

History Notes of Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice
Updated January 2018
(See bottom for explanations of acronyms and abbreviations)

2002

Dec. 22, 2002 – Interfaith Peace Vigil in front of PA City Hall, with lots of music, band, intergenerational choir – about 250-300 in attendance

2003

Jan 14– first organizational gathering (First Pres, PA)

Feb 18 – second organizational gathering (Our Lady of the Rosary, PA)

March 8-9 – 24 hour vigil , PA City Hall Plaza; intergenerational times & children’s activities, Islamic prayers (2 times) & lecture, Jewish ending of the Sabbath, liturgical dance, Meditation & centering prayer, Unitarian worship, youth teach-in, midnight ritual, Tao Te Ching & Taoist Eucharist, All Saints Episcopal Eucharist, Christian Science Lecture, Quaker Adult Study, School of Americas watch teach-in, Just War teach-in, “Not with my Money teach-in, Nonviolent Direct Action teach-in, closing worship with dramatic reading of MLK’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech with prayers, scripture, songs, and children’s choir; anywhere from 5 (in the wee hours) to about 500 (for the closing worship) in attendance

March 22 – Interfaith Service 2 days after war on Iraq began; First Pres, PA, about 300 in attendance; offering received for LIFE – Islamic Relief for Iraq

April 7 – “Plotting and Praying for Peace” – organizational meeting with educational time – CAIR, ING, intro to “Rebuilding America’s Defense” and “How do we work for peace in the midst of war?”

April 27-- Interfaith Service for Peace at Grace Lutheran, introduction of “One Voice” youth interfaith choir; Jewish, Muslim, Unitarian & Christian speakers

May 18 – Interfaith Youth Service for Peace at First Baptist, more from “One Voice,” plus Unitarian, Jewish, Presbyterian & Lutheran youth speakers and Muslim youth music.

June 7 – Teach-in – Roman Catholic, Muslim, Presbyterian speakers, at Muslim Community Association in Santa Clara

June 22 – Interfaith Service at Congregation Kol Emeth, Charles Liteky, speaker, offering taken for CWS directed to Iraq – about 80 in attendance

September 11 – Interfaith Service of Healing & Peace, Friends Meeting House – abt 60 in attendance

November 11 – Veterans Day Vigil for Peace, PA City Hall

2004

Feb 29 –Speakers: Meg & Peter Lumsdaine, just back from Iraq, Friends Mtg House, 50 attending

March 21 – Interfaith Service for Peace; 1-year marking of the start of the war on Iraq, First Methodist Church, PA, Susan Galley, speaker

Mary 27 – Memorial Day Vigil for Peace: Honoring Lives, Protesting Deaths, PA City Hall, closed streets for funeral march, about 200 in attendance

July 15 – Kathleen Namphy, speaker from Christian Peacemaker Team in Iraq; All Saints Episcopal; about 60 attended

Oct. 3 – Teach-in – Grace Lutheran Church; about 180 attended; 5 speakers – Byron Bland, Amy Lansky, Carmichael Peters, Diane Morrison, Tarek Mourad “The Road to Peace begins with Truth”

Nov. 11 – Veterans Day service for Peace – Stanford Memorial Church; Portola Valley Presbyterian choir sang; Rabbi Sheldon Lewis and Vet. Craig Wiesner among speakers

2005

February/March – Peace Workshop for Middle School age kids – led by 2 Stanford interns – Katie Cueva and Priti Sanghani – attempted for 2 Saturdays but only 1 youth came; ended up teaching 2 extended class periods at Jordan Middle School with teacher Mary Sano – and was great!

March 20 – Interfaith Peace Service marking 2nd anniversary of war; in San Jose at Unitarian Church “Producing Peace” – about 170 attending; part of regional anti-war rally

May – first annual Memorial Day Peace Picnic at Mitchell Park – over 100 attending

June – delegation met with Congresswoman Eshoo re: Patriot Act

October: Traditions of Peace Confluence of Holy Days

Uniting in Song, Oct 2, Gandhi’s b-day; Protestant World Communion; First Congregational PA; great age and race diversity; about 150 attending

Fasting for Darfur, Oct 6, Palo Alto City Hall Plaza - National Fast Day for Darfur, Muslim’s Ramadan Fast, Jewish Rosh Hashanah; co-sp with Stanford student group

Opening Doors for Mutual Understanding, Oct 16, MCA, Ramadan, CAIR sponsored & we helped

Gathering in the Sukkah to Break Fast Together, Oct 23, Kol Emeth; Kol Emeth sponsored & we helped

Nov 3 - Pakistani Earthquake Relief press conference at First Pres, PA – great attendance & press

Nov. 10 - Veterans Day Eve Worship & Teach-in at First Baptist PA; Karen Meredith among speakers

Nov 22 - Pakistani Earthquake Relief Overnight Vigil at PA City Hall Plaza

2006

January 16-21 – sponsored week of daily noon vigils for Darfur at El Camino & Embarcadero with Kol Emeth & Stanford student group building up to Darfur Day of Conscience in April

March 18 – Multifaith Gathering for Peace at All Saints’ Episcopal, PA; intergenerational worship following which we joined the PPJC rally & march marking 4th anniversary of war; Stanford interns Lindsay Caldwell, Maia Goodman and Josephina Guillen helped plan and lead; Dave Howell came with Clarence the Camel and Sohab Malik (Muslim youth) sang and they both were awesome; Diana Gibson gave words of reflection

March 25 – Iraq: The Power of Truth in a War Based on Lies; First Pres PA – speakers Scott Ritter, Ray McGovern, Faiza Al-Araji, Medea Benjamin; about 350 attending

May 7 – Co-sponsored AMV Open House

May 11 – Given “Blessed are the Peacemakers” award by the US Conference of the World Council of Churches (plus generous gift from the offering)

May – second annual Memorial Day Peace Picnic at Mitchell Park – over 100 attending

June – joined National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRAT)

July 26 – Call for Cease Fire in Middle East – vigil at Lytton Plaza

August – trip to ICE detention center in Yuba City

Sept 21 – “Iraq: What Next?” speaker program featuring David Abernethy & Ray McGovern with interfaith panel response; Unitarian Universalist Church of PA; about 250 attending

Sept 27 – Religious Leaders Statement Against Torture signed by 17 local, state and national organizations; 6 state and national religious leaders; 96 religious leaders within CA and 30 religious leaders from outside of California; press conference held at First Pres, PA; excellent pressure on and relationship with Lantos’ and Eshoo’s staff and vote.

Oct 1 - first Op-Ed piece from MVPJ in San Jose Mercury News (re: torture and Military Commissions Act)

Oct 21 – Vigil Opposing the Death Penalty at Lytton Plaza; co-sponsored with Californians of Faith Against the Death Penalty

Oct 27 – Joined the Lockheed Vigil in Sunnyvale led by Ed Ehmke

November – showed “Outlawed” DVD from Amnesty Int’l on extraordinary renditions & torture

2007

March 16 – Multifaith Peace Witness at First Methodist with speaker Aimee Allison in conjunction with 8 people from MVPJ at the Christian Peace Witness in Washington DC, which we co-sponsored.

March-May – co-sponsored 4-part once-a-month film series with Jewish Voice for Peace in Sunnyvale

April 2-6 – Press Conference & advocacy for Ramirez family in the midst of deportation

April 5 – 2nd Op-Ed piece in San Jose Mercury News – this one on immigration & the Ramirez family

May – third annual Memorial Day Peace Picnic at Mitchell Park – over 120 attending

July 2 – Immigration Forum at First United Methodist, PA; KQED cosponsored

July 12 – Visit to ICE Detention Center in San Francisco

September 11 – Prayers for Peace vigil at Friends Meeting House

September 13 – Meeting with Congresswoman Eshoo’s office urging her to co-sponsor HR 1352 – the “stop out-sourcing torture” bill; In response to our meeting she did indeed cosponsor the bill!

September 21 – STOP AT 11:30am gathering for prayer and solidarity at the corner of Embarcadero and El Camino; kick off for Iraq Moratorium actions (3rd Friday of each month)

October 7-8 – Interfaith Fast End the War in Iraq – began fast at First United Methodist Church, PA with Nichola Torbett of the Network for Spiritual Progressives & Rabbi Sheldon Lewis speaking; concluded fast at Lytton Plaza with Rabbi Michael Lerner speaking

October 19 –Co-sponsored with Iraq Moratorium group a Motorcade to End the war; Ray McGovern spoke at the conclusion

October 20 –co-sponsor End the Death Penalty vigil as part of Amnesty International’s Weekend of Faith and Action with California People of Faith Against the Death Penalty; Lytton Plaza in Palo Alto

October 24 –showing of “Ghosts of Abu Ghraib” at First United Methodist Church, PA

November 16 – Press Conference/Vigil outside of Jeppesen International in San Jose protesting their involvement with extraordinary rendition flights (co-sponsored with Iraq Moratorium)

November – Supported Immigrant family from East Palo Alto after their father was picked up and deported the day after Thanksgiving

December – Interfaith winter holy day ad: “Work and Pray for Peace & Call for an End to the War in Iraq” in Palo Alto Weekly and San Jose Mercury News

2008

March 7 – In Washington, D.C. joined with Olive Branch Interfaith Peace Partnership in Witness to End the War in Iraq

May 3-4 – Eyes Wide Open Cost of War exhibit – 36 hour presence at Kings’ Plaza in PA; Opening, Closing & Saturday evening programs with prayers, readings from diverse faith traditions, a film, speakers, and taps

June 26 (U.N. International Day to Abolish Torture) – Silent vigil outside of Jeppesen International

August 23 – Co-sponsored American Muslim Voice Open House

Fall Series: Faithful Citizens Go to the Polls

Sept. 10 – screening of “Soldiers of Conscience” film with producer speaking; 80 in attendance, First Baptist Church, PA

September 15 – Climate Change Working Group (we co-sponsored California Interfaith Power & Light event)

October 1 – screening of “Soldiers of Conscience” film in San Jose

October 2 – Immigration: Local Stories & National Policies – panel with immigrants, speakers from the New Sanctuary Movement, Sue Dremann from Palo Alto Weekly, and representative from Archdiocese of San Francisco. First Congregational Church, PA

October 20 – Globalization & Immigration with Raj Patel, Keynote; First United Methodist Church, PA

November 8 – Vigil to End the Death Penalty; cosponsored with California People of Faith Against the Death Penalty

November 13 – Delegation to Congresswoman Anna Eshoo’s office asking her to call for a Presidential Executive Order to End Torture; Eshoo did so putting it into the Congressional Record in December

2009

January – Met with Editorial Board of the San Jose Mercury News asking them to call for a Presidential Executive Order to End Torture; in response to our visit they did so, plus ran an op-ed authored by 2 of our members.

June – Sponsored major 2 day “Torture is a Moral Issue” event; Friday night and Saturday at First Presbyterian and First United Methodist Church, PA; 200 Friday night and 120 on Saturday in attendance; speakers included Dr. David DeCosse (Santa Clara University ethicist and Roman Catholic theologian); Ben Daniel (Presbyterian pastor, author and political commentator), Ray McGovern (former CIA analyst), Rev. Carol Wickersham (founder of No2Torture & on NRCAT board), Terrence Karney (former Army interrogator and trainer), Rev. Rita Nakashima Brock, and volunteers for the Center for Healing for Victims of Torture.

August-September – took leadership in faith community’s response to local teen suicides; sponsored interfaith panel at Cubberly Community Center with several hundred in attendance

September – became involved with nuclear disarmament issue and committed to work with the Silicon Valley Chapter of the Nuclear-Age Peace Foundation

November - cosponsored speaker Dr. Lynn Eden, “Inside the Minds of Nuclear Warriors” at Los Altos library

November – issued statement re: Fort Hood Tragedy (authored primarily by Rev. Amy Zucker Morgenstern)

2010

March 21 – “Listen to the Voices of Children Born in Places of War” Public worship for Peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan – at Lytton Plaza; gathered children’s words and drawing for viewing and meditation; held prayers and had some singing

March – MVPJ received Peace Award from American Muslim Voice

May – Commissioned and sold “Mother of Mother’s Day Greeting Cards for Peace” with quotations from Julia Ward Howe’s 1847 Mother’s Day Proclamation for Peace. (Art by “Design Action” and printed by “Inkworks Press”)

Co-sponsored Nuclear Age Peace Foundation’s spring series of speakers

September – Interfaith Peace Witness marking U.N. International Peace Day; Speakers included Rana Tomaira (born in Baghdad, Iraq, works with Iraqi children wounded from war), Len and Libby Traubman (creators of Jewish Palestinian Dialogue Group), and Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers (via videos); began in park with International Peace Village; worship held at St. Thomas Aquinas Church.

September – Building Bridges for Peace: Interfaith Adult Study Series featuring diverse traditions and their teaching for peace. Concluded with presentation by Rajmohan Gandhi (grandson of Mohandas Gandhi).

July – Cosponsored American Muslim Voice Open House

Summer-Fall - Richard Duda led us in preparing a Multifaith Study Guide for the documentary, “Nuclear Tipping Point” (features George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry and Sam Nunn)

Showed documentary “Nuclear Tipping Point” using multifaith discussion guide

September - Supported the Third National Quaker Conference on Torture and Accountability with Fr. Roy Bourgeois as speaker (held at Ben Lomond)

December – Cosponsored Haiti Photography Exhibit to raise funds and awareness for Haiti after earthquake

2011

February – Cosponsored showing of “The Human Turbine” film documenting efforts of Palestinians and Israelis working together to provide needed electricity for village in Hebron hills.

March – “The War Goes On: Featuring Camilo Mejia” with interfaith panel response; at Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto

April – Cosponsored “The Vision of Reykjavik: Steps Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons” – a 4 part study series led by MVPJ steering committee member Dick Duda.

May – Continued selling “Mother of Mother’s Day Greeting Cards for Peace” with quotations from Julia Ward Howe’s 1847 Mother’s Day Proclamation for Peace. (Art by “Design Action” and printed by “Inkworks Press”)

June – “Nuclear Abolition Day” – urged people to write letters to mayors asking them to call for end to nuclear weapons and declare their cities nuclear free zones.

August – “Make August a Nuclear Free Future Month” – sponsored speakers and action at Livermore Nuclear Laboratory marking 66th anniversary of U.S. bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima

August – “Budrus: A Village United in Nonviolent Resistance” – sponsored documentary showing with South Bay Jewish Voice for Peace and others

September - Encouraged people to ask Congress to call for scientific assessment of risks of reducing our nuclear arsenal.

September – Hosted “Windows and Mirrors” (from American Friends Service Committee) display of banners depicting daily experiences of Afghan citizens; banners were displayed in several local congregations as well as at King Plaza in Palo Alto

Fall-Winter – worked with Palo Alto City officials re: use of city plazas for freedom of speech events

December – Defend Civil Rights for Everyone: Held vigil on 12/15, anniversary of adoption of the Bill of Rights, and worked with Muslim Peace Coalition, Bill of Rights defense Committee, NRCAT, Center for Victims of Torture and American Muslim Voice to raise awareness about the National Defense Authorization Act (2012) that allowed for indefinite military detention of anyone without charges, court review or trial and made it more difficult to close Guantanamo Bay.

2012

April – Sponsored “The State of the National Security State 2012” talk by Ray McGovern at First Baptist Church (with PPJC); about 60 people in attendance

July – Offered scholarship for student to attend Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Peace Leadership Workshop in Santa Barbara with Paul Chappell (in conjunction with Silicon Valley Chapter Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and Los Altos Voices for Peace); Scholarship awarded to Stanford student Keryn Breiterman-Loader

July – Cosponsored Woody Guthrie Singalong with Reach and Teach in San Mateo

August – First Real World Peacemakers Event (potluck and presentation) with American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) General Secretary

August - Real World Peacemakers Event (potluck and presentation) with Christian Peacemaker Team Outreach Coordinator

Created MVPJ Affiliate Circle

October – sent MVPJ representative Neil Penn to Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prayer Day in San Leandro

2013

March – Eyes Wide Open Exhibit at King Plaza: Empty boots and shoes remind us of the real cost of war.

April – Received \$1,000 grant from NRCAT for 2013 spring-summer efforts to encourage Senator Dianne Feinstein to support making public the Senate Intelligence Committee sponsored report on the use of torture by the CIA.

- write op-eds on this issue (one written by MVPJ members & published in SJ Mercury News)
- ask religious leaders to send letter to Feinstein urging release of report (several written)
- organize delegation of religious leaders to meet with Feinstein or staff to discuss (done in June)
- ask local congregations to show NRCAT’s updated “Ending U.S. Sponsored Torture Forever” film (film shown in several congregations)

April – Real World Peacemaker Event on Right Use of World Resources

June – UUCPA and Catholic Parish of NRCAT’s “Ending U.S. Torture Forever”

July – Offered scholarship for student to attend Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Peace Leadership Workshop in Santa Barbara with Paul Chappell (in conjunction with the Silicon Valley Chapter of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and Los Altos Voices for Peace); Scholarship awarded to Stanford student Cole Manley

July – Real World Peacemaker Event with Diane Randall of Friends Committee on National Legislation (at UUCPA)

September – MVPJ issued statement against use of military force against Syria; cosponsored vigil outside Rep. Eshoo’s office; Eshoo committed to vote against any such resolutions

September – Cosponsored AMV 9/11 Peace Picnic

October – Cosponsored Malala Joya speaking on Afghan Women and Non-Intervention

December – Cosponsored American Muslim Voice Peace Convention

2014

April – Joined with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and Faithful America calling on Sarah Palin and NRA to repudiate statement equating waterboarding with baptism.

August – “Living for 32” film and discussion on gun violence

September – Campaign Nonviolence Week of Action: MVPJ joined the National Campaign Nonviolence with over 20 local events involving over a dozen local congregations and organizations ranging in topic from climate change, poverty as structural violence, gun safety, to prayer vigils, labyrinth peace walks, and youth discussions regarding conscientious objection to war. Campaign Nonviolence banners were displayed in front of several local congregations and on the overpass on Embarcadero Road.

October – Participated in the “Awakening the Heart of Compassion” featuring Fr. Greg Boyle at the Carry the Vision Conference.

October – Cosponsored Dennis Kucinich speaking on Redefining National Security.

December – Cosponsored EID festival with American Muslim Voice.

2015

January – publicized Interfaith Conference on Drone Warfare calling for Immediate Halt on Lethal Drone Strikes

April – Joined Peace and Planet Mobilization for a Nuclear-free Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World during the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

Spring-Summer-Fall – Worked with many other local faith and community organizations on the “Raise the Wage Campaign working for a livable minimum wage.

August – Cosponsored the Livermore Lab Nuclear Witness and Action marking 70 years after the U.S. bombed Hiroshima and Nakasaki. Daniel Ellsberg was a featured speaker.

September – Campaign Nonviolence Week of Action included sermons, a showing of “White Like Me” documentary film, and a discussion on Climate Justice in response to Pope Francis’ Congressional Address.

September – MVPJ issued a response to violence and terrorism in Beirut, Paris and Syria.

2016

January-March – Drone Quilt Project displayed at various congregations in Palo Alto and the Los Altos Library.

February – Cosponsored the Islamic Society of East Bay's and American Muslim Voice Foundation's Hands-Around-the-Mosque in Fremont.

September 11 – Multifaith Peace Walk & Picnic: Community-wide event with over two dozen cosponsors and over 750 participants. We walked from Congregation Etz Chayim to University AME Zion to Our Lady of the Rosary to Mitchell Park for an American Muslim Voice hosted picnic. Programs and music were held at each stop. Multifaith, intergenerational and fun!

2017

January – Multifaith Service of Concern and Commitment on Eve of Inauguration: 200 attendees at service of prayers, music, silence and words of encouragement and challenge.

Ongoing – Partnered with numerous local and national organizations to block Muslim ban in any form.

February – MVPJ issued Statement of Solidarity with immigrants, Jews, Muslims, victims of war, those who may lose health care coverage, refugees, and anyone targeted with hate, violence or injustice. Published in San Jose Mercury News.

March – Hands Around the Mosque – joined with the Muslim Community Association of Santa Clara and American Muslim Voice for this event at which hundreds of community members from all faiths and walks of life circled the mosque as a sign of friendship and solidarity.

March-October – Wrote letters and supported campaigns for the passage of California SB 31 (California Religious Freedom Act) and SB 54 (California Values Act). Both were passed and signed into law in October 2017.

May – Initiated Peaceful Presence monthly gathering for Multifaith prayers for peace and strength for the journey. May event hosted by Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto.

June – Unity Rally led by MVPJ, PACT and CAIR and cohosted by over 50 local community and faith organizations stood in solidarity in face of ACT for America anti-Muslim protest in Santa Clara. Over 800 participants.

June – Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by Congregation Beth Am

June – Rapid Response Training in face of possible ICE raids hosted by MVPJ.

July – Diverse Ways to Offer Care and Sanctuary: presentation and discussion organized by MVPJ.

July – Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by University AME Zion Church

August – Acting in Solidarity: initiated offer for public acts of solidarity on behalf of any religious, ethnic or other vulnerable communities which are being threatened or have been harmed or violated in some way. Responses will be faithful, peaceful demonstrations of friendship and solidarity, with responses within 24-48 hours. Includes offer to find facilities for worship or study if community is threatened.

August – Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by Palo Alto Friends Meeting

September 11 – Peaceful Presence: Prayer, songs, words and rituals for peace, justice and inclusion at King Plaza; more than 200 in attendance.

October 11 – Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by Baha'i Community of PA

November 5 – Participated in “Hearts for Justice: Toward Understanding: A Jewish, Christian, Muslim Dialogue” panel and resource fair at Trinity Church, Menlo Park (Episcopal)

November 11– Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by Unitarian Universalist Church, PA

December 11– Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by First Presbyterian Church, PA

2018

January 11– Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by First Baptist Church, PA

January – Sent letter to both U.S. Senators and several local Congress members calling attention to article by former Secretary of Defense William Perry regarding current nuclear dangers.

February 11– Peaceful Presence Multifaith Prayers for Peace, hosted by First Lutheran Church, PA

Abbreviations:

AMV – American Muslim Voice

CAIR – Council on American Islamic Relations (SF Bay Area)

CWS – Church World Service

ICE – Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement

ING – Islamic Network Group

MCA – Muslim Community Association (Muslim mosque and community association in Santa Clara, CA)

MVPJ – Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice

NRCAT – National Religious Campaign Against Torture

PA – Palo Alto

PACT – People Acting in Community Together (Santa Clara County PICO organization)

PPJC – Peninsula Peace & Justice Center