 copies were mailed Monday, Jan 30.

-In 2016, there was a total of 18,814 visits to the IRCLC website. In the month of Jan. 2017, the website received 1,624 visits; this is higher than the monthly average of 1,281.

-Our Facebook "likes" are holding steady at 84 people. Three posts in January reached 38 people.

-Cedric Lofdahl has been asked to compile a summary of the IRCLC history to put on the website.

-Goal is to make needed changes to the website on a monthly basis to keep the information as current as possible, especially the community events page.

-Access is needed to the EPON YouTube account to set up automatic Facebook postings when new videos are downloaded.

-The next focus of the committee is compiling the spring newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Feb 4, 2 p.m. Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 6621 C Ave. NE, will be hosting an event to show solidarity with the black motorist who was shot. It is sponsored by Iowa Justice Alliance.

Feb 8, 10 a.m. Welcome Proclamation from the Linn County Board of Supervisors will be presented at the Jean Oxley Building, 935 2nd St. SW.

March 3, 11:46 p.m. Intersections will be held at First Presbyterian Church. The topic is "Understanding Transgender," and the presenter is Dr. Joe Freund.

2018: Hassan Selim wants to organize an Interfaith Youth Conference. The tentative plan is for a one-day conference, open to high-school and college-age youth. If you or your youth minister is interested in participating on the conference committee, please let Hassan know.

Our next meeting will be March 2 and Ashok Chawla will lead the inspirational discussion.

Hassan Selim moved to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. seconded by Nathan Williams. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Mitchell
Secretary.