

# Bishop Savoy welcomes Nevada Clergy



Bishop Gene Savoy Jr.  
delivering Welcome Address  
PHOTO Stephan Fuelling

*The Right Reverend Gene Savoy Jr., Bishop of the International Community of Christ Church and President of the Nevada Clergy Association, welcomed a body of 300 clergy and congregants at the Nevada Prayer Breakfast on November 16, 2010. His brief history of the Association and his message of respect and consideration set the tone for the event. An abbreviated version of his address follows:*

*It is indeed a pleasure to be with you for this revival of an old Nevada tradition.*

*First I would like to thank mayors Cashell, Martini, and*

*Crowell for their endorsement of this event. Without their support, and the hard work of the Breakfast Planning Committee, we would not be here today. So I thank all of you for taking time and making a contribution.*

*We have a good turnout this morning, and we will continue this tradition year after year for our civic, religious, and business leaders, so that we can all be aided in making the right decisions for our local communities, our families, our nation, and the great state of Nevada.*

*We are here to celebrate Nevada's diverse and thriving religious community, especially the interreligious community we have fostered in Northern Nevada, which has become and is becoming increasingly an example for other communities across the nation.*

*The Nevada Clergy Association was recently contacted by a professor at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California, affiliated with the United Methodist Church, who is writing a book on interfaith dialogue and collaboration and wanted to feature what we do here in Northern Nevada because she feels it can serve as an example to others.*

*Many of you may remember the not-too-distant past – perhaps 30 years ago – when various religions or denominations were not welcome in our community. And it was due to the efforts of the likes of Rabbi Myra Soifer of Temple Sinai, Father George Bratiotis of Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church, and Bishop Phil Straling of the Catholic Diocese of Reno that we all – all of us in our different and diverse ways – are able to gather from time to time in peace and fellowship and unity. We do this in testament not only to our God but to ourselves as brothers and sisters of the human family.*

*We are able to set this example today, most importantly, due to the efforts of the man we honor today: The reverend James Jeffery. I have had the pleasure of knowing the Jeffery*

family and working with Jim for many years. He is a beautiful person and a wonderful man who is deserving of the gathering today.

You all know Father Jim, and his biography appears in your program, so I won't take time to repeat what you already know. But I will tell you a short story.

Within the Nevada Clergy Association we have a running joke about "the List." And that list is the interfaith clergy list. Well, the joke is always about the "keeper" of said list, as if he or she wields some sort of grand authority. (It would be better said that the joke is rather on the keeper of the List!) So, some years ago, when Father Jeffery was about to retire, he came to me and asked if I would be the keeper of the List. I, of course, was honored to accept the "grave" responsibility, as well as the low pay for the task.

The point is that the List – our network of interfaith clergy and religious leaders – had about 25 or 30 names on it when it was passed along to me. As of yesterday's count, that List now contains 349 names: religious leaders who represent a broad spectrum of Northern Nevada faith communities. And the List has become a wonderful tool: the announcements, the information exchanged, the events we hold together, and the friendships that have been forged because of it.

I would like to leave you with an idea before turning the podium over. It is the concept of tolerance versus respect. If we go to the dictionary, it tells us everything we need to know.

The definition of respect is "the act of giving particular attention or consideration," "high or special esteem," "to refrain from interfering with," and "to have regard for."

On the other hand, tolerance is "the ability to endure the effects of a psychological insult without exhibiting the

*usual unfavorable effects,” “the capacity of an organism to grow when subjected to an unfavorable environments factor,” “sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices conflicting with one’s own,” “the act of allowing something which differs from the standard.”*

*What we at the Nevada Clergy Association represent is respect and consideration, as well as the special and high regard we hold for one another as Children of God, embracing and valuing and sharing with one another the various ways we choose to worship and express our faith traditions.*

(Listen to Rt. Rev. Gene Savoy’s Welcome Address: [HERE](#).)

Read more on the 2010 Nevada Prayer Breakfast [HERE](#).