**Nashua Area Interfaith Council Meeting Notes**

**May 4, 2018**

**Rev. Alanna Van Antwerpen (NAIC President):** Welcome and Opening Prayer

**Role passed around and members and introduced**

**Community Conversations—Small Group Breakout Session:**

Express what is meaningful to us in our worship experience. What speaks to us in those moments of worship. Or, name an experience within our communities that is meaningful and powerful for you.

**Program Presentation:** Interfaith Worship and Dialogue

There have been many moving parts that have promoted this conversation. It is good to reflect on “the water that we swim in.” Sometimes, we can unintentionally say something that may hurt another’s feelings or be exclusionary. For example, Alanna felt that she had perhaps mis-said some things one of the Thanksgiving services. This conversation is a way to unearth our feelings and give us a vessel in which to put these differences so we can speak openly and honestly about how we worship and appreciate one another better.

**Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett from Temple Beth Abraham:**

Our connections are really important—we need to be able to work together. In the last week, even in local and national level he has had experiences surrounding this issue. Every so often, he goes to the protests around the ICE federal building in Manchester. He gets notices on what are they are going to say that day. (He described the “Jericho Walk” — the silent walk they take 7 times around the building symbolic of conquering and knocking it down. There are some ideas that get circulated. Most are Christian organizers—Catholic and Protestant. There will occasionally be certain wording, such as“Holy Spirit” or “Lord” that he realizes may come from the Christian faith, but he understands and accepts this based on some questions he asks himself: Do I see them as shared words?” or “Do I see Christian meaning?” or “Do I know the people who are expressing the words?” Can I tell by the context or who is saying it? He asks us to consider what things that we all share in common. He advises:

* 1. Look at the highest common denominator—How can we say at the high point and not offend.
  2. The ability to worship together helps us know better how to say the right words because we know each other.
  3. Recognize something called “Holy Envy”—realize that we all may experience things in our separate beliefs that others don’t because we share a different perspective. For example, Chistians may experience things that he as a Jew doesn’t because Jesus Christ looks differently to him.
  4. Look for common ground. For example, the Jew knows that the Bible came first to them, so then we can appreciate the fact that we can spread it to everyone.
  5. We can be jarred and learn another language. We can express concept in a Jesus language or Allah language or Hebrew language—graciously trying to leap out of the words we generally use and try to connect with others around us.

**Pastor Maggie Margaret Lewis, from First Baptist Church of Nashua**

Identified 3 ways to do worship together:

* 1. Appreciating the prayers of other faiths—Each faith can in turn pray.
  2. Invitations—Members of one faith can invite one or more members of the Interfaith to worship with them to help establish appreciation and understanding.
  3. United Service—participants from all faiths each can be given various readings, prayers, devotionals, and songs around a common theme. That way, everyone gets to take their moment to share their worship tradition.

Examples of Inclusion:

The First Baptist Church as been celebrating the MLK event for 25 years. They invited the NH Gay Mens Chorus to come recognizing that we may offend some of the faith community. They thought it was hypocrisy to not have them come as wonderful musicians. They have come for the last 4 years. They lost a priest and a choir because of it.

There are different kinds of Interfaith worship—Crop Walk and the Thanksgiving Service, The Holocaust Memorial, and the MLK event. We want the intent to be inclusive of all—Christian, Jew, Muslim, etc.

Sometimes a speaker will include something that will offend others. For example, one of their American Baptist pastors quoted and praised Jesus quite a bit in the service. Some from the synagogue were not comfortable. You need to know your audience. What do you do about it? You can call the person offended to apologize and heal feelings and all must be ready to move on. Dialogue is the best thing. How do we relate in an interfaith community?

**Rabbi Jon:**

Expressed much appreciation for Jim, Julia, and Maggie for following up with his friends from the synagogue who had had their feelings hurt! We need to reinvent this sometimes. He expressed his gratitude for the NAIC group and mentioned that he had never spent as more time with more non-Jewish people than he does here!

**Alanna Van Antwerpen:**

We need to think of the kinds of events we have and be more careful of our intention for what we are doing, and then articulate these to each other as we plan.

We are involved as an Interfaith Community in 3 ways:

* 1. We sponsor events (Like Prayer for Christian Unity, and the Crop Walk)
  2. We support ministries (like the Circles Greater Nashua, the Anne Marie House)
  3. We are invited as an interfaith group by a particular community to events. There, we are under their particular roof/tradition.

We embody relationships. f people want to speak about this over the summer, we can. In October, they may by readdressing this issue as we move forward.

**Survey:**

Alanna asked that all the attendees at the NAIC meeting to take 5 minutes to write down their thoughts. All took time to fill out the Common Worship Feedback Form.

**Reporting on Ministries**

Bobbie on Continuum of Care—she gave written report to Alanna. This morning the program was about housing. ????

House of Faith Tours—May 15th 6-8pm at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Roman Catholic St Patrick Church — This Sunday at 12:30 at St. Patricks — a special group that does outstanding music will be singing. Check their website.

Circles Greater Nashua: April 17th starting the first meeting!! They have the minimum number of people needed. They want to blitz the community with flyers. Put up in your house of faiths.

Assassination of MLK 50th anniversary—churches all over the world are tolling their bells for 39 times for each of their 6:03 pm tonight. Toll your bells at that time in your house of faith.

The NAIC is requesting photographs of Interfaith events and outreach activities. Please let them know if someone does not want their photo shared.

Executive board wrote a letter of the Nashua Food Council ????

Treasure Report —ready to send to State of NH! Dues are due starting in June for this year.

Next NAIC meetings:

May 2nd —The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Don’t have coffee, but will have hot chocolate!!

June 6— NAIC meeting held at Main Street United Methodist Church

September 5th— Nashua Presbyterian Church will be hosting

Prayer Vigils: Tuesday, April 17 and Tuesday May 1 at Federal Building at [275 Chestnut Street](https://maps.google.com/?q=275+Chestnut+Street&entry=gmail&source=g) in Manchester at 8:30 am. They have had anywhere from 20-300 people attend. We always see immigrant families with their hearts in their throats.

United Way is hosting a Community Baby Shower May 3, 2018 Nashua Community College. They are looking for diapers, strollers, cribs, for low income families. The families eligible just need to be referred. They can call ahead to Mike and let him know. No used car seats or cribs.

?????Camp Sedego—Rosemarie Dykeman with the Salvation Army. They need paperwork. Bus up and take back.

???????Integrated Delivery network report

Next Wed night 7pm at the Temple Beth Abraham, they will be hosting their annual Holocaust Remembrance Memorial Event. We are invited to visit the monument on 315 Main Street, Rotary Common Park, Nashua.