



Interfaith Community Church



July 3rd, 2011 ~ UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE Worship Celebration



Dear Friends;

[Interfaith Community Church](#) devoted an entire Sunday morning worship celebration to the [United Religions Initiative](#) (URI) on Sunday July 3rd.

Steve Crawford offered improvisational piano for the prelude and Anita Mammoser opened our worship gathering with a reading from HH the Dalai Lama.

We shared about our more than ten year involvement with the URI beginning with the *Call for 72 hours of Peacebuilding* at the turn of the millennium and the co-creation of our own

Cooperation Circle, *Interfaith Circle of Love*.

We read the URI Charter Preamble aloud, lighting a candle for each phrase. Each reader then struck a chime to carry the blessings of the intention of the statement into the world.

We followed the reading with small group conversation asking each person to recall a time their involvement in an interfaith gathering, dialogue, event or occasion made them feel their presence contributed in even some small way to interfaith harmony and world peace.

We concluded the service by offering healing to the world during a piano solo of "Moonlight Sonata" by Sally Jo Gilbert de Vargas and a Blessing by Jamal Rahman.

About our URI CC "Interfaith Circle of Love;"

We acknowledge and thank [Rev. Mary Ellen Gaylord](#) for being our first URI personal contact and encouraging our participation in URI.

Over the years our Cooperation Circle has created many wonderful interfaith gatherings, all meaningful and relevant and important to recall:

- We kept our church doors open with events, prayers, music, song and dialogue throughout the three days of the **72 Hours of Peacebuilding** at the turn of the millennium. We held a public reading of the URI Charter on this occasion.
- Our annual **New Year's Eve Walking Meditation** began at the turn of the millennium. This outdoor public gathering with music and song interweaving prayer and words of wisdom from representatives of at least nine faith and spiritual traditions. We gather in the cold during the last hour of daylight and as darkness descends we light candles as we walk around the lake -- a nearly three mile journey. In contemplation, reflection, or singing chants, we traverse the lake lighting the darkness in so many ways. We share the purpose statement of the URI in all invitations and flyers for this interfaith gathering. We thank Sky for his original inspiration and invitation to this event, one which we have continued since December 31st 1999.
- We now offer a public dialogue before our outdoor New Year's Eve gathering. We collaborate with the **Compassionate Action Network** for this pre event. Invitations are extended to public officials, city council, Houses of Worship, interfaith organizations, peace organizations, and the general public. Seattle has become a City of Compassion by adopting the Charter for Compassion.
- [Rev. Karen Lindquist](#) hosted and facilitated all day dialogue sessions at Interfaith Community Church, using the "**Just Peace**" and "**Vision for Peace Among Religions**" materials provided by the URI.
- We collaborate in co-creating an annual **Interfaith Worship Celebration** each fall near Thanksgiving, bringing nine faith and spiritual traditions together in celebration and gratitude. The Interfaith Network (TIN) -- previously Interfaith Council of WA,



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began this tradition 24 years ago. [The Interfaith Network](#) (TIN) – is now also a URI CC. We have past president Sibyl Lundy to thank for opening the consciousness in favor of the URI within The Interfaith Council of WA member organizations. Subsequent presidents also have supported the URI, including Margie Coles, current URI CC liaison for NA.

- Each fall we open our sacred space for a prayer vigil on the [International Day of Peace](#) September 21st. Spiritual leaders of our community, representing diverse spiritual traditions, host two hour segments where the public is invited to share silence, song, chant, dialogue and prayer. 2011 is the 30 year anniversary of International Day of Peace. In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly declared the Day shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. We plan to participate in [11 Days 11 Ways](#) from 9/11 — 9/21.
- Recently, members of our URI CC mobilized to create a “URI Peacemaker’s CC,” planning activities to raise awareness of religiously motivated violence. This circle is convened by [Sibyl Lundy](#), Zen Buddhist and one of Interfaith Circle of Love CC co-founders. Activities include hosting film / dialogue events for discussing the issues around religiously motivated violence, to offer interfaith prayers at sites of such violence and create training sessions in peaceful communication.
- Valuable members of our CC have attended URI gatherings out of state. Co-minister Imam [Jamal Rahman](#) celebrated the recent signing of the URI Charter in summer 2000 at an interfaith event held at the Presidio in San Francisco, CA. He also travelled to Salt Lake City, Utah, for the URI-USA Regional Assembly in June 2001. In June 2005, co-minister [Rev. Debra Lajimodiere](#) travelled to Las Vegas, NV for the URI-NAIN regional assembly “Hospitality, Gratitude and Sharing: Interfaith Action in Our World.” In November 2008, [Sally Jo Gilbert de Vargas](#) attended a URI retreat in Boulder Colorado, where the focus was on the organizational structure and the importance of the role of Cooperation Circles.
- URI leaders, [Steve Fitzgerald](#) Convener City of Angels CC, [Charles Gibbs](#) URI Executive Director, and [Kay Lindahl](#) URI Global Council Trustee, have each visited Seattle to support the work of our Cooperation Circle.

Conveners of **Interfaith Circle of Love Cooperation Circle** (established in 2000)

Interfaith Circle of Love CC founding members still active include, but are not limited to:

Jamal Rahman, Muslim; Sibyl Lundy, Zen Buddhism; Debra Lajimodiere, First Peoples; [Linda Stern](#), Ancient Mysteries; Karen Lindquist, Interfaith.

Interfaith Circle of Love CC members who have chosen to focus more specifically on ending religiously motivated violence, include, but are not limited to:

Anita Mammoser, interfaith; Lisa Yanak, Baha’i Faith; Nancy Coleman, Bahai Faith (also serving on the TIN CC); Sally Jo Gilbert de Vargas, Seeker of Truth; Steve Crawford, Rational Faith; Steven Greenebaum, Jewish.

Inactive Members include:

Barbara Levy, Ancient Mysteries (*moved out of the area*); Barry Klepper, Jewish (*has other interests*); Bill Bennett & Janet Worthen, Christian (*retired*); Gill Ben Ami, Jewish (*lives abroad*); Mickey Stern, Jewish (*change in life circumstances prevents participation*.)