

Sonoma Valley Interfaith Ministerial Association

Website: sonomavalleyinterfaithma.org Email: sonomavalleyinterfaithma@gmail.com

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

First Congregational Church of Sonoma

Our next meeting is Wednesday, April 24th with Mayor Harrington. Please mark your calendar. If you have any questions you would like her to address please email them in advance to Tricia at the email above and she will forward them to the mayor before the meeting.

Present: Peadar Dalton, Donna Thomas, Rich Gantenbein, John Bonnoitt (St. Francis Solano), Larry Frakes, Manette Fairmont.

Guests: Sandy Piotter, F.I.S.H.

Welcome and Call to Order - Donna opened with a reminder that one of the basic purposes of life is to survive and that survival is joy. We forget that we can create joy and need to do so on a daily basis. The group shared their reflections on what they gather joy from.

Checking In With Non Profits -

- F.I.S.H. - Sandy Piotter will update today.
- City Council - The mayor will be our guest at the April meeting. Peadar reports that the council will be focusing on adding an additional 1% to the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) to help fund affordable housing, a dispensary for medicinal needs and fair minimum wage of \$15 for Sonoma Valley workers. For more info. check [here](#)
- S.O.S. - Larry reminds us to attend the candlelight gathering at the winter shelter at Alliance Church, 125 E. Watmaugh Rd. for it's last night, Sunday, March 31st, 7pm. Please join their board, staff and friends as we all welcome our homeless on the last night of the shelter. Give thanks to Sonoma Alliance Church for their efforts. An application is in with the County Planning and Zoning office for the shelter permit, a meeting will be held April 2nd regarding moving this process forward. For ongoing needs at S.O.S. contact them [here](#).
- SVU School District - Emily will now be our contact for the district, reports to come.
- Sustainable Sonoma - Jacey will be attending the next meeting, or will reach out for someone to fill in if she is out of town and will report back to us.

Upcoming Events -

- **Good Friday Service**, Friday, April 19th, 12 noon. First Methodist Church will be having one to invite the community, 109 Patten St. Sonoma, it will be Methodist based. Please contact Emily if you can come and share a reading, epickensjones@gmail.com or 510-207-0255. Rich reports that St. Andrew will have one at noon as well. John reports that St. Francis will also have one at 2:00pm.
- **Passover Seder** at Shir Shalom, April 20th, see the website [here](#) to RSVP.
- **Easter Sunrise Service** with St. Francis will be held at Cline Family Cellars on Easter Sunday, April 21st at 6:00am.
- **Earth Day Festival**, Sunday, April 28th, 11:30am-2:00pm, hosted by First Congregational Church, in Burlingame Hall. Join the many Sonoma Valley organizations that address Earth care, ecology, conservation, advocacy, raising bees, nurturing butterflies, protecting wildlife, building trails, pro-

ducing farm-to-fork produce, gardening, birding, worming and all manner of things ecological and conservation-focused. This year we will honor Youth speaking up for the Earth and taking action against *climate change*. Musical groups will join us throughout the Festival. An organic lunch will be available.

- **Hospice By The Bay - Service of Remembrance**, Sunday, April 28th, 4:00pm - 6:00pm, hosted by Congregation Shir Shalom, in the Sanctuary and Community Room. You are warmly invited to join us for an interfaith community gathering to grieve our loved ones and honor their memories. We'll share music, prayers and messages from a variety of spiritual traditions.
- **Memorial Day Celebration**, Monday, May 27th, 11:00am at Veteran's Memorial Park Cemetery, 126 1st St. West, Sonoma. Reverend Peadar Dalton and the SVIMA members will share the invocation/benediction during this community memorial celebration.
- **Fourth of July**, discussion on our participation in the parade to let the community know we exist. Possible theme, "Unity in the Midst of Diversity". Members are interested, discussion to be continued at the April meeting.

Information to Share -

- Larry asks that we pray for the homeless as the shelter ends and inclement weather continues.
- Donna reports that the Church of Scientology, Mission of Sonoma is offering Personal Efficiency courses every Saturday, for a nominal fee, from 10am-2pm, with a break for lunch. For more information or to sign up please call 707-939-6774. They are also looking to organize a group for veterans with PTSD. More to come.
- Manette reports that the First Church of Christ, Scientist is increasing their Facebook presence. They are organizing a talk on social media on Healing Around Self Esteem. More information to come.

Guest - Sandy Piotter

-First, thank you to the churches for their continued support! They will begin working on a written history of F.I.S.H. in preparation to celebrate it's 50th anniversary in 2021. They continue to work as an all volunteer program. All of their recipients live in the valley and mainly consist of seniors, working poor and those with medical issues.

-Changes this past year: increased paperwork issues with pick up have led to expanded home delivery food service. Faith Lutheran has shut down service but Redwood Empire Food Bank has increased their opportunities for food pick up in Sonoma Valley. They have over 70 home deliveries each month with much of that number being seniors.

-They continue to help with rent assistance. In January and February they provided \$54,000 in rent assistance, which shows a steady increase in the past 10 years. La Luz is helping with initial interviews for those in need of rental assistance and payments are made to the landlord directly. This is one of their core programs along with utility and gas assistance. There is no judgement but they are judicious in acting as a bridge for those temporarily in need.

-Food requests are up. In January and February they helped 322 families (750 adults and 36 children) with a 3 day food package. Sonoma Market/Nugget Market has been very supportive in giving meat at cost. The See's Candy sales raised \$4000 to help.

-They continue to give rides to dialysis appointments at an average of 60 per month. **There is a large need for any volunteers who can drive out of town.** Please spread the word to your groups that they need volunteers who can drive out of town and have a few hours a day to spare.

-Looking forward, there is a largely increasing population of seniors living in poverty. They are looking to put together volunteers who can act as case workers to help these seniors in making sure they are receiving any and all services available to them.

-Site changes: There will be changes to the ramp in the parking lot which will allow delivery trucks better access. There will also be some kind of covering for those waiting in pick up lines to protect them from the weather; rain and sun.

-They are always in need of volunteers for many things. They would like to have people they've helped have opportunities to share their stories within the community at churches, meetings, events.

Things to consider -

- We will invite Sandy Piotter back in June.
- We should invite someone from La Luz, Vintage House to be a guest.
- Bring your annual SVIMA membership dues in April.
- Continue our discussion on the 4th of July at the April meeting.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, April 24th, 12:15pm sharp - Please send a representative if you are unable to attend. Our guest will be Sonoma Mayor, Amy Harrington.

Meeting Adjourned - 1:30pm