

Compassion in Action
September 11, 2012

On September 11, 2012 at 4:30 p.m. the Interfaith Center hosted “Compassion in Action,” an interfaith event held on the grounds of the Arkansas House of Prayer. Over 130 people from many different religious backgrounds gathered to pray for peace and to bless the people doing interfaith work in the community. The Multi-Faith Youth Group processed into the event carrying a new interfaith prayer box to be permanently stationed at the House of Prayer. Leslie Singer of B’Nai Israel and board member of the House of Prayer welcomed the community to the event and introduced the speakers. Siva Soora offered a Hindu prayer for Universal Peace and was followed by the Rev. Susan Sims Smith, Director of the Interfaith Center, who gave an address on the meaning of Compassion in Action and encouraged participants to continue to both deepen their commitment to their respective faiths and to engage in interfaith work as an outgrowth of that commitment (the full text of the speech can be found below). Anna Cox of the Ecumenical Buddhist Society and Compassion Works for All then called leaders in the Arkansas interfaith community to come forward for a blessing of their work.

Sarah Catherine Gutierrez, House of Prayer board member and Program Administrator for the Interfaith Center, explained the gift a new prayer box for the Arkansas House of Prayer and delivered the vision for an interfaith prayer wall where all can leave prayers and intentions to be prayed for by people in the interfaith community. The Rev. Dr. Anika Whitfield followed with a prayer of blessing over the prayer box.

The keynote address was delivered by P. Allen Smith, garden designer and author, who talked about the garden as a place for the opening of the heart and was followed by the dedication of a new maple tree by Sophia Said of the Islamic Center of Arkansas and the introduction of student representatives of the Multi-Faith Youth Group who delivered individual prayers by the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths. All participants then processed to the tree and said in unison an original prayer written by the Multi-Faith Youth Group for the event (the text of the prayer can be found below).

A reception followed offering attendees a chance to enjoy delicious food and to meet each other.

Many thanks to the Rev. Susan Sims Smith, John Willis, Terry Hornbeck, Susan Bauman, Sophia Said, Leslie Singer, the Rev. Cindy Fribourg, the Rev. Dr. Chris Keller, Rick Smith, Sarah Catherine Gutierrez, P. Allen Smith and members of the Arkansas House of Prayer Board for their help supporting, planning, and organizing the event.

“Just returned from an interfaith gathering at the Arkansas House of Prayer. Prayers for peace were offered up by Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, including about a dozen teenagers from various traditions. I'm grateful to my friends [John Willis](#), [Sarah-Catherine Phillips Gutierrez](#), Susan Sims Smith and everyone who made the

event possible. That it happened is even more significant than what happened, lovely as it was.”

The Rev. Scott Walters