



Interfaith Sustainable
Food Collaborative

Fall Newsletter

2024

Growing Connections Between Faith-based and Secular Emergency Response Groups

To Support Food Access During Fires and Flood Disasters

This Spring, Interfaith Food began an initiative to build the capacity of faith-based organizations to support food access during fires, floods and other disasters. This included focusing our May conference around the theme. Our goal is to fill the information gap between disaster response organizations and faith organizations, to support efficient communication during crucial times immediately following a disaster. In addition we are looking for partners that need financial resources to grow their infrastructure to assist during disasters. This may include improving a congregation's kitchen, cold storage capacity and even back up power generation.

Currently Interfaith Food is conducting a survey of faith-based organizations to identify specific resources, assets, and contact individuals in geographically diverse communities. food access during disasters. **We need your help, getting the survey to the appropriate person at your congregation whether it is a food ministry/committee member, administrator or clergy! Please use the link below, and please share with other faith organizations in your network!**



The Food Pantry at Windsor Presbyterian Church, available during disasters and year-round.

Click Here to Take the Survey

For more information on the project and survey, visit us at www.interfaithfood.org. This work is funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant award 2024-67019-42135.

This Summer, our staff attended several events presented by **Sonoma County FBO**, an endeavor designed to support faith-based organizations in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The group is led by Adam Peacocke, who has worked closely with the County of Sonoma Department of Emergency Management and Sonoma County COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) to enhance faith community engagement. They are doing a survey, different from the one described above, with a broad scope that goes beyond food access response, and request Sonoma County congregations provide input. Click this [RESOURCE MAP SURVEY](#) to participate!

FaithLands National Conference in Ohio Serves to Grow Food and Community on Religious Properties

The Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative organized the **FaithLands National Conference** in Delaware, Ohio on August 6-8th at the Seminary Hill Farm on the Methodist Theological School in Ohio campus.

Over 70 people registered/attended in total from throughout the U.S. and Canada. Attendees consisted of clergy, non-profit organizers, government staff, community gardeners and farmers as well as university researchers.

The conference agenda featured four tours as well as 12 different presentations/panels. The tours of local faith and agriculture based sites included: Urban Farm Church and South Side Family Farm in Columbus; Seminary Hill Farm in Delaware; and the Procter Center in London. Each of these sites showcased successful models of agricultural use of faith community owned lands. Attendees learned about the genesis of the farms, the impact they have on their local communities, and practical lessons about how to maintain them.

Attendees had the opportunity to connect and share their own expertise during various interactive discussions and panels. The presentations covered topics such as inventorying faith-owned land for agricultural use; farming and faith fellowships for young adults; negotiating leases for beginning and immigrant farmers; and much more. Attendees heard from representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture; Colorado Land Link; Enterprise Community Partners; National Young Farmers Coalition; Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association; Fitzgerald Institute of the University of Notre Dame; and various other organizations.



Attendees of the FaithLands National Conference at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, August 2024

The conference provided not only resources for attendees to leave with, but an opportunity to gather with others just as passionate about FaithLands. In breakout sessions to discuss future FaithLands work, it was evident that everyone involved was truly driven and dedicated to growing the community. Multiple attendees noted, in a post conference evaluation, their connections made and meeting people they could learn from and even collaborate with. "The conference was invigorating, showing just how much people care and are willing to work for making use

of faith-owned lands in ways that uplift their community and food systems,” said presenter and first time participant Sousiva Ing of Interfaith Food.

On the second night of the conference, a special evening program showcased presentations from Rev. Nurya Love Parish, the Canon for the Northern Collaborative and Coach for Beloved Community & Creation Care, of the Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan; Kenneth Walker, Associate Chief for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, from Washington, D.C.; and Carlton Howard, Outreach Coordinator for the State of Ohio, also with NRCS. A delicious dinner was served by the MTSO team with all produce grown on site at Seminary Hill Farm and meat coming directly from local providers.

This conference was made possible with funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This conference was sponsored by Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Ohio Ecological Farm & Food Association, Presbyterian Hunger Program, Rural Advancement Foundation International, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Letter from the Executive Director

Friends,

We are coming out of a busy, productive time following our 10th Annual Food, Faith and Farms Conference in Petaluma, and the FaithLands National Conference we organized in Ohio. The FaithLands conference and the preparation going into it inspired me personally regarding the importance of this work, and the scope of the partnerships already going strong between private farmers and religious institutions. We toured a farm leasing over 1,000 acres to a local farm family, and another engaging youth and feeding families on a site with less than 1,000 sq. feet in production!

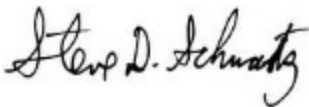
We are proud to be part of the state-wide coalition that fought to get \$23 million in state funding for nutrition incentives reinstated in the State Budget late this Summer. The California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) victory means that the funding for the Senior Bonus Bucks Program developed by Interfaith Food and the Market Match Program serving low-income farmers market shoppers across the state will be able to continue. I'm especially happy that we were able to get a bus, and bring seniors who had benefited from Bonus Bucks to the State Capitol for a lobby day to build momentum for the campaign.

This week I will travel to North Carolina for the Come to the Table Conference, a gathering of faith leaders that inspired our early work. I'll be part of a panel talking about land access. I will also tell the very personal story of the connections between my family's farm in Czechoslovakia and the small farm I have run for more than 20 years as part of my connection to my Jewish life, and to the happy times my father and his family had in Europe *before* the Nazis sent them to Auschwitz.

Coming out of our Strategic Planning process and retreat earlier in the year I'm excited to have new Advisory Committee members Brad Biggerstaff and Father Lawrence Margotich. Also welcome back to Rabbi Elana Rosen-Brown following her return from maternity leave with newborn son Malachi.

I'm appreciating the focus and hard work of our new staff members Sousiva Ing and Shelly Smith. You can learn more about them on our web-site. Interfaith Food is hiring two staff positions: Outreach and Advocacy Program Associate with full benefits; and a Policy Intern. Positions are based in Sebastopol and are open until filled. Interested in joining our team, or know someone who may be. Learn more [here](#).

Thank you for all you do!



Donate to Interfaith Food



Steve Schwartz serves as Master of Ceremonies at Lobby Day for Nutrition Incentives, at Capitol in Sacramento.

Advocacy Opportunities

This election season Interfaith Food is tracking several important initiatives that religious communities can support to help build a more just and sustainable food system! For ideas or questions about how your congregation can engage by hosting a forum, circulating information or endorsements contact our office, follow links below.

California Proposition 4

California Proposition 4 authorizes bonds for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, and protecting communities and natural lands from climate risks. This \$10 billion climate resilience bond could put in motion a wide range of investments that would make rural and agricultural communities safer and more resilient to wildfires, floods, droughts, and extreme heat. To join California Council of Churches IMPACT, California Interfaith Power & Light, and Interfaith Food in endorsing Proposition 4: <https://yesonprop4ca.com/endorse/>

No on Sonoma County Measure J

Interfaith Food has joined a broad coalition including organic and sustainable agriculture groups, small farms, and environmental organizations united in *opposition* to Measure J, which if passed threatens the local economy, food system and family farmers.

Measure J is a Sonoma County ballot measure that would prohibit Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). If passed, Measure J would phase out existing and prohibit future CAFOs in all zoning districts in the unincorporated areas of the County outside of the coastal zone. It defines CAFOs in accordance with federal regulations, categorizing CAFOs dependent on the number and type of confined animals as well as other factors such as waste disposal systems. The opposition considers Measure J to be poorly written, resulting in 'overreaching'.

Measure J would reduce the number of dairy and poultry livestock operations in the County and significantly impact local farms/businesses. Larger family farms would be banned, and economic fallout is likely to be significant for smaller farms and ranches, agriculture feed and equipment companies, and local food.

To get involved and endorse '**No on Measure J**', refer to the following: <https://www.noonmeasurej.com/getinvolved>

For more information from sustainable agriculture groups united in opposition go to:

<https://www.sonomafoodnoonj.org/>

Interested in doing canvassing in opposition of Measure J? Sonoma County Conservation Action has both volunteer and paid canvassing (door-to-door voter contact) opportunities. Contact Craig Litwin at 707 849-1622 or cvlitwin@gmail.com for details or to sign-up.

For more information and discussion on Measure J and additional ballot items, Interfaith Food invites you to the **Voters' Issue Forum – Ballot Measures from a Faith Perspective: Environmental Impacts of Sonoma County Measure J and California Proposition 4** at the Church of the Incarnation in Santa Rosa, CA.

Episcopal Deacon Phina Borgeson, an Interfaith Food Advisory Board member presenting at the forum, shares: "Our vision is for a respectful conversation where people can listen to one another and learn about a range of

concerns related to these measures.” Interfaith Food Executive. Director Steve Schwartz will also contribute.

Ballot Measures from a Faith Perspective: Environmental Impacts of Sonoma County Measure J and California Proposition 4

Sunday, October 6 @ 3:30 p.m. Church of the Incarnation, Short Hall – 550 Mendocino Ave, Santa Rosa

The Church of the Incarnation Green Team, with the help and support of the Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative, invites you to explore these two ballot items.

- How would Measure J affect animal agriculture in Sonoma County?
- What are some ways that CA Proposition 4 - Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act) may impact the climate crisis?

Local seasonal refreshments will be provided. **Questions? Email greenteam@incarnationsantarosa.org**

Petaluma Congregations Wanted for Help with Urban Growth Boundary Campaign

Petaluma's current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) was approved in 2010 and expires in 2025. An Urban Growth Boundary is a boundary around a city or town set by the votes to define the limits of urban development. The UGB separates urban areas from the surrounding agricultural lands by putting a limit on how far out the city can expand. It is an environmental measure intended to preserve open space, agricultural uses, and wildlife habitat. It is also needed to encourage climate-friendly, city-centered growth to enhance climate resilience by limiting sprawl and making it easier to walk and bike to school, jobs, and shops. Learn more: <https://www.renewpetalumaugb.org/>

Your Petaluma Congregation Can Help Promote Yes on Y in these ways:

- **Put Lawn Signs on high-visibility streets!** There are a very limited number of signs. This measure has no opposition, but it is imperative that voters equate voting Yes on Y with renewing the UGB. For lawn signs or fact sheet postcards, contact campaign organizers with a location and they will deliver. Contact Ann Hamilton ahamilton@greenbelt.org or (510)381-3730.
- **Endorse Yes on Y and tell your friends!**
 - Yes on Y – Renew UGB website: www.renewpetalumaugb.org
 - Endorse Yes on Y: <https://www.renewpetalumaugb.org/endorsements>

Food Week of Action 2024

Plan now for your congregation's activities for the annual Food Week of Action, October 13th-20th, 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. In

previous years congregations in our network have done a variety of events from organizing a film and educational advocacy forum; inviting a guest speaker to deliver a sermon or simply putting up a poster to raise awareness about food justice.

Everyone is the key word for the 2024 Food Week! Let us - *everyone* - join forces in our communities and across the land to protect land, foodways, and people in the food system.

We salute the hard work of farmworkers, family farmers, fishers and all those producing agroecologically in harmony with nature. This year we also thank those in cities, rural counties and regions who are building more resilient and equitable local food economies that protect and cool the planet. And we bow in gratitude to all those laboring in the food chain, in particular those who are oppressed by unjust immigration policies and inhumane conditions.

This year's Food Week will highlight groups and initiatives that are building equitable and sustainable food systems, while also tackling the economic and racial drivers of hunger, poverty, and oppression. Visit the [Food Week webpage](#) to get involved, or call Interfaith Food staff for support in planning an event, activity, or host to a speaker.

We Can Help You Brainstorm and Prepare a Project For Your Religious Community!

Food Week of Action is a great time to start a food justice project for your congregation or engage with advocacy work. Plan your garden, get your green team together, or highlight your food pantry! You can explore ideas on our Food and Faith Project Menu at [this link](#). Would you like help planning a program or activity for Food Week of Action or Hunger Action Month? We are here to help. If you do an independent project or action please let us know about it, we want to keep track of interesting activities congregations are doing, and we would love to promote your event to our network. Email info@interfaithfood.org or call the office at 707-634-4672 to connect with a team member.



Food Week of Action
October 13-20, 2024



One option for Food Week of Action is to work with Interfaith Food to organize a forum on the federal Farm Bill.

Once passed, the Farm Bill will direct more than \$1.3 Trillion dollars over the next decade. Did you know that the 2018 Farm Bill is slated to expire in less than a week on 10/1/24, and that technically, it already expired once before on 10/1/23? Congress has been unable to advance a fair and equitable 2024 Farm Bill, putting at risk the vital programs and resources on which our nation's farmers rely.

Every successful farm bill has been built on the foundation of bipartisanship and the active engagement of many stakeholder

communities, and the next farm bill will be no different. The 118th Congress could still complete a new farm bill this year during the lame duck session – but expediency must not come at the expense of policies that address hunger, public health, farmers, workers, and the environment. Interfaith Food has joined a broad coalition of organizations sharing this message with Congress. See the letter we joined that went to Congress September 13th [here](#).

Upcoming Events:

- **10/06 Voters' Issues Forum** by Church of the Incarnation @ 3PM, 550 Mendocino Ave, Santa Rosa, CA
- **10/06-10/07 National Summit 2024** by Green the Church in Shreveport, LA
- **12/12-12/15 Cultivating Culture: A Gathering of Jewish Farmers** by Jewish Farmer Network in Falls Village, CT

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