

“Diverse faiths pray together in Reno for Peace & Unity”



Religious leaders and others after the prayer vigil. PHOTO: Boyd Jeffery

In view of growing violence nationally and globally, diverse northern Nevada faith groups joined hands to pray together on December 20, 2016.

“Multi-faith Prayer Vigil for Peace & Unity” was an event coordinated by religious statesman Rajan Zed and hosted by South Reno United Methodist Church (SRUMC). Present at the event included representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Baha’i, Shinto, and Native American traditions. Attendees signed a banner pledging peace and unity. Representing the International Community of Christ as bishop and the Nevada Clergy Association as president was the Rt. Rev. Gene Savoy Jr.

The event started with lamp lighting by leaders of the various and diverse faith communities and prayers read in English, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, Pali, and Paiute languages. Some prayers were accompanied by flutes and taiko drums.

Zed, President of the Universal Society of Hinduism, speaking on the occasion, said: "In view of growing violence nationally and globally, many times targeting innocent people, there is the need to come together in prayer, dialogue, and community to bring light and hope to the spreading darkness."

Participants included Dawn Pidlypchak, Senior Pastor of SRUMC; Rita K. Sloan, Life-Peace-Justice Commission Coordinator of Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno; Sherif A. Elfass, President of Northern Nevada Muslim Community; Shelly L. Fisher and Matthew T. Fisher, Priests at Reno Buddhist Center; ElizaBeth Webb Beyer, Rabbi of Temple Beth Or and Tahoe Hebrew Congregation; Roya Galata, Baha'i Teacher; Gene Savoy Jr, Head Bishop of International Community of Christ; Joseph E. Johnson, Sparks Stake President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Brian E. Melendez, American Indian Spirituality Scholar; Becky Stockdale, Pastor at SRUMC; Rieko Shimbo, Director of Tsurunokai Taiko; and well know musician Oscar Dallas Smith III.