

Funeral for Rev. Onie Cooper well attended



Photo of Rev. Onie Cooper displayed at his funeral PHOTO Bilde

A funeral for the late Reverend Onie Cooper was held on the morning of Friday, April 15, 2011, at Second Baptist Church in Reno, Nevada. Rev. Cooper passed away at Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center on April 6 at the age of 86.

A two-hour program of scriptural readings, special presentations, song, and family reflections celebrated the life of Rev. Cooper with a crowd of attendees that stretched out of the church sanctuary, onto the stage, and into the hallway.



Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. addressing funeral congregation.
PHOT Bilde

Among the special presenters was The Right Reverend Gene Savoy, Jr., president of the Nevada Clergy Association and chairman of the Northern Nevada Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Committee, who was asked to make a few remarks on behalf of Reverend Cooper, at the request of Rev. Cooper's wife, Mary.



Mary Cooper reflecting PHOTO
Bilde

Reverend Onie Cooper and Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. became good friends over the years. Bishop Savoy was invited by Revrend Cooper to serve on the Holiday Committee in January 2009. In November of that same year, as Rev. Cooper's health began to fail, he asked Rev. Savoy to take his place as chairman. Since that time, through the auspices of the Nevada Clergy Association, Bishop Savoy has carried on the tradition, begun by Rev. Cooper, to honor the life, work, and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by planning the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Service and Memorial Caravan, which drives the 21-mile stretch of US Highway 395 named after Dr. King.

It is of interest that Rev. Cooper was first introduced to the International Community of Christ in 1999, when the Advocates of Religious Rights and Freedoms enshrined Dr. King as an Advocate of Human Spiritual Rights. At that time, the late Most Right Reverend Gene Savoy Sr. also forged a friendship with Rev. Cooper. At Bishop Savoy's funeral in 2007, Rev.

Cooper was among those who spoke in recognition of Bishop Savoy's work.

Nevada Clergy Association members visit Sacramento Spiritual Life Center



On Sunday, April 3, 2011, Bishop Savoy and two other members of the Nevada Clergy Association, the Reverends Bill Bartlett and Robert Petrovich, both of the International Community of Christ, made a trip to Sacramento, California to attend a Sunday Celebration Service at the Spiritual Life Center. The purpose of the trip was to meet with the minister conducting the service, the Reverend Michael Moran.

During the March meeting of western region interfaith leaders at the Western Regional Interfaith Leaders Conference, March 7-8, 2011, Bishop Gene Savoy Jr. met Unity minister Rev. Michael Moran and was impressed with what he had to say about the interfaith movement. Based on their religious and theological conversations during the conference, Bishop Savoy offered to visit Rev. Moran in Sacramento. Following the Sunday celebration April 3, Bishop Savoy was able to speak with Rev. Moran. Bishop Savoy invited Rev. Moran to attend a sunrise service in Reno and gifted him a copy of *Jamil: Child of Light*.

Japan Intervention Service held



More than 50 members of the International Community of Christ and the Satya-chetana Movement gathered in Reno at the Chapel of the Holy Child at 4:00 PM on Saturday, March 19, 2011, to hold a special service of intervention to help prevent the recurrence of earthquake and tsunami disturbances in Japan and to arrest immediately the threat of nuclear explosion. Similar services were held simultaneously in India at the Sri Kalahasti Temple near Tirupathi in the state of Andhra Pradesh and in Japan in Kurume, south of Fukuoka City, on the southernmost of the four main islands of Japan.

Interfaith welcome for Rev. Stephen Karcher



Fr. Stephen Karcher performing Divine Service at St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church PHOTO St. Anthony web site

A reception to welcome the new pastor of Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church, the Reverend Stephen Karcher, was held by the Reno-Sparks interfaith community on March 14, 2011, at the India Kabob & Curry Restaurant. Approximately 35 clergy and other religious leaders attended. Bishop Gene Savoy, Jr. was asked to speak on behalf of the community in welcoming Father Karcher and his wife, Olga, to Northern Nevada. All those in attendance were welcomed as guests by the restaurant's owners.

Regional Interfaith Seminar

held in California



More than thirty interfaith leaders from four western states came together for a two-day conference in the California Bay Area.

The Western Regional Interfaith Leaders Conference held March 7-8, 2011 at San Damiano Retreat, Danville, California was a gathering of presidents and directors of interfaith movements in California, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah. The aim of the conference is to improve dialogue between organizations and to share information and insights, as well as to provide time for leaders to describe the various projects being undertaken in their respective areas. Emphasis was on ways and means of improving communication between interfaith organizations, including reaching out to youth, funding, and increasing activity online and in virtual reality formats. Bishop Gene Savoy, Jr., president of the Nevada Clergy Association (NCA), focused in his presentations on the interreligious activities, services, and events that NCA promotes.

This year's participants agreed to meet again in 2012 at the San Damiano Retreat Center. The 2011 gathering was the second to be held. The first such gathering was held in Phoenix, Arizona in 2010. Bishop Savoy accepted the invitation to serve on the planning committee for the 2012 conference.

Martin Luther King Jr.

celebrated



King
giving
a
lecture
in 1964

The Northern Nevada Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Committee and the Nevada Clergy Association jointly presented the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Celebration events for 2011.

An interfaith memorial service was held Sunday, January 16, 2011 at 3:00 PM at Reno First Methodist Church in downtown Reno. The theme of this year's event was "Remembering the Dream, Fulfilling the Mandate." Owing to the efforts of the Reverend Onie Cooper of the Second Baptist Church, this event was originally brought to fruition and has continued for decades. It is now up to the Nevada Clergy Association to join the Holiday Committee 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 Bishop Gene Savoy Jr.

On Monday, January 17, a memorial caravan, beginning at 10:30 AM at the Second Baptist Church in Reno, followed the twenty-six miles of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Highway along US 395.

Nevada Prayer Breakfast Reinstated



More than 300 clergy and congregants gathered at the 2010 Nevada Prayer Breakfast. PHOTO Rob Roy

The Nevada Prayer Breakfast, sponsored by the Nevada Clergy Association, was held Tuesday, November 16, 2010, at 7:00 AM at the Atlantis Hotel. This powerful gathering brought together over 300 local people across a variety of religious communities to join in prayer for the good of the state of Nevada.. The event also sought to remind civil authorities and other community leaders of the spiritual considerations to keep in mind when decisions are made that affect human lives.



Rt. Rev. Sean Savoy acted

as Master of Ceremonies at
2010 Nevada Prayer
Breakfast. PHOTO Stephan
Fuelling

The Right Reverend Sean Savoy, Chairman of the Nevada Prayer Breakfast Committee, served as Master of Ceremonies for the program of music and prayer, providing the opening remarks, graciously introducing program participants and musicians, and recognizing the civil and religious dignitaries present, with special mention of members of the Nevada Prayer Breakfast Committee and of the co-hosts of the event: The Honorable Robert Crowell, Mayor of the state capital, Carson City; The Honorable Robert Cashell, Mayor of the city of Reno; and The Honorable Geno Martini, Mayor of the city of Sparks.



Rt. Rev. Sean Savoy looks
on as Rev. Stefani Schatz
presents award to Fr. Jim
Jeffery

The Right Reverend Gene Savoy Jr., President of the Nevada Clergy Association, together with Reverend Stefani Schatz, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, presented the first Vision Award to the Reverend V. James Jeffery, Rector Emeritus of Trinity Episcopal Church, in recognition of his dedication and contribution to interfaith dialogue and collaboration in Northern Nevada for over thirty years.



PHOTO Rob Roy

(Read Rt. Rev. Gene Savoy's Welcome Address and introduction to the presentation of the Vision Award: [HERE.](#))

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



PHOTO Stephan
Fuelling

(Read Rev. James Jeffery's Keynote Address: [HERE.](#))

(Listen to Rev. James Jeffery's Keynote Address: [HERE.](#))



Rev. Bill Bartlett
delivers expression
of faith from
Buddhist
perspective. PHOTO
Stephan Fuelling

Father Jeffery's Keynote Address was followed with prayerful expressions of universal love and guidance provided by a number of regional religious representatives from their local

and personal traditions.



Members of the dais gather together. PHOTO Stephan Fuelling

The 2010 Nevada Prayer Breakfast revived, in a new form, the old tradition of the Governor's Prayer Breakfast after a ten-year absence of the once annual event. The Nevada Clergy Association (NCA) plans to continue the tradition of the Nevada Prayer Breakfast as one of its programs. Other programs and events sponsored by NCA are the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Celebration, the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service, now in its 25th year, the bi-annual Clergy Lunches hosted by the various participating congregations, occasional conferences and study groups, and regular email communications on programs and events of mutual interest.



Revs. Robert and Francine Petrovich at the Church's patron table. PHOTO Rob Roy

The International Community of Christ was represented at the event by a patron table of eight of its members, who were there to promote and encourage the event, which is in line with the Church's mission to knock on the doors of churches to aid in the joining together of all religions under God's Light.

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](#).

Father Jim Jeffery addresses interfaith clergy



Father Jim Jeffery
delivering Keynote
Address PHOTO Rob Roy

The Reverend Jim Jeffery, Rector Emeritus of Trinity Episcopal Church, addressed a crowd of 300 after he received the first annual Vision Award from the Nevada Clergy Association at the 2010 Northern Nevada Prayer Breakfast. His moving address was made more so by the musical accompaniment provided by a duo of Carmelite Sisters, Clorinda de Stockalper OCD on piano and Claire Sokol OCD on cello, performing Debussy's Reverie, at the climax of his talk. An abbreviated version of his Keynote Address follows:

*It was a wonderful achievement to have this Prayer Breakfast brought back to life after **ten years** of absence. (In the Christian tradition, resurrection comes **three days** after death, not ten years, but that's a story for a different time and place.)*

*I commend those of you who have made it happen. Scripture says, "**without a vision the people perish,**" and your vision of our gathering together again helps counter the ignorance and suspicion that is part of today's climate regarding religion.*

*A accept with **gratitude and humility** the first annual **Vision Award**. In doing so, I pay **tribute to many folk**, some of whom are in this room, others who have gone to god, who have shared with me a belief in our common humanity while*

representing a broad spectrum of faith differences.

That I am here in this way is what I call a **carrot/stick combination**. The **carrot**: the **Award**. The **stick**: that I was also **to give this talk!**

The Quakers wisely caution, "Don't speak unless you can improve upon the silence."

A writer once advised, it's really very easy to be a writer, all you have to do is sit down at the typewriter (today we'd say computer) and **open a vein**. I believe the same holds true of speaking.

As I began **to bleed** in preparation for this talk, I was inspired to ask my Carmelite friends (who pray and who are also musically gifted) to help me and I thank Sisters Cloe and Claire for saying yes.

And I am indebted to my wife who listened many times to what I was composing then in a tactful way would say "it need work." Bunny, thanks is too small a word.

A few years ago, I heard someone say in a downtown Reno setting that for a community to be whole and healthy, it needed four ingredients, all beginning with the letter P. A **plaza** where people can gather; a **pump** where water flows; a **pub** where folk can eat and drink; and a **pulpit** or religious setting where deep spirituality is witnessed to.

I believe this event comes under the **pulpit** portion of those ingredients, and perhaps a bit of the **pub**.

What we do here this morning takes place in a comfortable setting, but the name of this event, **prayer**, is not always so comfortable.

Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams has said that prayer is sometimes "**a battle and a struggle.**"

In the midst of real life events, be they on a personal plane such as family illness or strife; a community struggling with unemployment and homelessness, or nations engaged in warfare and violence, the bishop writes, **“the struggle is not to let God and the world fall apart from each other.”** It is separating that I find poet Robert Frost protesting:

Something there is that doesn't love a wall . . .
His neighbor says, 'Good fences make good neighbors'.
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down'. . . .
– “Mending Wall”

Instead of being like his neighbor who picks up a stone in each hand, who Frost describes “like an old stone-savage armed” to repair the fence, you and I are called upon to be among those who want the fences down and refuse to allow God and the world to separate from each other.

Hear Rowan Archbishop Williams again: **“God and the world belong to each together. There is no place where the love of God can't go.”** This is incredibly hard to accept. But we of the various faith traditions are charged to believe and act upon it.

Within our various religious texts there are examples of what I'm talking about. Situations or times when God's love is severely questioned. How can God love that much when there seems to be hardly anything worthy or lovable? When the whole world seems caught up in cruelty and pain?

My faith tradition, and I would like to believe other

traditions as well, would say **that God's love is there even before** there is any hope or light or possibility.

Music is a way that prepares us to consider the possibility.

Our calling is to participate in the costly struggle to hold together God and the world, love and suffering, light and darkness, vision and despair.

I includes **verbal** prayers for particular persons and conditions, but it also includes times of **silence**, no asking, no words whatsoever.

The latter is what I believe Archbishop Desmond Tutu meant when he was asked about his prayer life and replied, "It's no longer a shopping list, but more a sitting by the fire and warming myself."

Prayer is one way in which our hearts can be opened. It is an alternative against our hearts being closed. It is a never ending process.

Music can help us do that, creating a portal through which we let God's spirit in.

What Robert Frost calls "Spring Mischief" I call "God's Spirit" urging us to enter into relationships with others who share the **vision of our oneness as human beings, and to celebrate our relationship with the Holy One (called by many names)**, who **made us one** and who will not be content until we call **each other sister and brother**.

This is my vision, and hopefully yours as well.



Carmelite Sisters, Clorinda de Stockalper OCD on piano and Claire Sokol OCD on cello, performing Debussy's Reverie. PHOTO Stephan Fuelling

(Listen to Rev. James Jeffery's Keynote Address: [HERE](#).)

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

25th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service Held



Presenters at the 2010 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. From left to right are Reverend Judith Bither (Reno First United Methodist Church), Canon Robert

Petrovich (International Community of Christ), Rabbi Myra Soifer, Buddhist priest Dr. William Bartlett, Hindu leader Rajan Zed, Imam Abdul Barghouthi (Northern Nevada Muslim Community), Reverend Stefani Schatz (Trinity Episcopal Church), Roya Galata (Baha'i Faith), and Bruce Brinkerhoff (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints).

The 25th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service was held Wednesday, November 24, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Reno. The event, sponsored by the Nevada Clergy Association, an interfaith network of regional religious leaders, marks twenty-five consecutive years of interfaith celebration in Northern Nevada.

The theme of the service, "A Quarter Century of Coming Together in Gratitude," was addressed in the keynote presentation made by the Reverend Judith Bither, pastor of Reno First United Methodist Church. Reverend Bither, a resident of Reno for only two years, opened her talk with mention of her amazement at the unusual degree of good will and interaction she found among the various religious associations in the Reno area for such a great length of time, then went on to portray the meaning and purpose of being grateful.

The one-and-one-half-hour service was a program of harmonious and peaceful music and prayer. The Sierra Foundation, a local Turkish-based interfaith organization, provided the favorite performance of the program: a whirling dervish performance by their community's children.

Representing the International Community of Christ in the service was the Reverend Canon Robert Petrovich, standing in for Bishop Gene Savoy Jr., who read from the Thanksgiving Scroll of the Dead Sea scriptures for the Benediction. Also

present from the International Community of Christ was the Reverend Dr. Bill Bartlett, who delivered the Invocation preceding the service as a representative of the Buddhist community.

Read an online article on the 2010 Thanksgiving Eve Interfaith Service published November 16, 2010 at Moonshine Ink:

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:bDxEYAPGt7AJ:www.moonshineink.com/articles.php/0/2115+{1fa2ef75e2e78439128d99df03acfe1d8ee3047374abe3d4676fe3470ff8b909}22nevada+prayer+breakfast{1fa2ef75e2e78439128d99df03acfe1d8ee3047374abe3d4676fe3470ff8b909}22&cd=10&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>