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Interfaith Sustainable  
Food Collaborative

# September 2021 Newsletter

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## **Faith, Food and Farms Conference Celebrates Faith Community Pandemic Work; Inspires Leaders to Expand Food Justice Work**

The Faith, Food and Farms Conference brought together food justice and sustainability leaders representing 47 diverse religious communities. Most of the just over 100 participants came from the North Bay and East Bay, however attendees came from other areas of California as well as 8 other states. For the first time the conference included tours of farms and gardens at 7 different faith-community sites. Diverse speakers included 8 farmers growing food on lands owned by religious institutions. The in-person event overlapped with the National Faithlands Gathering.\*

Ammar Ahmed of Islamic Circle of North America in Washington, D.C. spoke about the response of Muslim communities in the U.S. to hunger during the COVID Pandemic. He called on attendees to help with the national effort by Muslim and Jewish groups to urge USDA to make kosher and halal meat available to observant Jews and Muslims through an emergency food program. Advocates are concerned about protein options available to observant individuals who utilize TEFAP, The Emergency Food Assistance Program. (A letter signed by some 47 members of Congress went to USDA last week, we will keep the Interfaith Food network apprised of how to help with this work.)



Ammar Ahmad from ICNA discusses need for halal and kosher food aid options.

Sha'von Terrell, Deputy Director of the National Black Church Food Security Network closed the conference with a Call to Action. "Churches and church associations through their assets and financial commitments may aid in the development of farmers' markets, supply chains, and other arrangements which can help to create equitable food systems and advance food sovereignty," said Terrell. Specifically she called on faith-groups to work at every level including:



- Nationally: Support the Justice For Black Farmers Act
- Regionally: Support the regional food infrastructure by purchasing produce from Black farmers
- Locally: Incorporate a racial and economic justice lens to ministry planning by partnering with the Black Church Food Security Network.

Sha'Von Terrell, Black Church Food Security Network.

The in-person conference was organized in conjunction with the National Faithlands Gathering which overlapped with the first-day programming August 25th and continued for two more days. More than 30 people from 9 states focused on how to make lands owned by religious institutions available to more farmers and ranchers. Interfaith Food has been inventorying lands in Northern California owned by faith-based groups, and identified well over 100 parcels that are 5 acres or larger that may be suitable for leases to BIPOC farmers and others. The group heard from farmers that are successfully operating farms on lands owned by churches, and also from those who have faced challenges to identify 'best practices'. Tours highlighted immigrant farmer Napoleon Camacho who farms at Seventh Day Adventist Academy, and CrossWinds Church in Livermore with a large community garden and tiny home village on church grounds.

**Missed the conference? Join our virtual follow-up event 10/21!**

**Get inspired by engaging with other leaders, and access new resources!**

Couldn't join the in-person conference due to COVID concerns or other conflicts? Want to get re-inspired to grow your work with food justice? Join our virtual follow-up event "Food, Faith and Farms, Where Do We Go From Here?". This interactive Zoom on Thursday 10/21 will run 4-5:30 p.m. PST. Hear excerpts from our plenary presentations, and discuss in small 'breakout rooms' thoughts and plans on expanding your work on food access, food justice and stewardship in the time of COVID. Register for the virtual event [here!](#)

Hand-outs and other presentational materials are available from some of the speakers and sessions addressing topics including: food recovery in Contra Costa County; Halal/Kosher meat purchasing related to 'whole animal sales and custom processing; commercial kitchen rental

agreements; the Green Gulch farm fellowship for youth; and 6-page infographic from Duke University titled the "Impact of COVID-19 On Hunger Relief Organizations". In addition, Interfaith Food has two resources to facilitate project planning and implementation of projects:

- a. Community Supported Agriculture: A Toolkit for Faith Groups (53 page guide)
- b. A Handbook on Community Kitchens for Faith Groups (22 page guide on how to make a congregation's kitchen a resource for local entrepreneurs, and earning revenue for your non-profit faith group. These materials are available on request.



Episcopal Bishop Rice talks with Father Daniel Green, Rector at St. John's in Petaluma and other participants.

Partners helping to promote and/or organize the conference include: University of California Cooperative Extension, Agrarian Trust, Marin Interfaith Council, Land for Good, Green the Church, Center for Earth Ethics, Plainsong Farm, The Conservation Fund, the Center for Food, Faith and Justice, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Islamic Center of North America. Special thanks to USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA AFRI/NIFA, Americorps, San Francisco Foundation, Marin Community Foundation, Sonoma Community Foundation, the Heck Foundation, and other conference sponsors for their financial support. For a full list of groups that made the conference possible [click here](#).

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## **Farmers: Operation Affected by the Pandemic?**

## **USDA Program Offers Cash Relief! Apply by October 12**

*We need your help spreading the word* about an important federal assistance program for farm operations affected by the pandemic. The Biden/Harris administration specifically extended the

deadline to facilitate more participation from underserved farmers. Farmers must apply by October 12, 2021!

***Farmers and ranchers can receive direct government cash assistance for up to 80% of lost revenue from the 2019 and 2020 seasons through the USDA CFAP 2 Program (Corona Financial Assistance Program 2).*** Producers who need to submit a CFAP 2 application or modify an existing one can contact their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or call 877-508-8364 to receive one-on-one support. Answers to frequently asked questions, including eligibility requirements can be found at: <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/cfap2/faq>

***Interfaith Food will host a webinar on October 4th, 2021 from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. to facilitate participation in this important program.*** Speakers include USDA staff from the state-FSA office. The workshop will also benefit staff or volunteers from faith-based groups interested in conducting outreach to farmers in their communities. Pre-registration for this free webinar is strongly encouraged. To register please click [here](#).

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## **Senior Nutrition Funding Win!**

### **Farmworkers Safety Bill Support Needed Now!**

Interfaith Food is pleased to announce that after some 18 months of advocacy for the first time the State of California will augment federal funds for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The program covers the costs of farmers market produce for low-income seniors, Interfaith Food has promoted SFMNP with emphasis on Sonoma, Marin and Alameda counties. We lead a coalition of over 50 faith-based and secular groups to advocate for increased funding, and the Governor and Legislature have committed to fund an increase in the number of seniors served by the program by 60% in 2022!

Join Interfaith Food THIS WEEK in calling on Governor Newsom to sign SB 606 protecting farmworkers and food chain workers from unsafe work conditions related to employer COVID policies and other practices. A sample letter is attached [here](#), letters should be emailed to Governor Newsom by Friday 9/27/2021 at: [leg.unit@gov.ca.gov](mailto:leg.unit@gov.ca.gov) and also please cc [jassy@ufcwstatescouncil.org](mailto:jassy@ufcwstatescouncil.org) and [steve@interfaithfood.org](mailto:steve@interfaithfood.org) who can answer questions or give assistance with this timely advocacy ask.

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**Food Week of Action Is Coming in October!**



## Plan Your Congregation's Activities Now!

Plan now for your congregation's activities for the annual Food Week of Action, October 10th-17th, organized by the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Interfaith Food is again proud to co-sponsor this opportunity for our congregational partners to help focus our work, intentions and prayers. Congregations in our network have done a variety of events from organizing a film and forum; inviting a guest speaker to deliver a sermon or simply putting up a poster. Many easy to adapt resources are available through this link, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger/food-week-action-and-world-food-day/>

To get a taste: download the The Ten Commandments of Food ([pdf](#)) excerpted below, a resource for Food Week that PHP helped the WCC's Food for Life Campaign develop. Accompanying the Ten Commandments is [this educational tool for congregations](#). It has theological reflections and steps for faithful action on each of the 10 commandments of food, four of which are pictured here:



If your congregation is planning action for Food Week of Action or Hunger Action Month, we would love to promote your event to our network. Email [info@interfaithfood.org](mailto:info@interfaithfood.org) or call the office at 707-634-4672 to connect with a team member.

## Join the Interfaith Food Team

Interfaith Food is hiring for two professional positions based in Sonoma County: an Outreach and Policy Associate; and a Communications and Reporting Associate. *In addition, we are recruiting two Americorps\*VISTA positions to start as early as November 2021! Note, our VISTA's are typically recent college graduates. Please help spread the word about these positions. Details are available at: <https://interfaithfood.org/were-hiring/>* Interested individuals should contact Steve@interfaithfood.org.

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## Upcoming Events to Advance Your Faith-Groups Work

**Green the Church Summit (Virtual) October 10-13, 2021** Are you passionate about environmental justice, renewable energy, and food sovereignty? Green the Church is hosting their annual summit, with this year's theme: "Green Lessons from Black Wall Street: Infrastructure, Agriculture, Energy and Equity." With over 40 speakers and presenters for this three day event, Green the Church is encouraging congregations to reflect on the intersections of climate change and sustainability with their faith. To learn more about this virtual event and register, [click here!](#)

**San Francisco Foundation FAITHS** program offers grants to assist congregations advancing interfaith and race relations, increase civic and cultural participation, support leadership, and provide community service to low-income residents and communities of color. Awards are \$6,000 to \$8,000 per year for up to two years. Faith based organizations in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties can apply. Applications are due 10/11/21. For more information [click here](#), or call Steve Schwartz at Interfaith Food for additional background.

**Marin County Volunteers Needed:** As part of a response to COVID, the **Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM)** launched a farmer's market produce box reaching families and seniors who are experiencing food insecurity in Marin. From July to December 2021, in collaboration with community partners, AIM will distribute over 1,650 Bounty Boxes. The group seeks ongoing volunteers to help pack boxes on Thursdays at the San Rafael Civic Center Farmer's Market, with several options for volunteer shifts/time-slots. To find out more visit [www.bounty-box.org](http://www.bounty-box.org), or to sign up for volunteer shifts go to <https://www.agriculturalinstitute.org/volunteer>. For questions contact volunteer@agriculturalinstitute.org.

**How can your faith group serve your community during a disaster?** Free-webinar hosted by San Francisco Interfaith Council September 27th. For more information and link to register click [here](#).

**Interested in selling certified organic produce?** There will be a free webinar on September 27th, co-hosted by the UC and CCOF for urban and small farmers. For info and to register, [click here](#).

**September is Hunger Action Month!** [Click here](#) to take the pledge to end hunger wherever you are located, also you'll find a toolkit for community action plans, food resources, and more from Feeding America!

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### Save the Date:

**September 27** SF Interfaith Council, How can your faith group serve your community during a disaster? Free webinar for congregations in the Bay Area. [Register here](#).

**September 27** UCCE & CCOF, Want to sell certified organic produce? Free webinar for small and urban farmers. [Register here](#).

**October 4** Interfaith Food, CFAP2 Webinar for farmers affected by the pandemic looking for USDA assistance. Register [here](#).

**October 10-13** Green the Church, 2021 Virtual Summit, "Green Lessons from Black Wall Street: Infrastructure, Agriculture, Energy and Equity." [Register here](#).

**October 21** Interfaith Food, 8th Annual Conference 2021 Recap and Follow-up, Where Do We Go From Here? Register [here](#).



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