Silicon Valley Interreligious Council
creating a just and compassionate society

Proposal for the
Silicon Valley Interreligious Council

MISSION

Silicon Valley Interreligious Council (SiVIC) builds interreligious harmony and understanding so as to be a moral voice for Silicon Valley.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of SiVIC are to:

- Build relationships among religious communities
- Function as a Partner City of the Parliament of the World's Religions
- Provide leadership and a voice for the interreligious community
- Encourage shared action and service
- Educate ourselves and our community about our religious diversity
- Provide a point of communication to and among religious groups
- Interface with interreligious organizations and other guiding institutions
- Be a resource for information and referral
- Document the interreligious life of Silicon Valley

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The goal of the organizational structure is to maximize "ownership" and participation and to minimize the number of people actually involved in final decision-making.

In the long-term we should be ready to hire staff, at least an Executive Director (E.D.) with administrative support.

Membership:

Members shall be the Board of Directors

Levels of Affiliation:

1. **Congregational Affiliate:** agrees with goals and values of SiVIC and makes a financial contribution, then may appoint 2 voting delegates to Annual Assembly.
2. **Community Affiliate**: a non-profit with a community/religious/educational mission, affirms goals and makes a financial contribution, and may appoint 1 delegate to the Annual Assembly.
3. **Individual Affiliate:** agrees with goals and makes a contribution, has voice, but no vote at Annual Assembly

Organization:

Annual Assembly: held in January or February. Those with voting privileges are:

- Elected Congregational affiliates
- Elected Community Affiliates
- Members of the Board of Directors who are not otherwise affiliates

  The assembly determines the basic directions of the organization. Assembly voters elect the Board of Directors.

Board of Directors:

The basic management group of the organization shall be a Board of Directors (BoD) of a minimum of 20 members. The BoD has the right to appoint an additional 5 members to itself in order to provide a balance between religious tradition, ethnicity, geographic area, culture, etc.

- Determines policy of the organization
- Has fiduciary responsibility for funding and control of property, accounts,
- personnel (subject to instruction by the Annual Assembly)
- Elected for 3 year terms. One third changes each year. May be re-
- elected for second term.
- No member may be on the board more than 6 years
- Meets at least 6 times per year
- Creates programs and committees
- Includes the chair, 3 vice-chairs, secretary and treasurer

Executive Committee:

- Consists of the BoD chair, 3 vice-chairs, secretary, treasurer and executive staff
- Has authority to act on ad interim basis between meetings of the Board of Directors

PROGRAMS

- Clergy Network (every other month)
- Interfaith Dialogue (with speaker/content, opposite months of clergy network)
- Annual interfaith gathering
- SiVIC website with calendar, links to other interfaith orgs, calls to action
- SiVIC Facebook fan page, Twitter page
- SiVIC annual assembly and voting
- Affiliates only online group where all information is archived and with forum capability

- Participation in Santa Clara U. and San Jose State U. non-profit organization fairs (where available)

PROPOSED CODE OF CONDUCT

In order for SiVIC to build authentic community among our many diverse traditions we all ascribe to a shared understanding of what it means to build relationships and community. Below is a "code of conduct" for members of SiVIC. These are based on "The Dialogue Decalog" of Leonard Swidler[1], Kay Lindahl's "Guidelines" in *The Art of Dialogue and Centering Prayer*[2] and David Bohm's *On Dialgoue.*[3]

Eight guidelines for building inter-religious community:

1. I am ready to change and grow in my interactions with others.
2. I will endeavor to speak and listen without judgment, assuming integrity in the other person's self-understanding. I will suspend my prior assumptions and prejudices.
3. I assume that we are all equal partners, both individually and institutionally.
4. I will observe trust and confidentiality.
5. I will endeavor to be as honest and open as possible. I will feel free to define myself, and will avoid comparing my ideal with another's practice.
6. I will work to avoid making generalizations about my own and others' traditions, and will value "I" statements.
7. I will delight in the difference of other people's understandings and experiences.
8. I will work collaboratively with others to build authentic inter-religious community.

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[1] *The Dialogue Decalog: Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue,* revised by Ingrid Shafer, 1997 http://www.usao.edu/%7Efacshaferi/DIALOG00.HTML

[2] *The Art of Dialogue and Centering Prayer,* by Kay Lindahl, Chapter 6 of <u>The Diversity of Centering Prayer,</u> Gustave Reiner (ed.) Continuum Publishing, New York, 1999

[3] *On Dialogue,* by David Bohm,