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A Newsletter of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable



Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Prayer Breakfast

*Thursday, February 4, 2016
Hellenic Cultural Center, Salt Lake City, Utah*



Jennifer Seelig, the Community Relations Director for Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski

Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos, Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Chair and Assistant Priest at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church welcomed approximately sixty members of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable to the Hellenic Cultural Center on

Thursday, February 4, 2016 to the Roundtable's annual Interfaith Prayer Breakfast. The breakfast is an annual event that signals the beginning of Interfaith Month in Salt Lake City and joins with other faiths and organizations around the world participating in the United

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Prayer Breakfast >>> Continued from first page



Imam Muhammed Mehtar of the Khadeeja Mosque and the Islamic Center of Greater Salt Lake



Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week activities from February 1 -7.

Imam Muhammed Mehtar of the Khadeeja Mosque and the Islamic Center of Greater Salt Lake was invited to give the invocation, who said that when we pray we should always give thanks to God first before we ask anything for ourselves. He went on to thank God for all that we have received and asked that God be with the less fortunate who are in need of daily necessities.

Reports were given by Janet Healy and Alan Bachman about the upcoming Interfaith Month events and recognition was given to those who had worked on the organizing committees.

Father Elias welcomed guest speaker, Jennifer Seelig, the Community Relations Director for Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski, who supported the Roundtable's mission saying, "Seek out other perspectives that you do not hold. Increase your capacity to include others. We need all perspectives," Seelig said.

Seelig talked about her Methodist upbringing and her recent embrace of some Buddhist tenants.



Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos receives the "We Can't Do Without You" award



Brian Farr is recognized for his work in advertising the Roundtable at the Parliament of the World's Religions

"We are complex and holistic beings. We are not easily defined. We must guard against silos, staying within our own world. We do important work to bridge these silos," Seelig said. "This goes beyond tolerance. We are not here to put up with each other, we are here to thrive together," she said. Seelig ended with encouraging words, "You matter very much."

Father Elias invited Josie Stone, Vice-chair of the Interfaith Roundtable to present the Roundtable's

annual awards. The Community award was awarded to J.B. Singh and the Sikh Community for providing the Langar every day at the October 2016 Parliament of the World's Religion in Salt Lake City. The Individual award was given to Brian Farr for his work in advertising the Roundtable at the Parliament. The "We Can't Do Without You" award was presented to Father Elias for being a Father to us all. A special award was presented to Wendy Stovall for her outstanding

Prayer Breakfast >>> Continued



Wendy Stovall receives a special award for her outstanding and tireless efforts on behalf of the Roundtable



Flowers were presented to Andalin Bachman in appreciation for all her work on the Roundtable's website



Susan Soleil (left) receives recognition of her work on behalf of the Roundtable for the Parliament of the World's Religions.

and tireless efforts on behalf of the Roundtable. Flowers were presented to Andalin Bachman in appreciation for all her work on the Roundtable's website, and to Susan Soleil in recognition of her work on behalf of the Roundtable for the Parliament of the World's Religions.



Reverend Susan Roberts and Alan Bachman offered prayers over the peace messages



Father Elias invited everyone to write a message of peace and place them in a bowl. Members were invited to come up and offer a prayer. Reverend Susan Roberts and Alan Bachman offered prayers over the peace messages.

Father Elias concluded the breakfast by thanking the caterers for the delicious breakfast and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints for sponsoring the event, after which he closed with a benediction.

Governor's Opening Statement and First Nation Native American Blessing for Interfaith Month 2016

Friday, February 5, 2016
Utah State Capitol Rotunda



Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos, Chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and Assistant Priest at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church



Left to right: Community Advocate Pamela Atkinson, Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos, Governor Gary H. Herbert, Lacey Harris

Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos, Chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and Assistant Priest at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church warmly welcomed everyone to the Capitol Rotunda for an opening statement by Governor Gary R. Herbert kicking-off the 2016 Utah Interfaith Month and to celebrate the First Nation Native American Blessing Ceremony by Lacey Harris.

Community Advocate Pamela Atkinson introduced Governor Gary H. Herbert, who said it was fitting to have this ceremony in the Utah State Capitol, because Utah was founded by a people seeking religious freedom. Marjorie Cortez of the Deseret News reported on Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos' and Governor Gary Herbert's remarks in the following link:

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865647077/Be-open-to-ideas-beliefs-of-others-chairman-of-interfaith-group-urges-Utahns-at-state-Capitol.html?pg=all>

Lacey Harris, a Northern Ute – Northern Paiute and Board Member of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, was introduced by Father Elias. Harris began by welcoming everyone

to his land, saying that his ancestors used to spend the summers in the Salt Lake area. Harris then brought out his ceremonial pipe, showing two pieces which he





Governor Gary H. Herbert



Lacey Harris

joined together in symbolism of unity. He showed everyone his bag of tobacco, which he stated is a medicine for his people and that each tribe has a different recipe. Harris began the ceremonial blessing by offering a pinch of tobacco in six directions; east, south, west, north, above to God and below to Mother Earth. In his following prayers, Harris invoked God to bless everyone, once again praying in all directions and moving his Eagle Feathers from each direction towards the audience. In previous years Harris had included the audience by passing his Peace Pipe around the circle.

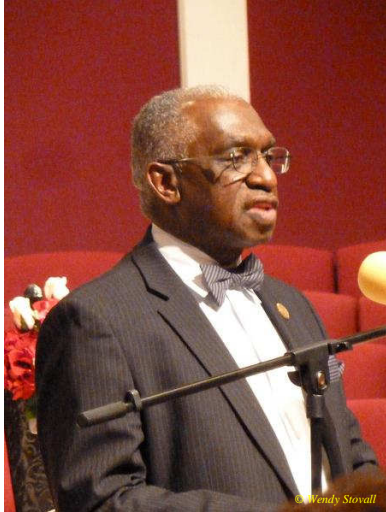
After the Blessing ceremony light refreshments were served allowing participants time to talk with Lacey Harris.



Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of each member or member organization. The Roundtable encourages open discussion and dialogue.

Gospel Extravaganza: Celebrating Crossroads 50 Years of dedication to the Salt Lake Community

Monday, February 8, 2016
Calvary Baptist Church



Pastor France Davis of the
Calvary Baptist Church



The Calvary Baptist Church Choir

A Gospel Extravaganza was hosted by Pastor France Davis and the Calvary Baptist Church to honor the Crossroads Urban Center and its 50 years of dedicated service to the Salt Lake Community. Pastor Davis welcomed the audience and invited Pastor Eun-Sang Lee of the First United Methodist Church to offer the invocation. Amanda Dixon from KSL Radio emceed the evening and welcomed the Hilltop United Methodist Choir, which performed "What He Has Done for Me" and "Thou Oh Lord are a Shield to Me."

New York based Ebony Yvonne Diaz was the keynote speaker. She said that if it hadn't have been for similar organizations, such as Crossroads Urban Center who help people like herself, a single Mom with three children, she would never have made it to where she is today. Diaz emphasized the work of the Center during the past 50 years, which included serving 32,000 meals in 2015, providing diapers and baby formula; preventing people from being evicted from their homes; and providing



The Unity Baptist Choir



The Hilltop United Methodist Choir



Pastor Eun-Sang Lee



Amanda Dixon



Glenn Bailey



Ebony Yvonne Diaz



Lane Gardinier



Sally Sharp

gas, bus tokens or money for prescriptions. She said that for 50 years Crossroads has been the lighthouse for those in the dark, providing an emergency food pantry, a free lowcost thrift store and addressing the root causes of poverty through community organizing and advocacy. The Crossroads Urban center has been in its current location since 1966, in a building owned and maintained by the United Methodist Women and overseen by a board of Directors.

The Unity Baptist Choir performed two musical numbers, and Executive Director, Glenn Bailey and Chairman of the Board, Lane Gardinier spoke briefly about the work of Crossroads, after which the Calvary Baptist Choir was invited to the stage to perform "He made a difference." In conclusion Sally Sharp, a cardiologist on the Crossroads Development Committee thanked everyone for their donations and participation in the evening.

The evening concluded with all the choirs singing together followed by light refreshments in the lobby.



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Dean's Hall, Cathedral Church of St. Mark

More than 100 people joined parishioners at the Cathedral Church of St. Mark to celebrate Shrove Tuesday, also known as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday in French). The tables and the guests were adorned with traditional purple, gold and green carnival beads.

Shrove Tuesday is the last day before the Christian penitential season of Lent, the 40-day period leading up to Easter. Many people enter Lent taking on a spiritual discipline, such as meditation, prayer, reading or acts of service. In the past, people "gave up something" for Lent, such as indulgences, like dessert, or rich and expensive foods, (meat, butter) or habits and behaviors such as smoking and/or drinking. What better way to use up the butter, syrup, eggs and fat which might be shunned during the Lenten season, than hundreds and hundreds of pan-



Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos

cakes, bacon, sausage and veggie patties. Two authentic English ladies, Josie Stone and the Reverend Caryl Marsh, supervised the preparation of English pancakes, another name for their popular crepes drenched in lemon juice and sprinkled with sugar.

In addition to the Pancake supper, the children participated in a mini carnival, dressed up in their costumes while pulling carts. Dean Walden and other parishioners helped with the prizes. Dean Walden then led a tour of the Cathedral.



LDS Church History Museum Tour

Thursday, February 11, 2016
Salt Lake City, Utah



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints participated in the Interfaith Month activities on Thursday, February 11, 2016 by providing a special tour of its newly-renovated Church History Museum.

Members of the Interfaith Roundtable were met by museum staff and guided to the Board Room where they were warmly welcomed. Participants were informed that the room was restored from the original ZCMI department store in downtown Salt Lake City and that the table in the room was used for some of the interfaith meetings in preparation for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.



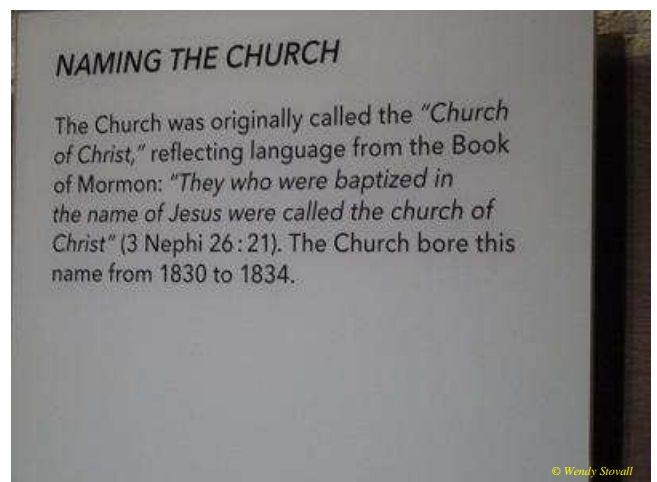
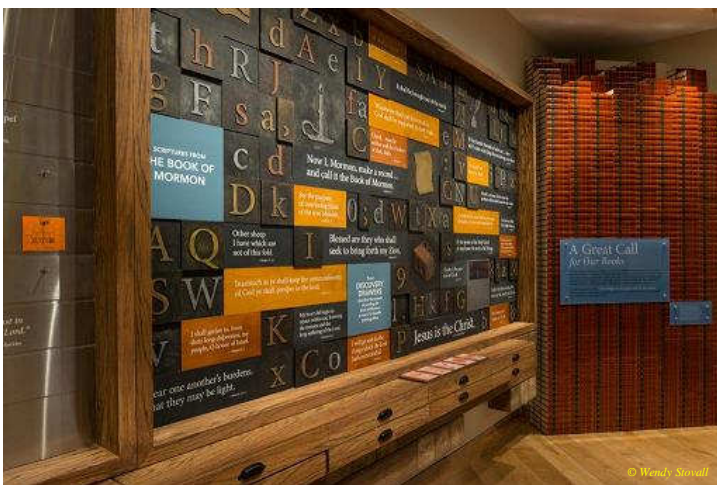
The Museum provides videos, informational displays and historical artifacts arranged to tell the Church's history from 1820 to 1846. Of special interest was a new 10-minute movie, in a full surround theatre, of the First Vision, a pivotal event in the early life of the Church's founder, Joseph Smith, Jr.

Replicas of early LDS Church historical sites are displayed in the museum, such as the Liberty Jail in Missouri, where Joseph Smith and others were incarcerated for over 5 months as well as many artifacts from that period, including a chest that held the gold plates and the

press which was used to print the Book of Mormon.

At the end of the tour participants were given the opportunity to browse through the wonderful art and paintings displayed from the Church's 10th International Art Competition themed "Tell me stories of Jesus."

Finally, the museum management provided a lovely reception following the tour with refreshments and drinks. We wish to offer our thanks to museum curator Ray Halls and his staff for this wonderful evening.



“Combating the Cancer of Extremism”

Friday, February 12, 2016

Anatolia Cultural Center/Pacifica Institute

Friday, February 12, 2016 saw the inaugural event of the new Salt Lake City location of the Utah Anatolian Cultural Center/Pacifica Institute. This was an open community discussion on “Combating the Cancer of Extremism,” with special guest Dr. Daniel Hummel of Idaho State University. Dr. Hummel, an Assistant Professor in the ISU Political Science Department, is a specialist in Public Administration and has a very hands-on and practical approach. Raised a Christian, Dr. Hummel is a convert to Islam and plays a very active role in his community in addition to the university; he is also an interfaith leader as well as acting Imam at his mosque in Pocatello, Idaho.

The topic of discussion was the November/December 2015 *The Fountain* article by Imam Fethullah Gulen, “Combating the Cancer of Extremism” (first published in *The Wall Street Journal* August 2015). Introducing Dr. Hummel and moderating the community discussion was Andrew Kosorok, glass



Andrew Kosorok

artist, chaplain-in-training, and a Christian, and Coskun Kariparduc, President of the Utah ACC/Pacifica. Many faiths were represented including Muslims, Christians, Pagans, and Humanists, all taking an active role in addressing one of the most serious and devastating modern ills.

“One thing that is truly remarkable about Imam Gulen,” said Andrew in his welcome, “is the fact that although he hangs his messages soundly on the



teachings of the Qur'an, the truths he shares echo through the belief system of every major faith and decent person in the world.” Extremism is aptly described as a cancer, drawing energy to itself as it seeks to crush the healthy “organs” and systems of society it touches.

Six points from Gulen’s article iterated by Mr. Kosorok were: 1) Religious platitudes like “turn the other cheek” refer to patience and nonviolence in response to evil action, and does not mean we should “fall prey to victimhood”; 2) We should nurture “holistic understanding” of religions, particularly Islam, and bond with like-minded people regardless



Dr. Daniel Hummel



of cultural or religious differences; 3) We need to be actively vocal in our support of the human rights of dignity, life and liberty; 4) It is vital that we encourage education in the arts, humanities, and science in an atmosphere of respect for every life; 5) We must support religious education and religious freedom so we are prepared with the tools necessary to combat extremist dogma; and 6) We must actively promote and support equal rights for women and men. “Basic human rights and rights of gender equality are an inextricable birthright of the human experience,” Andrew pointed out, “We cannot grant them but we must recognize and respect them as they are already there.”

Dr. Hummel presented some fascinating and saddening statistics. “Out of dozens of mass shootings around the U.S. last year, the popular media only keeps a handful in the news cycle – those involving horrible people claiming association with Islam.” He also shared that in 2015, out of 56 extremist attacks foiled in the US at least 44 were stopped directly because Muslims stepped forward to help. And worldwide many more Muslims die and are hurt at the hands of so-called “Muslim” terrorists than any other faith group. “Terrorist extremists who commit atrocities in the

name of Islam are only a fraction of one part of one minor sect of Islam, yet popular media uses them to define Islam for all of us.”

Be vocal yet polite, be engaged as a neighbor, sincerely care about those around you regardless of faith, and take an active and healthy role in the democratic process were the ideas Dr. Hummel shared with several examples. One audience member asked, “What are you and your family doing specifically?”

“I am very active in interfaith work and dialogue in Pocatello,” he responded. “Our mosque works with the LDS, Episcopal, and other Christian groups whenever we can. Our child attends a Catholic school with children of many other faiths. As we interact with each other familiarity and friendliness dispel the mistrust of ignorance, and each of us see the other is a person too.” Dr. Hummel also shared a recent encounter with an evangelist Christian group who came to Pocatello to picket and proselyte the mosque. “We completely shocked them by coming out, introducing ourselves, and asking them inside for refreshments!” The group took them up on the offer and what began as a contentious encounter quickly transformed into tentative friendship. “They invited us to come to their home town for a reli-

gious debate, we countered with the offer of a friendly debate, and now we are making plans for a real dialogue.” Education, dialogue and mutual respect, Dr. Hummel emphasized, are invaluable keys to overcoming extremist hatred and violence.

Another audience member shared her own ongoing project: “I am going through the Qur’an and writing commentary on what I read from my own Christian perspective, finding all the points of commonality and intersection I can.” The faiths are different, but through thoughtful and prayerful comparison she is finding cause to respect the differences and celebrate the similarities.

The audience discussion was lively and animated, voices from many faiths were heard and all agreed that extremism is a problem not just for Muslims, but for everyone to resolve. After the close of comments, Dr. Hummel remained to answer individual questions and the audience broke into friendly conversations among new friends as the evening came to a satisfying end.

All in all it was a very fruitful evening.

True Parents' Birthday Celebration

Saturday, February 13, 2016

Salt Lake Family Church, Salt Lake City, Utah



The Salt Lake Family Church of the FFWPU opened its celebration of True Parents' Birthday on Saturday, February 13th, to the public with a luncheon and entertainment. Pastors Mike and Wendy Stovall welcomed over thirty members and guests to the church. Pastor Mike gave a short explanation of who Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Moon are and their vision for families and an ideal nation. Both of the Moon's celebrate their birthdays on January 6 according to the lunar calendar.

A string quartet formed by the daughters of some of the families performed "My Heart Will Go On," and the church's children's choir sang "All the Lands that I've Loved." A trio of Japanese sisters sang a Japanese song translated as "Hometown."



Pastors Mike and Wendy Stovall



Yoshiko McKain, Yurie Ishii and Eiko Takeda (piano)



An updated video showing the life of True Parents was shown. Following the performances we invited everyone to join us in singing “Happy Birthday” and cutting the celebratory cake. Everyone enjoyed the international potluck meal, which was followed by family style entertainment provided by Pastor Mike and Wendy, who sang “Edelweiss” and performed some “nanana” magic.



Pastor Mike Stovall



Increasing Harmony and Understanding
in our Communities

The **Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable** is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your tax deductible contributions are very much appreciated and help to make our work of faith cooperation and event planning possible. We could also use donations of office supplies, such as stamps and copy paper.

Go to www.interfaithroundtable.org and click on the “Donations” tab to pay through PayPal™ or mail your check or money order to: Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, P.O. Box 112016, Salt Lake City, UT 84147

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