

Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Prayer Breakfast
Thursday, February 4, 2016
Hellenic Cultural Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos, Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Chair and Assistant Priest at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church welcomed about 60 members of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable to the Hellenic Cultural Center on Thursday, February 4, 2016 for breakfast. The Roundtable holds their annual Interfaith Prayer Breakfast to commence Interfaith Month in Salt Lake City and to join with other faiths and organizations around the world who are also participating in the U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week activities from February 1 – 7.



Imam Muhammad Mehtar

Imam Muhammed Mehtar of the Khadeeja Mosque and Islamic Center was invited to give the invocation. Imam Mehtar said that when we pray we should always give thanks to God first before we ask for anything ourselves. He went on to thank God for all that we have received and then ask God to be with those who are less fortunate than us and who are in need of daily necessities.

Reports were given by Janet Healy and Alan Bachman about the upcoming Interfaith Month events and recognition was given to those who had worked on the organizing committees.



Jennifer Seelig

Father Elias welcomed our guest speaker, Jennifer Seelig, the Community Relations Director for new Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski. Seelig supported our mission saying, "Seek out other perspectives that you do not hold. Increase your capacity to include others. We need all perspectives," Seelig said.

Seelig talked about her Methodist upbringing and her recent embrace of some Buddhist tenants. "We are complex and holistic beings. We are not easily defined. We must guard against silos, staying within our own world. We do important work to bridge these silos," Seelig said. "This goes beyond tolerance. We are not here to put up with each other, we are here to thrive together," she said. Seelig ended with encouraging words, "You matter very much."

Father Elias invited Josie Stone, Vice-chair of the Interfaith Roundtable to present the Interfaith Roundtable's annual awards. The Community award was awarded to J.B. Singh and the Sikh Community, for his endeavors in having the Sikh Community provide the Langar everyday at the Parliament of the World's Religion held in Salt Lake City in October, unfortunately he was not able to be present. The Individual award was given to Brian Farr for his work in advertising the Roundtable at the Parliament. The "We Can't Do with You" award was presented to Father Elias for being a Father to us all. A special award was presented to Wendy Stovall for all her work for the Roundtable. Flowers were presented to Andalin Bachman in appreciation for all her work

on the Roundtable's website, and to Susan Soleil in recognition of her work on behalf of the Roundtable for the Parliament of the World's Religions.



Brian Farr and Josie Stone, Vice-Chair



Fr. Elias Koucos, Chair and Wendy Stovall



Andalin Bachman and Josie Stone



Susan Soleil and Josie Stone



Audience representing all faiths

Father Elias invited everyone to write a message of peace and place them in a bowl. Members were invited to come up and offer a prayer. Rev. Susan Roberts, an Episcopalian and Alan Bachman, a Jew, offered prayers over the peace messages.



Writing out a message of peace



Christian and a Jew praying over the messages of Peace

Father Elias concluded the breakfast by thanking the caterers for the delicious breakfast and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for sponsoring the event which he closed with a benediction.