



The purpose of the Carbondale 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 our differences, and speaking with courage and strength for justice

Meeting Minutes for September 29, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm at Congregation Beth Jacob by Maurine Pyle, President of the Council. Sue Liemer of Congregation Beth Jacob gave an introduction to Judaism that focused on a discussion of the Jewish harvest holiday of Sukkot. This was part of our ongoing series of introductions to the history, beliefs, and practices of our member faith communities.

Ken Starbuck, who has been chairperson of the Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogues since 2004, announced that he will be concluding his leadership of the dialogues. In honor of this transition, the Council discussed the history of the dialogues and plans for the future of the dialogues. Ken encouraged a committee of members of the interfaith community to continue the dialogues. The Council formally expressed their thanks for the leadership that Ken and his wife Cathy Starbuck have shown in this role over the past eleven years.

The next Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogue event will be on Monday, October 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship. The topic will be "Thirty Year Anniversary of Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogues." The three presenters, Father Roger Karban, Mazhar Butt, and Dale Bengtson, were instrumental in that early history. For more information, call Ken at 942-3986 or email cubrats@frontier.com.

Guest speaker Stephen Nickels of Illinois People's Action told the Council about the Illinois Clean Jobs Bill. This bill (HB 2607/SB 1485) would increase energy efficiency, increase the use of renewable energy, and pursue market-based strategies to reduce carbon pollution while creating jobs in Illinois. The bill was discussed in the context of the Pope's recent encyclical on climate change, the recent climate declaration released by a group of Muslim scholars from 20 countries, and similar public statements about climate justice by other faith leaders. Anyone who would like more information about the bill can visit ilcleanjobs.org/bill. For those interested in further discussion of environmental stewardship and creation care, Scott Martin of the Baha'i community also coordinates a monthly discussion group called Faith and Environment on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at Gaia House Interfaith Center

Katherine Graves discussed the Sparrow Coalition's recent "Housing First" event. At this event, guest speaker Dan Bryant spoke about several different types of ministries for the homeless that he has worked with in Eugene, Oregon. There were approximately 75 community members in attendance, including three members of Carbondale City Council and several representatives of other local institutions. The presentation and discussion included consideration of which of these models if any may be applicable here in Carbondale.

Mike Heath, director of Good Samaritan Ministries, presented an update on the state of the ministry. The Illinois budget crisis has left many service agencies, including Good Samaritan,



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missing a substantial portion of their budget due to the state government's failure to meet its commitments. Good Samaritan has not received payment from the state for several months and has only been able to continue functioning due to the generous support of local community members.

Mike Heath announced that Good Samaritan was planning to close its soup kitchen in early October as an emergency cost-saving measure. Initially, the Council discussed various ways that local faith communities may be able to support those who would be missing out on the food currently provided by the soup kitchen. The ongoing Feed My Sheep program by Bethel AME Church already feeds many people, but is already at maximum capacity. Grace United Methodist Church also has a new ministry that has been feeding 40-60 people at the Town Square Pavilion on Sundays. Those faith communities that have certified commercial kitchens and certified staff/volunteers could possibly take turns helping with one of these existing ministries or a new ministry.

Sam Cox of First United Methodist Church suggested that it might be simpler to take up a special collection to sustain the Good Samaritan soup kitchen for another month. After some discussion and consideration, the Council decided to pursue this approach. Individuals and faith communities are invited to contribute to the fundraising effort as they are able. Contributions should be designated as soup kitchen contributions to ensure that they are used for the soup kitchen.

Maurine Pyle of the Quaker community and Sarah Richards of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship discussed the Council's student outreach efforts at the start of the fall semester. The "four square" discussion event did not occur as planned, but future events may benefit from the lessons learned. More lead time, more promotion, and partnership with student organizations and faculty may help in future semesters. The CommUnity Dinner, co-sponsored with the Rotary Club, went well with good turnout and good fellowship among the students. Students have formed a Rotaract Club to help connect students with off-campus service opportunities, including those offered by local faith communities.

The Council reviewed its Policy Manual. This document was initially reviewed over the summer by Maurine Pyle, Harry Treece, Bob Flannery, and Treesong. The review group proposed several changes. After some discussion of the exact wording, the Council approved the proposed changes.

The Council also discussed how to handle letters to the editor and similar group declarations. How can the Council express a unified opinion or concern in writing without alienating members of the Council who may not agree with the idea or some aspect of its wording? Suggestions included alternative phrasings such as "We the undersigned members of the Council" or "Written on behalf of the Council". However, there was some concern that these



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phrasings would still imply that the Council had reached unanimous agreement. The Council did not reach a unanimous decision about how to handle future letters. Such letters may still be signed by individual faith leaders or presented to the Council for consideration.

Scott Martin showed a short trailer for the Racial Taboo film. He is proposing organizing a Racial Taboo film showing and discussion series in Carbondale. The film explores how we talk about and experience race in the United States. The showing in Paducah had several hundred attendees. Scott Martin and others involved in the initial trial screening of the film are asking the Council for support in informing people about the film and the effort to bring it to Carbondale.

The next Parliament of the World's Religions is coming up on October 15-19 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Having the Parliament in the U.S. is a rare opportunity for people from the U.S. to attend for relatively little cost. Several local people are attending, including members of the Council. Maurine Pyle will be blogging about the event and sharing her blog with the Council.

Carbondale in Thanksgiving is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17 at the Carbondale Mosque. This year's Carbondale in Thanksgiving will feature speakers who attended the Parliament of World Religions.

Dia Parr announced that the Spirit of Christmas program has already started for this year. The names of people who will be receiving gifts through the program must be submitted by October 14. These names will go out to participating churches on or near November 1. On December 6 through 8, the gifts will be received, processed, and distributed. The Council expressed their thanks to Grace United Methodist Church for hosting this program at their church.

Sonja Ingebritsen of Church of the Good Shepherd UCC will be leaving the Council after this meeting. The Council thanked her for service on the Council as well as her work with the Racial Justice Coalition and other groups and projects.

The next gathering of the Carbondale Interfaith Council will be at Carbondale in Thanksgiving on Tuesday, November 17. The next board meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 15. Meeting minutes submitted by Treesong, Secretary of the Carbondale Interfaith Council.



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CARBONDALE INTERFAITH COUNCIL
Members And Guests In Attendance
September 29, 2015

Name	Faith Community or Organization
Scott Martin	Southern Illinois Baha'i
Debbi Martin	Southern Illinois Baha'i
Dia Parr	First Christian Church
Sue Liemer	Congregation Beth Jacob
Maurine Pyle	Southern Illinois Quaker Meeting
Sonja Ingebritsen	Church of the Good Shepherd UCC
Jan Womack	Epiphany Lutheran Church
Alan Rhein	First United Methodist Church
Samuel Cox	First United Methodist Church
Abdus Sami	Islamic Center of Carbondale
Harry Treece	University Baptist Church
Sarah Richards	Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship
Sara Faye Marten	Congregation Beth Jacob
In-Sook Hwang	Grace United Methodist Church
Mike Heath	Good Samaritan Ministries
Ken & Kathy Starbuck	Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship
Katherine Bryant Graves	First Christian Church
Bob Flannery	Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church
Treesong	Gaia House Interfaith Center & SIPA
Stephen Nickels	Illinois People's Action