



San Francisco Interfaith Council

*Celebrating our diverse faiths & spiritual traditions
Bringing people together to build understanding
Serving our community*

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Accomplishments and Plans of the San Francisco Interfaith Council

2018 – 2019

CONVENING, COMMUNICATING, AND ADVOCACY

The San Francisco Interfaith Council's work centers on civil rights, homelessness, housing affordability, and disaster preparedness. The SFIC convenes and amplifies the voice of our city's faith-based community on these important issues.

OUR MISSION

History teaches us that many of the world's conflicts are rooted in religious strife. Founded in 1988, the San Francisco Interfaith Council (SFIC) seeks to counter this historical trend by "*Celebrating our diverse faiths and spiritual traditions, bringing people together to build understanding and serving our community.*"

WHO WE SERVE

We count as our constituents the 800 congregations in the City of San Francisco, their respective judicatories, sectarian educational and healthcare institutions, and the faith-based social service agencies that provide the social safety net for our most vulnerable residents.

OUR WORK

During this time of social change in San Francisco, civic leaders and the public view the SFIC as the "go-to" organization for mobilizing our City's religious communities. Congregations and faith-based agencies turn to us for resources, referral and representation. Our robust relationships and communications network of over 4,500 e-subscribers allow the SFIC to bring together and mobilize San Francisco's faith-based community to create an effective, combined force for service and issues of public policy, so that we may accomplish together what no single congregation can alone.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Monthly Breakfast

For over 15 years the SFIC has hosted a free public interfaith breakfast on the second Thursday of each month at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco where 100 congregational and lay leaders network and share a meal. Speakers from a variety of City departments, civic agencies, NGOs and philanthropic programs discuss their important work, ask faith communities to help spread the word, and offer volunteer opportunities for congregants. An individual gives a "meditation" from his or her religious tradition, and another presents a personal "faith journey." To appreciate the substantive presentations made we invite you to visit: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/monthly-breakfasts>

Aging & Adult Services

- **Coro Northern California Fellow**

The SFIC welcomed Coro Northern California Public Affairs Fellow, Siena Guerrazzi on September 10, 2018. A native of Sonoma County, who majored in Political Science at UC Berkeley, Siena is a passionate change-maker who has been assigned to assist the SFIC in reaching out to its 800 constituent religious institutions to compile a comprehensive report on programs and services being offered to aging adults, discern how many are accessing City services for that vulnerable population and creating a line of communication that will enable religious and lay leaders in those institutions to convey observations and concerns that will be instructive in formulating policies and programs to benefit our City's aging adults. Communities of faith are traditionally hubs of gathering for aging adults, where they feel safe, valued and are able to overcome social isolation. The SFIC is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with our cross-sector partners, the SF Department of Aging and Adult Services, SF In-Home Supportive Services, the Metta Fund and Coro Northern California on this important endeavor.

For additional information about Coro Northern California please visit: <https://coronorcal.org/>

- **Senior Health Fair at Grace Cathedral**

On April 21, 2018 the SFIC co-hosted with Grace Cathedral the inaugural Senior Health Fair at Grace Cathedral. In total, twenty-two agencies and vendors from all around San Francisco joined to celebrate our seniors. The fair started with keynote speakers, followed by breakout groups and workshops. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2GhMfGO>
For an in-depth look at the Senior Health Fair please visit: <https://www.gracecathedral.org/celebrating-senior-health/>

- **Reimagine End of Life – Conversation Sabbath**

The SFIC was a co-sponsor of "Conversation Sabbath," an initiative of Reimagine End of Life, a City-wide, week-long (April 16 – 22, 2018) collection of events exploring death, dying, and bereavement, and celebrating life through the arts, spirituality, health care, and innovation. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2Ggxlkl>

- **Faith Community & City: Coming Together to Support Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities**

In collaboration with the San Francisco Department of Aging & Adult Services, the San Francisco Interfaith Council hosted a half-day workshop on October 16, 2017, at which congregation leaders shared their challenges and needs for ministering to older adults and persons with disabilities, as well as being briefed on how to access important City services available to these vulnerable sectors in their congregations. Program may be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/P35A8z>

The SFIC created a page on their website with links for information and resources about services for older adults and persons with disabilities. Please visit: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/aging-and-disability-resources>

Disaster Preparedness

- **Fleet Week 2018**

Emerging from the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, one of the SFIC's founding missions has been that of disaster preparedness. Because of the critical role communities of faith play, both in providing volunteer support and making available their facilities in times of disaster, SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas was invited to be part of the Planning Committee for Fleet Week 2018. This year, the SFIC was also invited to participate on a panel, as part of the Senior Leaders Seminar, to discuss the critical role communities of faith play in responding to disaster, with a particular focus on our regional response to last year's North Bay fires. As Fleet Week welcomes a significant number of officers and enlisted personnel to San Francisco's shores, the SFIC, in collaboration with military chaplaincy leaders, is coordinating opportunities for navy and marine chaplains to preach in local houses of worship as well as providing a roster of faith communities at which officers and enlisted personnel may worship while in San Francisco.

- **Interfaith Response to North Bay Fires (October 2017)**

In addition to radically changing the landscape of Sonoma and Napa Counties, the impact of the October 2017 North Bay fires created a unique opportunity for interfaith regional collaboration. As civic and humanitarian aid entities headquartered in San Francisco were deploying assistance to the impacted region in the North Bay, the SFIC played an integral role in making time-sensitive introductions to our counterparts in those impacted regions. At the same time, because of air quality concerns of the fires' impact on San Francisco, the SFIC worked in close cooperation with the SF Departments of Emergency Management and Public Health to identify and activate religious institutions to serve as clean air stations. Additionally, as evacuees were given permission to return to their homes, concern was raised about their emotional and spiritual well-being. As such, a regional effort to invite and deploy chaplains to Sonoma County in particular, was undertaken. In the aftermath of this response a constructive debrief hosted by the SF Department of Emergency Management, at which representatives from all of the Bay Area interfaith councils, as well as American Red Cross Bay Area, Salvation Army, Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disaster (VOAD), and the Southern Baptist Conference were present. This convening resulted in a consensus decision to work collaboratively to train and certify prospective chaplains deploying in future disasters in the areas of cultural and interfaith competency.

Links to email blasts sent by the SFIC in response to North Bay Fires:

- a. Air Quality Smoke Advisory Issued (10/9/2017) <https://conta.cc/2zbvnP2>
- b. Red Level Air Quality Advisory Issued (10/12/2017) <https://conta.cc/2xCKO5G>
- c. Ordained Clergy/Mental Health Professionals Asked to Self Organize as Pastoral Care Teams for Fire Victims (10/17/2017) <https://conta.cc/2ggXV1g>
- d. Legal Help for People Impacted by California Fires (10/24/2017) <https://conta.cc/2gEuMRp>
- e. 2017 Northern California Wildfires Helping Handbook (10/27/2017) <https://conta.cc/2yXX1Bp>
- f. North Bay Fire Assistance with Replacing Identification Documents (11/2/2017) <https://conta.cc/2zeNKVu>

The SFIC has created a page on their website with links to disaster preparedness resources.

Please visit: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/disaster-preparedness-resources>

Immigration-Related Activities

- On June 21, 2018 the SFIC co-hosted with Grace Cathedral an "Interfaith Vigil to End the Separation of Immigrant Families." Faith partners from diverse traditions gathered in solidarity and prayer at Grace Cathedral's Outdoor Plaza.
 - a. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2l3dpBD>

- b. Link to program:
<http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/sites/default/files/files/Interfaith%20Vigil%20Program%206-21-2018.pdf>
- c. Link to op-ed by SFIC founder and past chair, Rita Semel:
<https://www.jweekly.com/2018/06/25/interfaith-vigil-for-immigrants-was-good-action-is-even-better/>
- On April 24, 2018 SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas moderated a panel discussion regarding “Sanctuary Rising”, a film screening by documentary film director Theo Rigby at the San Francisco Public Library addressing the history of the Sanctuary movement in San Francisco. The film and panelists spoke on how San Francisco became a Sanctuary City in the 1980s and how faith-based sanctuary work is being enacted today in the Bay Area and throughout the Country. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2HpyOcl>
Link to panel video clip: <https://goo.gl/mVz3qc>
- On March 27, 2017, the SFIC was invited by the San Francisco Human Services Network (HSN), an important partner in its work, to sign onto an Amicus Brief, expressing concern for the potential financial consequences that the Federal Government's Sanctuary City Executive Order would have on the San Francisco faith-based social service agencies. Signing on behalf of the "SF Faith Based Social Service Agencies CEO Round Table," the SFIC joined twenty-seven other nonprofits from the counties of San Francisco and Santa Clara. On April 25, 2017, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California ruled in favor of the Plaintiffs, of which this Amicus Brief was included. The Federal Government then appealed the decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. The SFIC then signed an identical "Sanctuary Jurisdictions Amicus Brief" filed in the 9th Circuit, on February 12, 2018. A final decision has yet to be rendered by that court.

San Francisco Interfaith Winter Shelter

Entering our 30th year, the SFIC has sponsored and coordinated an Interfaith Winter Shelter for the homeless. This shelter provides a hot, nutritious dinner, breakfast and a safe, warm overnight rest for some 100 homeless men every night from the Sunday before Thanksgiving through the end of February. The SFIC coordinates four host-site congregations, 50 meal-providing congregations, shelter staff from Episcopal Community Services and the San Francisco Night Ministry, with input from the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

At the request of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing the Interfaith Winter Shelter will remain open through the end of March 2019. Extending the shelter was made possible, in large part, thanks to our partners at Episcopal Community Services and congregations who volunteered to prepare and serve meals. For additional information about the Interfaith Winter Shelter please visit:

<https://goo.gl/o3zVdM> and <https://sites.google.com/site/shelterworkingsite/>

The SFIC has created a page on their website with links to resources for the homeless.

Please visit: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/homeless-resources>

WinterFaith Shelter Walk

Each year the SFIC hosts a “walk against hunger” around Lake Merced. Proceeds from the walk are used to defray the cost of operating the Interfaith Winter Shelter. The 2018 Walk occurred on Sunday, May 6, 2018 around Lake Merced with picture perfect weather and over 100 participants. Sponsorships and pledges raised over \$15,000 for the shelter. This year’s walk is scheduled for Sunday, April 7, 2019. For additional information please visit:

<http://winterfaithshelterwalk.dojiggy.com>

Annual “Bike to Worship” Week

The SFIC partners with the SF Bicycle Coalition to promote “Bike to Worship,” an opportunity that encourages congregants to pedal to their worship services. Employing its large communications network, the SFIC helps to spread the word, share the free “BIKE TO WORSHIP Toolkit,” and enlist registrants. Once again, the SF Bicycle Coalition and Walk San Francisco

(an organization whose focus is pedestrian safety) joined forces for the 5th annual "Walk & Bike to Worship" Week from May 26 – June 3, 2018. Twenty congregations participated in this annual event. For additional information please visit: <http://www.sfbike.org/worship>

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance and Interfaith Service

For nine years the SFIC has organized the City's annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance, including a popular march and interfaith service. The march proceeds from the Caltrain terminal over the Lefty O'Doul Bridge to Yerba Buena Gardens (YBG), bringing together "freedom riders" from the South Bay and others from the wider Bay Area. This march pays tribute to the 1965 crossing made by Dr. King over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Once at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial at YBG, a large crowd participates in the outdoor interfaith service organized by the SFIC to celebrate Dr. King's legacy. Key religious and civic leaders address the attendees.

The theme highlighted at this year's Interfaith Prayer Service was "We Are In This Together." Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was remembered with readings from his speeches. Program may be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/2UYspl4>

The Vigil: Interfaith Annual Homeless Persons Memorial

Every December, collaborating with the SF Night Ministry, the SFIC hosts the "The Vigil: Interfaith Annual Homeless Persons Memorial." Religious leaders of different faiths offer prayers for the homeless who have died during the past year, and their names are read. This year's memorial service will take place on Friday evening, December 21, 2018 at UN Plaza.

Annual Interfaith World AIDS Day Service

Last year's service, "From Losses to Blessings," was held on Sunday, December 3, 2017 at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav and was organized by Calvary Presbyterian Church, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, Old First Presbyterian Church, and the SFIC. The keynote speaker was Dr. Charles Garfield, Founder of The Shanti Project. Program may be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/zWHzPZ>

Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Day Service

Each year, the SFIC sponsors San Francisco's only Interfaith Thanksgiving Day Service which brings together people of diverse faiths for prayer and thanksgiving. The 14th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Day Service on Thursday, November 22, 2018 was hosted by the Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist. The offering collected at this service is used to offset the costs of the Interfaith Winter Shelter. Program may be viewed at: <https://bit.ly/2RZGx2b>.

Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast

Our major event of the year is the SFIC Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast, attended by 400 people on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Each year we shine the spotlight on a significant contribution made by the faith community to San Francisco. This year's 21st Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast on Tuesday, November 20, 2018 recognized the 30th Anniversary Observance of the Interfaith Winter Shelter. Program may be viewed at <https://bit.ly/2ElFiXc> and the program booklet at <https://bit.ly/2UKESPZ>

Convener of Faith-Based Social Service Agencies ("CEO Roundtable")

For the past ten years, the SFIC has regularly convened the leaders of the 16 major faith-based agencies to provide a forum to address issues of common concern. The SFIC promotes the agencies' collective impact and advocates on their behalf to increase the visibility of the economic challenges faced by non-profits and their clients. Since 2009 the CEO Roundtable has responded with a significant unified voice to issues ranging from dramatic budget cuts and their impact on programs and staff, to San Francisco's affordability crisis that prompted the displacement of numerous constituent agencies. Currently, focus is being placed on the attraction and retention of staff in light of shrinking availability and soaring housing

costs. As well, the Roundtable is developing a strategic response to the significant shift in federal policy priorities and the threat of funding cuts. None of this work could be accomplished by any single agency. Its continued impact has established the CEO Roundtable as a major stakeholder at policy-making tables. For a list of the faith-based agencies please visit: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/social-service-agencies>

Crisis Response Communications

It has been the ongoing practice of the SFIC to issue statements, either on behalf of the SFIC Board of Directors or in collaboration with key faith leaders, on occasions when extremists act violently in the name of religion. In chronological order from the most current, the SFIC has issued the following statements. Access to the complete texts is available by visiting: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/social-justice-statements>

- SF Bay Area Faith Leaders Stand in Solidarity in Condemnation of Horrific Terrorist Attacks on Two New Zealand Mosques (3/15/2019)
- SFIC Extends Invitation to Participate in Vigils Against Hate (10/27/2018)
- Stand With You! SF Bay Area Religious Leaders Stand in Support of Survivors of Sexual Assault (10/5/2018)
- SFIC Proud Co-Signer of Know Your Neighbor Multifaith Encounters Coalition Statement on Today's Supreme Court Decision on Muslim Ban (6/26/2018)
- SFIC Stands with our Partner, the Brady Center, to Respond to Las Vegas Shootings (10/4/2017)
- Communities of Faith Respond to DACA Decision (9/11/2017)
- SF Faith Leaders Stand United Against Hate in Charlottesville and Our Backyard (8/15/2017)
- Bay Area Muslims Condemn Attacks on Coptic Christians SF Chronicle Op Ed (4/17/2017)
- SF Religious Leaders Denounce Massacre of Coptic Christians (4/11/2017)
- A Message from SFIC Founder and Former Chair Rita R. Semel (2/27/2017)
- SFIC Joins Interfaith Partners Nationwide in Support of Our Muslim Neighbors (1/27/2017)
- SFIC Denounces Bomb Threats at Bay Area Jewish Schools (1/19/2017)
- SF Bay Area Faith Leaders Denounce Incidents of Hate Targeting Religion (12/1/2016)
- SFIC Statement of Support for Pacifica Institute (10/13/2016)
- All Lives Are Precious and Irreplaceable (7/8/2016)
- SF Communities of Faith Mourn Victims of Istanbul Terrorist Attack (6/30/2016)
- Communities of Faith Issue Statements in the Aftermath of the 6/12/2016 Orlando Massacre (6/22/2016)
- SF Communities of Faith Share in Grief of Orlando Massacre (6/13/2016)
- SF Faith Leaders Denounce Anti-Muslim Hate Speech (12/11/2015)
- Church Desecration Denounced by Coalition of SF Faith Groups (9/2/2015)
- SF Faith Leaders Respond to Racist Acts of Violence and Destruction (7/2/2015)
- SFIC Issues Social Justice Statement (3/12/2015)
- SFIC Condemns Vicious Anti-Muslim Bus Ads (10/16/2014)
- SFIC and Religious Leaders Speak Out Against ISIS Religious Persecution (9/17/2014)

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks at the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine and anti-semitic killings in Paris, the SFIC, Jewish Community Relations Council, and Islamic Networks Group (ING) sent an interfaith delegation to the Consul General of France in San Francisco, to express concern and offer support from San Francisco's diverse faith communities.

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, the SFIC leadership participated in a moving interfaith service for peace at Calvary Presbyterian Church.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

San Francisco Community Vigil to Mourn and Pray for the Victims of Christchurch Mosques Shootings (March 20, 2019)

Elected Officials, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, the San Francisco Interfaith Council, the Muslim Community, and Community Leaders gathered on the steps of San Francisco's City Hall for a community vigil to stand together in solidarity with Muslim sisters and brothers in New Zealand and around the globe against Islamophobia, hate, bigotry, and white supremacy. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2Fci7xf>

Financial Capabilities: A Social Justice Issue "Mini Summit" (January 31, 2019)

The San Francisco Interfaith Council, local civic leaders and a planning committee of women of faith and action hosted a "mini summit" at the San Francisco Main Public Library focused on raising awareness about the vast inequities in pay and wealth impacting our diverse San Francisco community, pioneering local efforts responding to this challenge and strengthening economic security and mobility for families. The program featured faith leaders on social justice, San Francisco Treasurer, Jose Cisneros, and the San Francisco Office of Financial Empowerment's programs, and a keynote from Commissioner on the Status of Women, Carrie Schwab-Pomerantz, on the importance of financial capability. Link to Financial Security and Wellness Resource Guide: <http://bit.ly/2CEVNMn>

Interfaith Unity Celebration for Governor Gavin C. Newsom (January 7, 2019)

At the invitation of Governor-Elect Gavin C. Newsom, the San Francisco Interfaith Council was asked to be the lead coordinator for an Interfaith Unity Celebration that was held on the morning of the gubernatorial inaugural at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sacramento. The SFIC was responsible for extending invitations to clergy participants as well as developing the order of service for this interfaith prayer gathering. In addition to the governor-elect and his first partner, over 150 faith leaders from throughout the State were in attendance praying for the governor-elect and his family. Program: <http://bit.ly/2FrkOvc>

Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the World War I Armistice (November 11, 2018)

The San Francisco Interfaith Council collaborated with the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission, the American Legion Eighth District Council, the San Francisco World War I Armistice Commemoration Committee, the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Interfaith Center at the Presidio in commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the World War I Armistice with an Interfaith Memorial Service at the Norwegian Seamen's Chapel. The SFIC also encouraged congregations throughout the City to join citizens and organizations across the nation to ring bells in their communities 21 times at 11:00 am local time on Sunday, November 11, 2018 in remembrance of when fighting ceased.

Vigils Against Hate in Response to Pittsburgh Tree of Life Congregation Shooting (October 28, 2018)

The San Francisco Interfaith Council extended an invitation to the greater community to gather for vigils at Congregation Emanu-El on Sunday, October 28, 2018 and the Contemporary Jewish Museum on Saturday, October 27, 2018. It was important to come together as community with our Jewish sisters and brothers, to demonstrate our solidarity and resilience and reject the normalization of violence against the Jewish community or any community in our country. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2OcTLWK>

Global Climate Action Summit (September 12 – 14, 2018)

In San Francisco, on September 12-14, 2018, Governor Jerry Brown hosted a summit to bring sub-nationals, business leaders, and civil society together to collaborate and commit to more ambitious goals to curb carbon pollution and protect our climate. The Global Climate Action Summit was intended to inspire leaders from around the world to "Take Ambition

to the Next Level.” It was a moment to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of states, regions, cities, companies, investors and citizens with respect to climate action. It was also a launchpad for deeper worldwide commitments and accelerated action from countries – supported by all sectors of society – that can put the globe on track to prevent dangerous climate change and realize the historic Paris Agreement. The decarbonization of the global economy is in sight. Transformational changes are happening across the world and across all sectors as a result of technological innovation, new and creative policies and political will at all levels. States and regions, cities, businesses and investors are working to push down global emissions by 2020, setting the stage to reach net zero emissions by mid-century. Religious institutions and faith communities are leading the way, and many low-to-no carbon congregations are right here in San Francisco in the network of Interfaith Power & Light.

The SFIC participated on the Planning Committee for the inspiring and historic Global Climate Action Summit Multi-Faith Service and Workshops hosted at Grace Cathedral to inaugurate the broader convening. Additionally, SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas was invited to emcee “Faiths Rise,” an interfaith service held at Ferry Park prior to the Climate March at which 30,000 people participated. Please visit: <https://conta.cc/2CocQVg>

The SFIC also devoted as the theme of its September Monthly Breakfast: “Global Climate Action Summit and Contributions by Communities of Faith” Please visit: <https://conta.cc/2NqC35z>. Guest speakers featured founder and past President of Interfaith Power & Light, The Rev. Canon Sally Bingham as well as California Interfaith Power & Light Program Manager, Liore Milgrom-Gartner.

9/11 Day of Service

The SFIC was an integral partner for the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance’s Inaugural Bay Area event on September 11, 2018. This nationwide effort to turn 9/11 from a day of tragedy to a day of service, unity and peace hosted like efforts in New York City, Los Angeles, Phoenix and San Francisco. Collectively, over 8,000 volunteers came together to pack 1.6 million plus non-perishable meals for distribution by local food banks. Here at San Francisco’s Pier 35 over 1,000 Bay Area volunteers, joined by Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Mayor London Breed, in packing an estimated 300,000 of those meals. The SFIC was instrumental in making introductions to the SF-Marin Food Bank, the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission, sf.citi as well as to key civic officials and members of the media. Additionally, the SFIC extended invitations to faith leaders across the religious spectrum who commenced each meal pack shift with poignant blessings. Please visit: <https://conta.cc/2Bfr1vs>

Interfaith Prayer Service for Mayor-Elect London N. Breed

On Monday, July 9, 2018 the SFIC and the historic Third Baptist Church co-sponsored an Interfaith Prayer Service for Mayor-Elect London N. Breed at Third Baptist Church with many diverse communities of faith participating. Link to email invitation: <https://conta.cc/2J2oZ07> Program may be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/f2Mh2K>

2020 Complete Count (Census)

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census counts every resident in the nation. A complete and accurate count of California’s population is essential to the state because the data collected by the Census determines the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and is also used to distribute billions of dollars in federal funds to local communities. More than 70 federal programs that benefit California, including education, health and human services, use Census numbers as part of their funding formulas. Communities of faith are central to the count as they comprise trusted institutions and leaders that are able to identify and convey the importance of the count to marginalized and "hard-to-find" residents (e.g. undocumented immigrants and the homeless). A key challenge surrounding the upcoming count is the transition from paper to electronic surveys and related confidentiality and security concerns. SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas was selected to participate among community stakeholders on San Francisco's highly successful 2010 Complete Count Committee and is being designated to assist in the 2020 effort. An expanded role he will play will be to coordinate census efforts of regional religious communities participating in the The San Francisco Foundation's FAITHS Program.

Annual San Francisco Ramadan Interfaith Iftar Dinner

On May 23, 2018 the SFIC was once again a co-sponsor of the Annual San Francisco Ramadan Interfaith Iftar Dinner at Calvary Presbyterian Church. SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas moderated an interfaith panel featuring The Rev. Victor Kazanjian, Jr., Executive Director of United Religions Initiative, Maha Elgenaidi, Founder and Executive Director of the Islamic Networks Group, and Jessica Trubowitch, Public Policy and Community Building Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2KekzEp>
Program may be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/uyV2ki>

Interfaith Blessing: Opening Ceremony for Salesforce Tower

Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff extended the invitation to the SFIC to offer an interfaith blessing on the occasion of the “Opening Ceremony” of the new Salesforce Tower. This edifice is the tallest structure west of Chicago. On May 22, 2018, six prominent faith leaders offered prayers from their respective traditions. Together, a final blessing for all who undertook this monumental effort as well as for those who will labor and visit the structure was prayed in unison by those clergy. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2wZbtto>

An account of this event and the role played by the SFIC’s executive director and constituent leaders may be found in the following ABC7 News video: <http://abc7news.com/business/ceremony-held-for-grand-opening-of-san-franciscos-salesforce-tower/3508208/>

San Francisco Religious Leaders Mourn the Death of Mayor Edwin M. Lee

On December 12, 2017 the San Francisco Interfaith Council issued a statement on behalf of San Francisco’s religious leaders expressing condolences on the passing of Mayor Edwin M. Lee. Full statement may be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/fF5K9y>

UN International Day of Peace Interfaith Service

On Friday, September 21, 2018, the San Francisco Interfaith Council, in collaboration with the Interfaith Center at the Presidio and United Religions Initiative, planted a native oak seedling outside of its offices in the Presidio Chapel to commemorate the UN International Day of Peace. Program may be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/yvoT81>

The SFIC’s Engagement with San Francisco Law Enforcement

SFPD Chief William Scott invited SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas, as a community leader and subject matter expert, to join the department as an external senior advisor to offer external perspectives on best practices in strategic planning and policy trends. More specifically, the work of this team will focus on the SFPD’s multi-year process with the U.S. Department of Justice called the “Collaborative Reform Initiative” (CRI). The CRI mandates over 270 individual changes to the SFPD and how it operates.

Collaboration with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)

As San Francisco braces itself for a significant increase in residential and corporate building, the impact new structures and increased inhabitants will have on our City’s transit system is a growing concern. Over the past three years the SFMTA, in collaboration with the SFIC, has engaged congregations along the Dolores/Guerrero Streets corridor to help address issues related to median parking in that neighborhood. As a result of those efforts, the SFMTA Board of Directors recently voted to institute a pilot study along that corridor. Recognizing the SFIC’s role as advocate for its constituent congregations, the Director of the SFMTA has initiated a regular, bi-monthly “check-in” with the SFIC Executive Director regarding the impact of SFMTA policies on faith communities throughout the City.

Convener of the “SF Interfaith Essential Housing Task Force”

With the growing scarcity of housing and skyrocketing rents, low paid/middle income workers who provide essential services for the City are leaving San Francisco. By developing religious institutions’ underutilized parcels for affordable rental housing, our faith communities will help stop the outmigration of our essential services workers.

The SFIC convened the City’s key religious leaders and the CEOs of the major faith-based social service agencies on September 11, 2014, for the purpose of developing a response to income inequality and the housing affordability crisis. At that meeting, the group decided to form the "SF Interfaith Essential Housing Task Force." The Task Force agreed to work with the City to identify parcels of property owned by religious institutions that could be developed for rental housing, using private funding, for low paid workers who provide essential services to the City. These employees work in the fields of health care, social services, education and the arts, and public safety.

SF Mayor Ed Lee directed staff in the Mayor's Office of Housing and the SF Office of Economic and Workforce Development to advise the Task Force on its mapping efforts, site recommendations, and funding strategies and to make introductions to prospective developers. A select number of parcels have been identified and are currently under serious consideration for development.

In addition, during the 2015 election cycle, the City asked the Task Force to endorse and advocate for passage of a \$310 million Housing Affordability General Obligation Bond. Due in part to the Task Force’s diligent efforts, the measure was approved.

Most currently, the real estate consulting team collaborating with the Task Force is both preparing feasibility and financial analyses on the properties under consideration as well as developing realistic funding strategies and options that will make these sites viable prospects for streamlined development.

At the request of SPUR (San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association), SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas, along with lead DCG consultant, Landis Graden, and a key staff person from the Mayor’s Office of Housing, presented on the work of the Interfaith Essential Housing Task Force at that organization’s regular noontime panel discussion “What Land is Left?” on September 13, 2017. Link to email blast: <https://conta.cc/2vS4sFJ>

Commonwealth Club of California

The SFIC's Executive Director has moderated several panels for the Commonwealth Club's Middle East Forum and other programs at the Commonwealth Club. Michael Pappas moderated a panel “*Diplomatic Righteous Among the Nations*” on April 13, 2018 at the Commonwealth Club. The audio podcast is available at: <https://goo.gl/hDht2e>

Hosted by the Commonwealth Club's Middle East Forum on October 26, 2018, SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas moderated a discussion with Ejaz Naqvi, author of “*The Three Abrahamic Testaments: How the Torah, Gospels and Qur'an Hold the Keys for Healing Our Fears.*” Naqvi is a practicing physician and serves on the Board of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. The audio podcast is available at: <https://goo.gl/BeWY7M>

On February 15, 2019, SFIC Executive Director Michael Pappas moderated a panel “*Helping Refugees, Welcoming the Stranger.*” The audio podcast is available at: <http://bit.ly/2TX00pm>

SFIC in the News

For further articles and other media related to the SFIC, we would direct your attention to the following link: <http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org/sfic-news>

Broad Civic Engagement

Because of the important stakeholder role the SFIC plays in many arenas, the SFIC has been invited to take a place at many tables. Executive Director Michael Pappas currently serves on the SF Aging & Adult Services Commission, designaated as the SF Aging & Adult Services Commission's representative to the In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority Governing Body, the SF Disaster Council, and The San Francisco Foundation FAITHS Leadership Council.

The accomplishments listed above are the work of two full-time staff (Executive Director, Michael Pappas and Program/Administrative Associate, Cynthia Zamboukos), an active Board of Directors, the tireless volunteer efforts of our Past Chair, Rita R. Semel, and other dedicated volunteers. Thanks to a grant from the Metta Fund, a database of religious institutions claiming non-profit status in the City and County of San Francisco, and a pro bono donation of software from Salesforce, the SFIC is currently engaged in updating, streamlining and creating its comprehensive database. We gratefully acknowledge the funding provided by congregations, judicatories, agencies, individuals, and foundations which makes these achievements and others not listed here possible.