

CARBONDALE INTERFAITH COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes for March 25, 2014

*The purpose of the Interfaith Council is to make God's love visible in our community by fostering interfaith cooperation, sharing religious experiences, engaging in service, discovering unity while respecting differences, and speaking with courage and strength for justice.  
(Statement of Purpose adopted c. 2001)*

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm at the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship by Maurine Pyle, Interim President of the Council. Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster spoke about Unitarianism at the start of our meeting as part of our ongoing series of introductions to the history, beliefs, and practices of our member faith communities.

Following up on discussion at our last meeting, the Council decided to have a public event centered around food. This potluck picnic will be open to the public with invitations sent to members of local faith communities. It will be an opportunity for new faith communities to learn about the Council in an informal context and also an opportunity for present and returning Council members to share food and fellowship. The picnic will be on May 18 from 3 pm to 6 pm at Sufi Park with a rain location of Gaia House Interfaith Center. For those unable to attend the full event, there will be a specific time near the beginning for the breaking of bread and the sharing of introductions as well as descriptions of each person's potluck dish and its role (if any) in their faith community.

The Council had an in depth discussion of a motion to make a donation in the memory of Pravin Varughese, the SIU student who recently passed away in Carbondale. The discussion included questions such as where to donate, how much to donate, and how we as an interfaith council should respond to violence in our community. The Council ultimately approved a final modified motion to make a \$50 donation to Good Samaritan Ministries in Pravin's name.

Ken Starbuck and Imam Haqq discussed the details of a letter to the Carbondale City Council about the city budget. This letter from the Council asks that any adjustments to the city's community organization budget be made proportionately rather than defunding entire programs which would then be at risk of discontinuation. The Council approved the proposal to send such a letter.

The first meeting of a new interfaith program called Faith and the Environment took place on March 20. This program was started by the Baha'i of Southern Illinois as a follow-up to the National Preach-In On Climate Change. Faith and the Environment meets on the third Thursday of each month and is open to people of all faiths and beliefs. The next Faith and the Environment meeting is on April 17.

The Racial Justice Coalition is having a meeting on March 29 at 1 pm at Church of the Good Shepherd UCC. A major focus of this meeting will be the effort to slow down or stop the development of a solar energy project at the old Koppers site. This site was previously contaminated by creosote pollution and there is concern that the solar project may disturb the remaining pollution and does not benefit those who were harmed by the site in the past. The next general meeting of the Racial Justice Coalition will be on April 3 at 7 pm and will feature Mike Carr, Jackson County States Attorney, and a discussion of a local restorative justice panel that is under development.

A new group, Enough is Enough, is seeking to respond to violence in Carbondale and create a sense of community. They will be having an event on April 6 from 1 pm to 4 pm at the Boys and Girls Club to raise awareness about the situation and hold a fundraiser for the shooting victim from a recent shooting

in Carbondale.

Several upcoming events were mentioned for inclusion in the next edition of the newsletter: the Imagining Geographies series on April 4 to April 6; Cornell West speaking at SIU on April 17; Southern Illinois AIDS Walk on April 12; Southern Illinois AIDS Candlelight Memorial on April 28 at 6:30 pm at Church of the Good Shepherd UCC; and Family Day and the March Against Child Abuse on April 5 at Gaia House Interfaith Center. Members of the Council are encouraged to send details of this and other events of interfaith interest to Treesong for inclusion in the newsletter.

The Council approved last meeting's minutes. Harry Treece, Treasurer of the Council, distributed a financial report and list of dues-paying member faith communities of the Council. The balance for the Ralph Anderson fund was \$1,291.96. The balance for the general Council checking account was \$4,923.15. This gives us a grand total of \$6,215.11. Any members who have not yet paid their membership dues are encouraged to do so. Treesong will update the website to reflect any faith communities that are no longer members and have requested to be removed from the member list on the website and newsletter.

The Southern Illinois Got Talent fundraising event for Good Samaritan came out ahead, but not as much so as expected. The \$25 price was considered too high for some people and there were some difficulties with promotion, including an outage of the electronic marquis that was meant to promote the event. However, the event did come out slightly ahead and generated good publicity. The next event by the same organizer will benefit Good Samaritan as well as Wounded Warriors.

The next meeting of the Carbondale Interfaith Council will be hosted by the Baha'i of Southern Illinois on Tuesday, April 22 at 6:30 pm at Gaia House Interfaith Center.

Meeting minutes submitted by Treesong, Secretary of the Carbondale Interfaith Council.