

ARIZONA FAITH NETWORK

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UPCOMING EVENTS

April 25, 7 pm, Judaism 101
East Valley Jewish Community Center

May 1, 10 am, ANNUAL MEETING
St. Mary's Basilica Hall, Phoenix
<https://tinyurl.com/afnam2018>

Sept. 13, 6:30 pm, FE&I Session IV
Resisting Religious Intolerance

Oct. 12, 6:30 pm, FE&I Session V
Environmental Racism



AFN in Transition

In 2018, Arizona Faith Network is going through a transition. AFN has developed a refined vision statement that speaks to what we have been doing and will continue to do: *People of faith uniting to create positive change for the common good.* Our mission has also been re-fashioned: “Inviting people of faith into meaningful relationships, shared prayer, dialogue rooted in our traditions, and actions that influence public awareness, engagement, and policy.” **Please join us at our Annual Partners and New Friends Gathering on May 1st, where we will share exciting updates.**

AFN Implements 2018 Mission Focus Topic

The Faith Equity & Inclusion Series is the 2018 mission focus for the Arizona Faith Network. With generous support from the Monsignor Edward J. Ryle Fund, in January launched our “Faith, Equity & Inclusion” event series as part of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. month of commemorative events. Each session of the series presents facts, dispel myths, and provide opportunities for direct social action promoting equity and inclusion. This event series is a way for AFN to honor the legacy of Monsignor Ryle and to work on critical issues we all care about. At the launch event, various faith leaders spoke on inclusion, using the parable of the Good Samaritan as a framework. **Call To Action:** 35 state legislators were touched with the message of *Micah 6:8*.



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AFN Hosts Subsequent Faith, Equity & Inclusion Events

In partnership with AFN’s Public Policy Committee, Demand2Learn, and education advocates, AFN hosted Session II of the Faith, Equity & Inclusion series titled, “Fair K-12 Educational Opportunities: Stop Pushing Students Out of School!” in February. Session II examined inclusion and equity in Arizona’s K-12 education systems and how people of faith can stand together to eliminate practices that disproportionately push children out of school.



AFN Board Member Rev. Dan Hoeger provided a theological foundation for the event rooted in the Theological Dialogue Commission’s statement on racism. Anabel Maldonado from Demand2Learn provided information on local efforts to address practices that push children out of school. Dr. Ann Hart addressed her experience as a former statewide Associate Superintendent with the Arizona Department of Education, and called for action on exclusion and inequity in schools. Michael Curry, member of AFN, provided a moving story of his own experiences in school, highlighting the issues of the differently abled. Participants generated ideas on how they could support inclusion and equity in schools. Call To Action: invite Demand2Learn to speak at your faith community or share your experiences with Demand2Learn (www.demand2learnaz.org).

In March, AFN hosted Session III: Faith, Equity & Inclusion in an Age of Mass Incarceration. The event featured a panel composed of faith leaders, a former judge, a State representative, experts in the field, and those affected by mass incarceration. The Faith, Equity & Inclusion events offer participants ways to directly impact local public policy, and Session III featured the opportunity for faith leaders and people of faith to sign onto Arizona Faith Network’s Message on Criminal Legal Reform.

An overview of local legislation critical to the issue of mass incarceration was provided. **Call To Action:** to sign up for Request to Speak to voice legislative opinions online (<https://apps.azleg.gov/>), sign on to AFN Message on Criminal Legal Reform (www.arizonafaithnetwork.org/message-on-criminal-legal-reform) and make a follow-up visit to Death Row in April 2018 (this is now full).

Theological Dialogue Commission Hosts Fall 2017 Events

The Theological Dialogue Commission (TDC) and the Bahá’í Communities of the East Valley hosted the Bahá’í 101 event for 90 attendees on October 3, 2017 at the Bahá’í Community Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. During the event, three speakers introduced to the audience various aspects of the Bahá’í faith. Dr. Joel Orona provided an overview of the history of the faith and the life of founder Bahá’u’lláh, Susan Weidner spoke of what it means to live a Bahá’í life and engage its principles with society, and Nicolas Mentha discussed programs that develop spiritual empowerment in children. Many thanks to the Bahá’í Communities of the East Valley who have embodied Bahá’í values for us.



Key Learnings from Next Steps Event:

- All have a common thread– Love. Prayer.
- We share more similarity than differences.
- We are all God’s children on a spiritual journey heading home.
- We are reminded that there are other views of God, prayer, and life.
- It was great to see how we have common ground, values.
- We all have God within us.

The TDC Next Steps Committee hosted an Interfaith Dinner and Dialogue for over 60 attendees on October 26, 2017 at Temple Solel in Scottsdale. Participants explored the nature of God’s power from various faiths’ perspectives. Small groups of people from different faith traditions answered the question, “Is God in control?” Members of Bahá’í, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Mormon, and Muslim communities shared their traditions teachings and their own experiences of how the Divine interacts with humanity. Special thanks to Temple Solel for hosting the event.