

San Francisco Interfaith Council

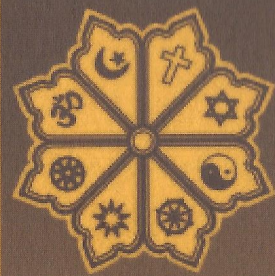
14th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast

Repairing the World: Honoring
the Work of Rita R. Semel



Tuesday, November 22, 2011
7:00 - 9:00 AM
Hotel Kabuki

**San Francisco
INTERFAITH
COUNCIL**



*Celebrating our diverse faiths
and spiritual traditions,
the San Francisco Interfaith Council
brings people together
to build understanding
and serve our community.*

San Francisco Interfaith Council

Michael G. Pappas, M. Div.

Executive Director

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Honoree Rita R. Semel



Welcome to the
14th Annual Interfaith
Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast



The San Francisco Interfaith Council welcomes you to the 14th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast. The Council exists to serve and give voice to the 800 congregations and faith-based social service agencies in the City and County of San Francisco. The Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast is our major event of the year when representatives of the faith community, civic leaders and citizens come together to give thanks for the gifts bestowed upon our city and nation and to pray for their well being.

Each year, at this breakfast, we shine the spotlight on one of the many contributions the religious community makes to the life of San Francisco. This year, we are shining the light on the work of a single individual, Rita R. Semel, on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Rita was a major force in bringing the religious leaders of San Francisco together to form the San Francisco Interfaith Council in 1989-1990. Her efforts were a continuation of more than fifty years of advocacy for interfaith cooperation in civil rights, education, homelessness, and women's health. As the long time Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, she has also been active in Jewish affairs and has led 23 trips to Israel for religious and civic leaders, and public officials. Her decades of public service epitomize a core teaching of the Jewish tradition: "Tikkun Olam" - Repairing the World.

Today we are launching the San Francisco Interfaith Council's Rita R. Semel Endowment Fund for Interfaith Work. Through gifts and bequests this will provide a continuing legacy that will give recognition to Rita and her contributions to our City.

We are grateful for your presence here today and we invite you to participate in the interfaith activities of the San Francisco Interfaith Council.

Rita R. Semel

Rita Semel, a native New Yorker, first came to San Francisco when her parents moved here in 1939. After graduating from Barnard College, she married and traveled with her soldier husband until he was shipped overseas. Returning to San Francisco, Rita worked first as a copy boy, then as a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle. When she went to work for the Chronicle, she had to sign a document, as did many women at that time, that she would give up her job when the men returned from the War. When her husband, Max, returned from Army service in Europe in 1945, they settled in San Francisco and Rita became the first Associate Editor of the newly formed Jewish Community Bulletin. She retired from the Bulletin in 1950 when her first daughter, Elisabeth, was born and began doing free lance public relations for the March of Dimes, the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, and the Israeli Consulate (then located in Los Angeles).

The 1950s and 1960s were a tumultuous time when San Francisco and the nation were struggling for integration, civil rights, and inter-ethnic and inter-faith harmony. In 1964, Rita served on the committee that organized the San Francisco Conference on Religion and Race, and she became its coordinator for the next 25 years.

It was during this period that she became a consultant to the Jewish Community Relations Council, and eventually joined the staff as Associate Director. Among the issues she worked on was overturning Proposition 14, a successful ballot initiative that had nullified the Rumford Fair Housing Law which prohibited racial and other discrimination in housing. Ultimately, Proposition 14 was declared unconstitutional by the California Supreme Court.

Rita served as Associate Director and then Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, where she built important coalitions and organized campaigns to advance a just society and a secure Jewish future. For more than five decades, Rita has mobilized broad coalitions to advance common causes of social concern, worked to advocate for those most in need, and built long lasting relationships among the Bay Area's many communities.

In addition to her important role as a founder of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, Rita has served in a prominent leadership role as the first Chair of the Global Council for the United Religions Initiative. She has served on the boards of Catholic Charities CYO, Family Services America, San Francisco Resource and Leadership Council, Friends of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, Jewish Family & Children's Services, San Francisco Children's Rights Coalition, San Francisco Family Service Agency, Interfaith Center at the Presidio, San Francisco

Homelessness Board, and Intergroup Clearinghouse. Rita currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. She has been recognized for her distinguished service by many of these organizations, and recently was acknowledged by the Islamic Society of San Francisco, Bay Area Cultural Connections, and United Muslims of America for her work as a "longtime Jewish activist and interfaith pioneer." Rita was honored by the California State Assembly as the Woman of the Year from the 13th District, as well as with the United Way's *Mortimer Fleishhacker Jr. Volunteer Award* and the National Council of Jewish Women's *Hannah G. Solomon Award* for her leadership contributions. In 1990, Rita received the *Rosa Parks Award* from Women in Community Service. In 1995, she was a delegate to the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in China. She also attended the 1985 conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

Rita helped found the San Francisco Interfaith Council in 1990, and her tenure has been marked by orchestrating significant programs which have a direct impact on the lives of San Franciscans—from the emergency winter shelter program for the homeless, for which she has galvanized multi-faith and City cooperation, to the chaplaincy program at the Youth Guidance Center.

Rita has served as the unofficial, trusted ambassador of the Jewish community to other religious communities for decades. Through the Jewish Community Relations Council, and later working on a national level through Project Interchange, Rita has led dozens of clergy from other faiths to Israel, to learn about the Jewish community's relationship to the land, people, and their history. She has introduced religious leaders from throughout the Bay Area to Judaism, Jewish history, and the American and worldwide Jewish experience.

After 51 years of marriage, Max Semel died in 1994. He was preceded in death by their daughter, Jane, who died in an accident shortly before her 18th birthday. Their daughter, Elisabeth, is a criminal defense attorney and is the Director of the Death Penalty Clinic at the University of California Berkeley School of Law.

Today, we honor this "Repairer of the World" on her 90th birthday and for her many years of dedicated service to San Francisco and the world.

HONORARY COMMITTEE

The Honorable Art Agnos
Former Mayor of San Francisco

The Rt. Reverend Marc Andrus
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of California

Alvin Baum

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The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco

Reverend Charles Gibbs, Executive Director
United Religions Initiative

Rabbi Douglas Kahn, Executive Director
Jewish Community Relations Council

Reverend Ronald Kobata
Buddhist Church of San Francisco



HONORARY COMMITTEE



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State of California

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Dr. Sandra R. Hernandez, Chief Executive Officer
The San Francisco Foundation

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Lieutenant Governor of California

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Rev. P. Gerard O'Rourke
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HONORARY COMMITTEE



Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director
San Francisco Interfaith Council

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Congregation Emanu-El

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Glide Memorial United Methodist Church

Anne Wilson, Executive Director
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Dr. Charles B. Wilson
Professor Emeritus of Neurological Surgery, UCSF



**SPONSORS
FOR TODAY'S BREAKFAST**

Table Sponsor—\$500

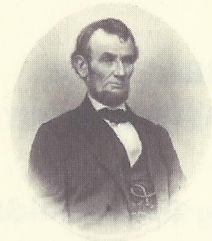
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 Episcopal Diocese of California
 First United Lutheran Church
 Franciscan Friars of California/ St. Anthony's Foundation
 Glide Memorial United Methodist Church
 Grace Cathedral (Episcopal)
 Jewish Community Relations Council
 Jewish Family and Children's Services
 My Dutch Uncle
 Providence Baptist Church
 Rev. Paul Chaffee and Jan Chaffee
 San Francisco Foundation
 St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco
 Susan Hirsch and Susan Leal
 The Salvation Army
 Third Baptist Church
 United Religions Initiative
 United Way of the Bay Area
 University of San Francisco
 St. Ignatius Church



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FOR TODAY'S BREAKFAST**

Sustaining Sponsor—\$250

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 American Jewish World Service
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 Dr. James Donahue, President GTU
 Lutheran Social Services
 Old St. Mary's Cathedral
 St. Stephen School
 Swedenborgian Church
 University of San Francisco, University Ministry



**President Abraham Lincoln's
Thanksgiving Proclamation**

October 3, 1863

It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the LORD.

We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too selfsufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

PROGRAM

Buddhist Ceremonial In Kin Bell
The Rev. Ronald Kobata
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

Muslim Call to Prayer
Khaled Olaibah, Administrator
Islamic Society of San Francisco

Prayer of Thanks for the Meal
Rev. Dan Nascimento, Pastor
St. Brendan's Roman Catholic Church

~ Breakfast is served at your table ~

Welcome by Breakfast Co-Chairs
Sandy Rechtschaffen, Congregation Emanu-El
Mary J. Zamboukos, St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church

President Lincoln's Thanksgiving Day Proclamation
Rachel Finn and Nina Pine, Faiths Act Fellows
The Tony Blair Faith Foundation

Introduction of Public Officials and
Personal Tribute to Rita
Rev. James DeLange,
Chair of the San Francisco Interfaith Council

Song: "Abi Gezunt" by A. Ellstein
Cantor Roslyn Barak, Congregation Emanu-El
Accompanied by Rodney Gehrke

Rita's Role in the Development of the SFIC
Michael G. Pappas, M.Div.,
Executive Director, San Francisco Interfaith Council
and member of Grace Episcopal Cathedral



PROGRAM
(continued)

Youth Speaks
Queen Nefertiti Shabazz

Remarks
Belva Davis

Remarks
*The Honorable Nancy Pelosi,
Democratic Leader of the House of Representatives*

Song: "Count Your Blessings" by Irving Berlin
*Cantor Roslyn Barak, Congregation Emanu-El
Accompanied by Rodney Gehrke*

Prayers for Rita's Causes
(page 18)

Youth Speaks
Queen Nefertiti Shabazz

My Mother— A Tribute
Elisabeth Semel

Purification Rite
*Rev. Mas and Alice Kawahatsu,
Konko Church of San Francisco*

Presentation to Rita R. Semel from the SFIC
Rev. James DeLange and Michael G. Pappas

Remarks
Rita R. Semel

Song: "You Are I" by Rev. Heng Sure
*Rev. Heng Sure, Ph.D., Director, Berkeley
Buddhist Monastery*



PROGRAM
(continued)

Song: "Happy Birthday" led by Cantor Roslyn Barak
*Congregation Emanu-El
Accompanied by Rodney Gehrke*

The Rita R. Semel Endowment Fund for
Interfaith Work
*The Rev. James DeLange, Chair of the
San Francisco Interfaith Council*

Closing Prayer: The Prayer of St. Francis
(said by all – on page 19)
*Led by Ms. Nancy McCormick Kovacich,
St. Benedict
Parish for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired
SSG Brad Hatton, CSMR Recruiter - Interpreter*

Song: "Blessings Upon Blessings"
*Sister Elizabeth Padilla
The Brahma Kumaris Community*

Closing Remarks by Co-Chairs



PRAYERS FOR RITA'S CAUSES

Civil Rights - G. L. Hodge, Administrator,
Providence Baptist Church and Vice Chair of the San
Francisco Interfaith Council

Education - Ana B. Gutierrez, St. Paulus Lutheran
Church

Homelessness - Ken Reggio, Executive Director,
Episcopal Community Services

Interfaith Work - Maha ElGenaidi, President &
CEO, Islamic Network Group

Judaism & Commitment to Israel - The Honorable
Akiva Tor, Consul General of Israel

Women's Health - Janet Reilly, Co-Founder and
President, Clinic by the Bay



PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

(said by all)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where
there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury,
pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is de-
spair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there
is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console; to be understood as to under-
stand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that
we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PLANS OF THE SFIC 2011/2012

- As we have done for the past 21 years, we continue to coordinate with 30 congregations to provide shelter at four sites and hot dinners for 75-100 homeless men throughout the rainy winter months.
- We continue our bi-annual workshops for disaster preparedness for congregations. Working with the Red Cross, SF CARD, and the City Department of Emergency Services, we have held three workshops. The next one will be May 2, 2012. In 2010, 175 people from 68 congregations and 25 agencies attended the half-day workshop. The role of the SFIC as a major stakeholder in this arena was recognized further this year with the mayoral appointment of our Executive Director to the City's Disaster Preparedness Council.
- With the blessing of the Rev. Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, the SFIC has taken on the responsibility of organizing the City's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance. Working with the local NAACP chapter and other organizations in the City and the South Bay, this year's observance at Yerba Buena Gardens drew over 6,000 people.
- We were designated by Mayor Ed Lee to organize the City's commemoration of 9/11. This was done in collaboration with the San Francisco Opera at the annual Opera in the Park at Sharon Meadow in Golden Gate Park, attended by 20,000 people. At the event, we remembered those who lost their lives in 2001, honored the first responders, and emphasized lessons learned. Participating were representatives of San Francisco's diverse faith communities as well as the mayor, the Police and Fire Departments and the Department of Emergency Management. A smaller interfaith observance was held at Crissy Field beach at 5:47 am in concert with events in New York.

- We have taken on the role of convener in bringing together the CEOs of the City's ten faith-based social service agencies to address common concerns, including Jewish Family and Children's Services, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, Episcopal Community Services, the Salvation Army, St. Anthony Foundation, Glide Memorial UMC, and others, especially as they deal with an increasing demand for their services to the elderly, the homeless, the unemployed and children in the face of severe cuts to the social service safety net.
- On the second Thursday of each month we host an Interfaith Breakfast that brings together some 100 community religious leaders and laity to network, share a meal, hear a community speaker, and listen to an individual's faith journey. The breakfast meetings are held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. The public is invited.
- Our major event of the year is the Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast, attended by 400 people on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving Day. Each year we shine the spotlight on a contribution of the faith community to the life of San Francisco. In 2010, for example, we honored the 40 hospital and hospice chaplains of many faith traditions who serve in our hospitals and hospice organizations.
- On Thanksgiving Day, we hold an interfaith service at one of San Francisco's religious buildings that attracts some 500 people who join together for prayer and music. On Thanksgiving Day 2011, the service will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Konko Church of San Francisco at 1909 Bush Street, corner of Laguna Street.

• The SFIC was chosen by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation to place two Faiths Act Fellows to work side by side with our Executive Director, Michael Pappas. The Fellows are focusing on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and also supporting our local work.

• The SFIC organizes the annual CROP Hunger Walk to benefit the Interfaith Winter Shelter Program, Church World Service and other international relief organizations. The next walk will be held on April 29, 2012, around Lake Merced. Last year's walk raised over \$20,000.

• Last year the SFIC distributed 1,000 calendars delineating major holidays of the world's religions to public and private schools, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, the Consular corps, the major social services agencies and NGOs. We will repeat this calendar distribution for 2012.

**WE THANK THOSE WHO HAVE
SUPPORTED THE SAN FRANCISCO
INTERFAITH COUNCIL IN 2011**

CONGREGATIONS

Calvary Presbyterian Church
Grace Cathedral (Episcopal)
Old First Presbyterian Church
Old St. Mary's Cathedral
St. Ignatius Church
St. Paulus Lutheran Church
Unity Church of San Francisco
Vedanta Society of Northern California
Congregation Emanu-El
St. Mary's Cathedral

FOUNDATION GRANTS

San Francisco Foundation
Calvary Foundation (Presbyterian)
Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund
Walter and Elise Haas Foundation

JUDICATORIES

Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco
Episcopal Diocese of California

AGENCIES

Catholic Charities CYO
Church World Service
Community Initiatives
Episcopal Community Services
Salvation Army
San Francisco Night Ministry
Tzu Chi Foundation
United Way

INDIVIDUALS

Ben Chandler
Msgr. Eugene Boyle
Jim and Diane DeLange
Rev. Elizabeth Ekdale
Acrevoula and Stella Hasapas
Anthony Kakis
Rev. Fred Merrick
Sandy and Scott Rechtschaffen
Cynthia S. Zamboukos

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Cecilia and Jim Herbert
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Tzu Chi Foundation
United Religions Initiative
Dr. Charles Wilson
Cynthia S. Zamboukos
Mary J. Zamboukos

**Congregations That Donated And Served Meals
At The SFIC Homeless Winter Shelter Sites
2010-2011**

Winter Shelter Site Providers

First Unitarian Universalist Church
St. Boniface Catholic Church
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
St. Mary's Cathedral

Winter Shelter Meal Providers

Calvary Presbyterian Church
Church of the Incarnation
Congregation Emanu-El
Congregation Sherith Israel
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First Unitarian Universalist Church
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Grace Cathedral (Episcopal)
Jewish and Muslim Women's Group
Knights of St. Francis
Mission Dolores
Noe Valley Ministry
Old St. Mary's Cathedral
Presbyterian Church in Chinatown
Salvation Army
San Francisco Stake LDS
SF Interfaith Council
St. Aidan's Episcopal Church
St. Boniface Catholic Church
St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church
St. Ignatius Catholic Church
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Stuart Hall High School
Swedenborgian Church
Zion Lutheran Church

**INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING PRAYER BREAKFAST
2011 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Sandy Rechtschaffen, Congregation Emanu-El, Co-Chair
Mary Zamboukos, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Co-Chair
Rev. James DeLange, St. Francis Lutheran Church
Betsy Dodd, Calvary Presbyterian Church
Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, Congregation Sherith Israel
Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director, SFIC
Abby Porth, Jewish Community Relations Council
Joan Rinde, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

SPECIAL THANKS

Erica Ernst, SFIC
Administrative/Program Assistant

SSG Brad Hatton
CSMR Recruiter, Sign Interpreter

Sr. Elizabeth Padilla
Brahma Kumaris Center
Soloist and Flowers

Bro. Mario Reyes
Brahma Kumaris Center
Accompanist

Cynthia S. Zamboukos
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Taste of Peace:



The coffee you are enjoying this morning is Mirembe Kawomera Delicious Peace, grown by the Peace Kawomera Cooperative in Uganda composed of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim coffee farmers, working together under an initiative for peace.

This coffee is roasted by Thanksgiving Coffee Company and was generously donated for this event.

The San Francisco Interfaith Council has been a supporter of the Delicious Peace coffee project since 2006.

To find out more about how you can bring this coffee into your community please visit:

www.deliciouspeace.com

or call to speak to us at 707-964-0118



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