

38 ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Nevada Interfaith Association

Thursday, November 16, 2023

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral (Reno, NV)

Delivered by The Right Reverend Gene Savoy, Jr.

GOOD EVENING. THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE. I THANK FR. CHUCK DURANTE AND THE NEVADA INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS EVENING.

BECAUSE THE THEME OF TONIGHT’S SERVICE IS BEING “THANKFUL FOR THE PEACEMAKERS”, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO GIVE A LITTLE HISTORY OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND THE INTERFAITH MOVEMENT HERE IN NORTHERN NEVADA.

THE ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED IN 1984 AS THE NEVADA CLERGYMEN’S ASSOCIATION. IT WAS LATER CHANGED TO THE NEVADA CLERGY ASSOCIATION, AND IT IS NOW KNOWN AS THE NEVADA INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION.

THE ORIGINAL CORE FOUNDERS REPRESENTED A SMALL GROUP OF CLERGY CONSISTING OF AN EPISCOPALIAN MINISTER, A GREEK ORTHODOX PRIEST, AND A REFORM JEWISH RABBI. INDEED, THE FIRST INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE WAS HELD HERE AT TRINITY ALMOST FORTY YEARS AGO.

THE GROUP LATER EXPANDED TO INCLUDE AND REPRESENT *ALL* MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY AND FAITH LEADERS AND FOSTERED INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE REGION. IT BROUGHT PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND VARYING FAITH TRADITIONS TOGETHER IN A VERY DYNAMIC WAY. AND THESE PIONEERS TRULY WERE AND ARE *PEACEMAKERS*.

AS TIME WENT ON, INTEREST IN THE ASSOCIATION GREW AND INCLUDED AN EVER-INCREASING DIVERSE CROSS-SECTION OF RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES.

BUT, IN THE EARLY DAYS, MANY OF THE CLERGY WERE UNCOMFORTABLE, IF NOT SUSPICIOUS, OF OTHER FAITH LEADERS, AS WELL AS THEIR BELIEFS AND TRADITIONS. SO, BI-ANNUAL LUNCHEAS AND OTHER EVENTS WERE INTRODUCED. THEN PEOPLE STARTED TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND FORM BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP. JEW AND MUSLIM,

PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC, HINDU AND SIKH BECAME FRIENDS, DISCUSSED IDEAS, BROKE BREAD TOGETHER, AND, VERY IMPORTANTLY, WORSHIPED TOGETHER IN THEIR OWN WAY, BUT...WE DID IT TOGETHER. AND THEY ALSO BECAME *PEACEMAKERS*.

SO WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE IN COMING HERE TONIGHT? IT IS MY FERVENT BELIEF THAT IT IS EVER SO IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH AND RELIGION TO COME TOGETHER NOT ONLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS BUT AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. AND THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED WHEN WE OPEN OUR HEARTS TO OUR FELLOW HUMAN BEING. WHEN WE DO THAT, WE TOO BECOME *PEACEMAKERS*. SO LET US BE THANKFUL FOR THE *PEACEMAKERS*.

ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE AND BEING *PEACEMAKERS* IN YOUR OWN RIGHT. HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES.