

Interfaith Initiative to Open University Prayer Room



PHOTO: Roger
Weld

Northern Nevada religious leaders of various religious groups gathered together January 18, 2012, at the University of Nevada–Reno (UNR) Student Union to request that UNR president Marc Johnson provide an interfaith prayer room and chapel on campus to meet the faith needs of the diverse student body. Among these religious leaders was the Right Reverend Gene Savoy Jr., Head Bishop of the International Community of Christ and president of the Nevada Clergy Association.

The group of about twenty decided at the meeting to send a letter to the university president to ask for a meeting with him to discuss the possibilities of assigning space on campus for an interfaith chapel. All in attendance signed the letter.

**Martin Luther King Jr.
celebrated**



Rev. William C. Webb, pastor emeritus, Second Baptist Church of Reno, delivers a rousing welcome at 2012 MLK Jr. Celebration PHOTO: Stephan Fuelling

The Northern Nevada Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Committee and the Nevada Clergy Association jointly presented the annual Martin Luther King Jr. community memorial events for 2012.



Lonnie Feemster, keynote speaker at the 2012 MLK Jr. celebration. PHOTO: Stephan Fuelling

The 26th annual interfaith memorial service was held Sunday January 15, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. at the First Methodist Church in downtown Reno. The theme of this year's event was "Remembering the Dream, Fulfilling the Mandate." Keynote

speaker was the current president of the Reno-Sparks NAACP, Mr. Lonnie Feemster.



Members of the Second Baptist Church Choir perform at the 2012 MLK Jr. celebration. PHOTO: Stephan Fuelling

Musical selections were performed by the Second Baptist Church Choir, directed by Dr. Jesse Hall, and by the group The Power of Love, headed by Leon Smith.



The Power of Love, headed by Leon Smith, performing at 2012 MLK Jr. celebration. PHOTO: Stephan Fuelling

The video tribute to Dr. King was coordinated by the Rev.

Deacon Stephan Fuelling of the International Community of Christ.

Owing to the efforts of the late Reverend Onie Cooper of the Second Baptist Church, this event was originally brought to fruition and has continued for decades. The Nevada Clergy Association and the Holiday Committee have joined to help "keep the dream alive." Both the Nevada Clergy Association and the Northern Nevada Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Committee are presently headed by ICC Head Bishop Gene Savoy Jr.

On Monday January 16, a memorial caravan, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Second Baptist Church in Reno, followed the twenty-six miles of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Highway along US 395. This was the 14th annual community memorial caravan.



(left to
right) Gene
Savoy Jr.,
Radheka Patel,
Debra and
Lonnie
Feemster at
2012 MLK Jr.
Dinner
Celebration.
PHOTO: Lisa J.
Tokla

On the evening of January 16, Bishop Savoy and fiancée Radheka Patel attended the 24th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Dinner Celebration, sponsored by the Northern Nevada Black Cultural

Awareness Society, at the Peppermill Resort in Reno.

26th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service held in Reno



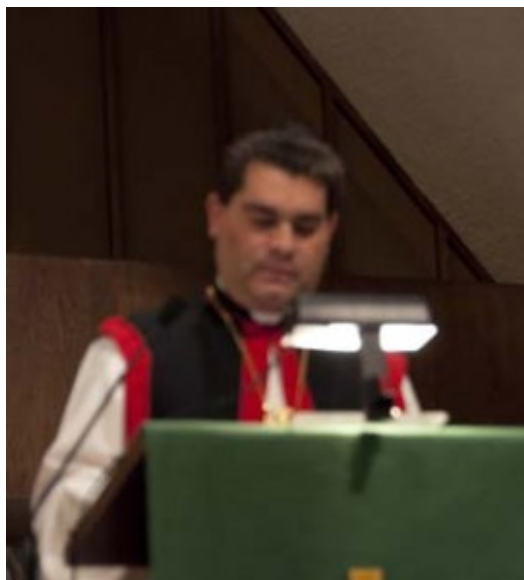
Rev. Susan Taylor of St.
John's Presbyterian Church
welcomes the congregation.
PHOTO: Rebecca Willis

A worship service of prayers, readings, and music from a variety of faith traditions sponsored by the Nevada Clergy Association was held Wednesday November 23, 2011, at St. John's Presbyterian Church.



Radheka Patel reads from
Hindu scripture in Hindi.
PHOTO: Rebecca Willis

Following a welcome by the Reverend Susan Taylor of St. John's, a program of prayer and thanksgiving was provided by representatives of the Reno Buddhist Center, Temple Beth-Or, Second Baptist Church, the Northern Nevada Muslim Community, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), the Baha'i faith, and the Hindu faith. Interspersed in the program were choral selections performed by the local LDS choir, a musical tribute by Roger Hogan of the Baha'i faith, a whirling dervish performance by the children of the Anatolia Center, and a musical selection by sacred storyteller Jim Eaglesmith.



Bishop Gene Savoy Jr.
delivers the Benediction.
PHOTO: Rebecca Willis



Children of the
Anatolia Center
perform whirling
dervish dance.
PHOTO: Rebecca
Willis

**Bishop Savoy Receives
Community Service Award**



Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. addressing
the 2011 Fall Leadership Revival
PHOTO: Second Baptist Church of
Reno

This fall, Bishop Gene Savoy Jr received the 2011 Community Service Award from the Second Baptist Church of Reno for his support of the late Reverend Onie Cooper and for his service as chairman of the Northern Nevada Martin Luther King Jr Holiday Commission. The award was made in honor of the Reverend W.C. Webb Fall Leadership Revival and signed by Reverend Michael L. Randle, Pastor, and Reverend William C. Webb, Pastor Emeritus, of the Second Baptist Church.



(left to right) unidentified Award
Committee member, Rev. William

Webb, Rev. Michael Randle, Bishop
Gene Savoy Jr.

October 2011 Interfaith Luncheon Held



(left to right, from top) Rt. Rev. Sean Savoy, chancellor ICC; Rita Sloan, Life, Peace and Justice Commission, Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno; Ismail Ozdemir, president, Sierra Foundation; Rajan Zed, president, Universal Society of Hinduism; Dave Challis, president, Reno, Nevada Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; Most Rev. Randolph Calvo, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno; Bro. Matthew Cunningham, FSR, chancellor, Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno; Rt. Rev. Gene Savoy Jr.,

president, NCA and head bishop,
ICC; Debbie McCarthy, Fox News
Radio photographer. PHOTO: Debbie
McCarthy

The October 27, 2011, interfaith luncheon was hosted by the Sierra Foundation and held at the latter's new Anatolia Cultural Center in Reno. Presentations were made by the Volunteers of America and the Sierra Foundation.

Reno Air Race Victims Remembered



PHOTO Reno Gazette Journal

The Most Right Reverend Gene Savoy Jr was one of three Reno clergy to lead prayers for the victims of the 2011 Reno National Championship Air Race crash. Families and friends of the victims, as well as some of the injured, gathered for a memorial service was held at Idlewild Park on Sunday, September 25, 2011, nine days after the crash occurred.

After speeches by Reno Mayor Bob Cashell and Nevada Governor

Brian Sandoval, prayers for the dead and injured were offered by clergy leaders on behalf of the 400 people in attendance.

Rev. Savoy received a letter of gratitude for his participation from the Reno mayor following the event.

Nevada Clergy Association Welcomes New Imam & New Tahoe Rabbis



(from left to right) Sparks Mayor Geno Martini, Hindu leader Rajan Zed, Rabbi Evon J. Yakar, Imam Abdelwahed Ali Awad, Rabbi Meredith Cahn, NCA President Rt. Rev. Gene Savoy Jr. PHOTO: Debbie McCarthy

Clergy of various religious faiths and denominations welcomed the new imam and two Tahoe rabbis into the regional interfaith community at a reception organized by the Nevada Clergy Association (NCA) at the India Kabob & Curry Restaurant in Reno on September 27, 2011.

Abdelwahed Ali Awad, the new imam of the Northern Nevada

Muslim Community Center in Sparks, and Evon J. Yakar, the new rabbi of Temple Bat Yam in South Lake Tahoe, California, and Rabbi Meredith Cahn, the new head of of North Tahoe Hebrew Congregation in Tahoe Vista, California, were garlanded by Sparks Mayor Geno Martini as a gesture of welcome to the area.

Imam Awad, born in 1956 in Upper Egypt, started studying Islam and memorizing the Quran when he was fifteen. After earning his BS in geology from Egypt's Assiut University, he traveled to Saudi Arabia and Yemen as a visiting scholar. He has worked as the educational supervisor and a teacher of Islamic studies at the Islamic School Group in Egypt, and during the last five years has delivered numerous lectures on Islam in Yemen, Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Ghana.

His vision of the nonprofit Northern Nevada Muslim Community, established in 1980, is for it to "become the center for developing and sustaining a vibrant Islamic community in Northern Nevada in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah" with a mission "to promote the values and teachings of Islam."

Rabbi Evon Yakar, besides serving at Temple Bat Yam, also works with the Synagogue Without Walls community. A University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate, he was ordained at Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, where he earned two master's degrees. He arrived in Lake Tahoe from Temple Chai in Phoenix, Arizona, where he was associate rabbi and director of education. For the last twelve years, Rabbi Yakar has worked with Jewish youth, fostering creative youth engagement programs, and is passionate about building and fostering healthy relationships across generational gaps and among faith communities.

Temple Bat Yam is a Reform Judaism synagogue on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe whose motto is: "It's beautiful. It's spiritual. It's casual." Besides South Lake Tahoe, the synagogue also serves Jewish needs and interests in the Carson City, Carson Valley, and Dayton areas.

Rabbi Cahn, a University of Pennsylvania graduate with a master's in public health from the University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health, was ordained at the Academy for Jewish Religion California, where she earned a master's in rabbinic studies. For the past two years, she has worked as rabbinic intern at Congregation Shomrei Torah in Santa Rosa, California, where she taught adult education and provided pastoral care to senior congregants.

North Tahoe Hebrew Congregation, which was founded in 1979, is a Reform synagogue serving the North Shore of Lake Tahoe and Truckee and welcomes all who walk through its doors. Its aim is "to enable its adherents to develop a relationship with God through communal worship, study and assembly."

NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet honors Rev. Onie Cooper

The 66th Annual Reno/Sparks NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, held on the evening of Saturday, May 14, 2011, at the Atlantis Resort Grand Ballroom, was attended by nearly 200 individuals, members and nonmembers of the NAACP. The banquet, titled "Building Nevada's Future," to celebrate the accomplishments of the local branch of the NAACP, to remember the Rev. Onie Cooper of Second Baptist Church and Dr. Milton Glick, President of the University of Nevada-Reno, and to award college scholarships to several worthy high school and university students from the Reno/Sparks area. A program of music and speakers, including keynote speaker, life coach Ondra Berry, preceded the awards. Messages of recognition for the event were presented by Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval, United States Senator Harry Reid, Reno Mayor Robert Cashell,

and Sparks Mayor Geno Martini.



NAACP President Lonnie Feemster.
PHOTO Stephan Fuelling

A letter addressed to NAACP President Lonnie Feemster by Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. memorialized the life and work of Rev. Onie Cooper. The letter was read at the program by Rev. Rebecca Willis in the absence of Bishop Savoy, who was traveling in Japan.



Rev. Rebecca Willis reads Bishop Savoy's address at 2011 NAACP Freedom Banquet. PHOTO Stephan Fuelling

The body of the letter follows:

"It is a great privilege for me to have been invited by the Reno-Sparks branch of the NAACP to say a few humble words on behalf of my friend and colleague, the late Reverend Onie Cooper. Unfortunately, I am not able to be physically present with you this evening; however, there certainly is no lack of participation in spirit!"

"Onie was a great friend to all of us. Indeed, he was not only a friend of this community, which he loved so dearly, but a friend of all humanity. I came to know Onie Cooper many years ago when the Advocates for Religious Rights and Freedoms, an association that seeks to preserve, protect and defend religious freedom and expression, honored the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I immediately saw in Onie Cooper something that I admired. I now know that what I saw in him was his incredible championship of and for the rights of man and woman. He fought for liberty, justice and equality of every person, not only here in northern Nevada, but everywhere. In this way, he followed in the footsteps and in the great traditions of Dr. King, the Mahatma Gandhi, the American Transcendentalists, and, yes, even Jesus the Christ."

"It was an extreme honor for Reverend Cooper to personally extend his hand to me and ask me to continue the work which he so ardently labored for in this community for so many decades. To be honest, at the time I was speechless! However, I do know that we, you and I, have an incredible legacy to carry on – a great work in order to keep the dream alive."

"So I say to you this evening, I know that we must – and will! – go on to do great things together. That will make Onie Cooper proud of all of us. I again thank you for the opportunity of being with you this evening. God bless."

"Most sincerely yours,

"The Right Reverend Gene Savoy, Jr."

*Bishop, International Community of Christ
President, Nevada Clergy Association
Chairman, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Committee”*

The event was supported by the International Community of Christ Church with a patron table. Attending from the Church were The Revs. Rebecca Willis, Robert Petrovich, Robert Anderson, Barbara Whitney, Michael Tamburello, Thomas Lee, Amanda Buchanan, Stephan Fuelling, Claudia Grady. Radheka Patel was expected to attend but was prevented by an illness in her family.



Second Advent Church members at patron table. From left to right, Rev. Amanda Buchanan, Dr. Stephan Fuelling, Rt. Rev. Rebecca Willis, Mrs. Claudia Grady PHOTO Stephan Fuelling

2011 Interfaith Clergy

Luncheon held



The Northern Nevada Biannual Interfaith Clergy Luncheon on April 14, 2011 was hosted by Volunteers of America Family Shelter in downtown Reno.

The luncheon this Spring addressed the issue of homelessness in the Truckee Meadows. The Nevada Clergy Association will be working with Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County to encourage religious and business leaders to support the campaign. A meeting was planned with Reno Mayor Bob Cashell, Sandy Isham of Volunteers of America, and Bishop Gene Savoy, Jr. Representing the International Community of Christ at the event were the Rt Reverends Gene Savoy Jr. and Sean Savoy, and the Rev. Dr. Bill Bartlett.

In conjunction with the project to encourage community leaders to address the problem of homelessness in the Reno area, an article on this campaign by Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. appeared in the *Reno Gazette-Journal* on April 12.

Fourth Annual Hindu Baccalaureate held



Presenters at 2011 Hindu Baccalaureate (Rev. Robert Roy, back row, second from right) PHOTO Debbie McCarthy

The fourth annual Hindu Baccalaureate Service was held at the University of Nevada-Reno on the evening of April 17, 2011. The Service was organized by the Indian Student Organization in collaboration with Rajan Zed to bless the graduating class in traditional Hindu style according to Vedic scripture.

Among those who read prayers of blessing was the Reverend Robert Roy of the International Community of Christ, who read the following blessing:

*May the God of salvation bless you with every good
And keep you from all evil,
And enlighten your spirit with the wisdom of life,
And grant you eternal knowledge,
And turn His face of mercies towards you for eternal peace.
May you walk in the spirit of God,
Consisting of healing and abundance of bliss
With length of days and fruitfulness;
And all blessings upon you without end
And eternal joy in perpetual life,
And a glorious crown and garment of honor
In everlasting Light.
Amen*