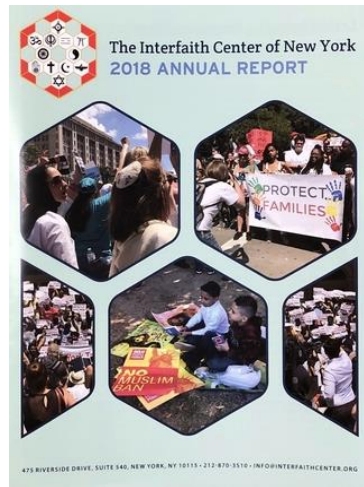




December 2018 Interfaith Center of New York Newsletter

Message from the ICNY Executive Director



Dear Friends,

The last few weeks have seen positive reminders of what faith leaders can do for their communities when they work together. [Click here](#) to view pictures of our **Annual Interfaith Community Thanksgiving** held at St. Paul's Chapel. See below for a [reflection](#) on "[NYC Faith Leaders Administer Aid \(And Wedding Vows\) To Sanctuary Caravan In Tijuana.](#)" And read up on a year's worth of accomplishments by diverse religious leaders making a difference for all New Yorkers in the [2018 Interfaith Center of New York Annual Report](#).

In December, ICNY will celebrate the graduation of our inaugural class of [Interfaith Leadership Academy Fellows](#), who for the last eighteen months have attended civic leadership workshops and launched their own community projects. Some of the fellows and their civic engagement projects—which you can [read about in more detail here](#)--are listed below:

- **Tsering Lama:** Know Your Rights Training for Nepali and Tibetan Immigrant Faith Leaders
- **Naureen Akhter:** 2018 Queens Democratic Primary: Debate Night
- **Ramatu Ahmed:** Introduction to Mental Health First Aid for African Immigrant Youth
- **Ahmet Atlig:** Community Chaplaincy for Recent Turkish Immigrants
- **Warren Abney:** Healthy Eating and Cooking in Harlem

- **Dowoti Desir:** Out of the Basement: Dialogues Towards Building a Formal House of Worship for African Diaspora Faith Traditions
- **Marie Lily Cerat:** Creating Language Access for Haitian Survivors of Domestic Violence
- **Giovanna Maselli and Kyndra Frazier:** Breaking Bread: Interfaith Dialogues and Mindful Practices

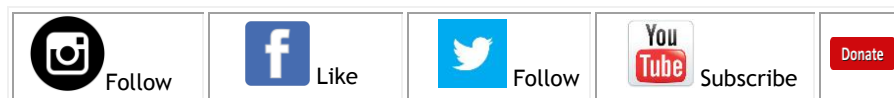
Finally, look for information about ICNY's 36th Rabbi Marshall Meyer Retreat "Welcoming the Stranger: Taking Action for Immigrant Rights" upcoming in January. We wish you a peaceful holiday season and are grateful for your support.


Best wishes,



The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer
Executive Director
The Interfaith Center of New York

P.S. Take a look at the new "[Justice For All: Courts and the Community](#)" initiative, opening December 10th.



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Rituals At The Border

By Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer



In preparation for the [Sanctuary Caravan](#), a group of NYC religious leaders visited San Diego recently to meet with immigrants rights organization on both sides of the border. We visited the [San Diego ACLU](#) and churches offering emergency shelter to immigrant families. Across in Tijuana we met with pro bono immigration lawyers and volunteers at [Al Otro Lado](#) an NGO for children that helps prepare asylum paperwork for immigrants seeking entry to the US.

In addition to the meetings, we were asked to assist at the weddings of seven couples, most of whom had travelled north with children and were in common law marriages. Marriage certificates, it turned out, could be helpful, crossing the border—especially where children were involved and a family needed to stick together.

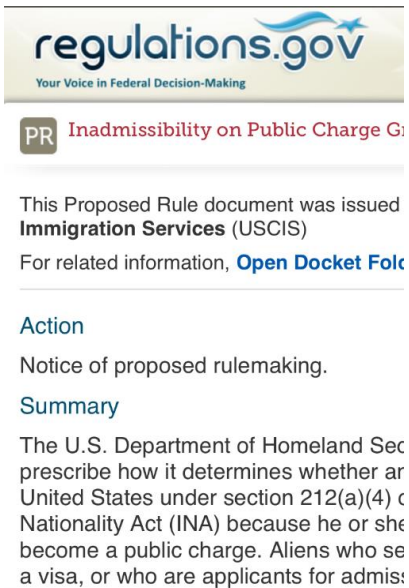
After some preparations, [New Sanctuary Coalition](#) Board Member, Minister Kaji Dousa wrote out the wedding certificates; [Al Otro Lado](#) volunteers supplied cake and amplified iPhone wedding music; and Padre Fabian Arias, formerly from St Peter's Lutheran, led the seven couples' recitation of the marriage vows in Spanish as they held hands and faced one another, some holding back tears.

"En la riqueza, en la pobreza (for richer, for poorer)... en la enfermedad y en la salud (in sickness and in health)...hasta que la muerte nos separe (until death do us part)." In the shadow of a looming border wall covered with miles of concertina wire, these vows held new resonance.

For a moment, the threat of rain and disease and seemingly insurmountable obstacles ahead slipped into the distance. "Thank you" said one of the volunteers after during the celebration that followed, "I haven't felt this much joy since coming here."

[Click here for photos](#)

Weigh-in against "Public Charge" regulations before 12/10



The screenshot shows the regulations.gov logo at the top with the tagline "Your Voice in Federal Decision-Making". Below the logo is a red box with "PR" and the title "Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds". The text below states: "This Proposed Rule document was issued by Immigration Services (USCIS). For related information, Open Docket Folio". Under the heading "Action", it says "Notice of proposed rulemaking." Under "Summary", it begins: "The U.S. Department of Homeland Security prescribes how it determines whether an alien is inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) because he or she is likely to become a public charge. Aliens who seek a visa, or who are applicants for admission..."

What is "public charge and why does it matter? ([More from National Immigration Center](#))

When someone applies for a visa to enter the U.S. or for lawful permanent resident status, a U.S. government official looks at the person's life circumstances to see if the person is likely to depend on the government for support in the future. If they are deemed likely to become a "public charge" in the future, their application can be denied. The government is proposing to change the public charge policy dramatically, to make it more difficult for low- and moderate-income families to come to and stay in the U.S. Before these proposed rules can be finalized, the government is required by law to give the public an opportunity to comment on its proposed regulations and must respond to those comments before finalizing the rules.

To submit your comment to regulations.gov [here](#) before December 10, 2018

The Trump administration is proposing to change the federal government's longstanding policy on "public charge" by broadly expanding the forms of public assistance counted when making a public charge determination. This would force immigrant families to make an impossible choice between meeting basic needs and keeping their families together in this country. Because of its broad scope, the new "public charge," the Center for American Progress (CAP) is reporting that the newly proposed regulation would affect roughly 900,000 immigrants and 176 million non-immigrants every year

To submit your comment to regulations.gov [here](#) before December 10, 2018

ICNY Co-Sponsored & Featured Events

**Sweeping Global Documentary *Sacred*
will stream on PBS**



Date: Monday, December 10

Time: 10:00 pm

Location: PBS (check local listings)

At a time when religious hatred dominates the world's headlines, the feature-length documentary *Sacred* explores faith as a primary human experience, revealing how people across the world turn to ritual and prayer to navigate the milestones and crises of private life. Premiering nationwide Monday, December 10 at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings), *Sacred* embarks on a global journey of spirituality, tracing religious ritual at birth, adolescence, marriage, death and other key moments of human life.

The film will be available to stream the following day at pbs.org/sacred and on PBS apps. Follow on social media: [facebook.com/sacredthemovie](https://www.facebook.com/sacredthemovie), @SacredTheMovie, #SacredFilmPBS.

[Click here for a printable copy of the Press Release](#)

SATSANGH:

Join us for an Interfaith Holiday Celebration!



Date: Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Location: First Unitarian Congregational Society, [119-121 Pierrepont St. Brooklyn, NY 11201](#)

Sadhana Satsangs are Hindu worship gatherings which are egalitarian and earth-honoring. We will have kirtan and bhajans (religious songs), prayer and puja (worship), meditation, and a discussion. We will also serve light prasada (food which has been blessed by the divine).

Our prayers, meditations, bhajans and discourses may be led by individuals of any race, caste, gender, sexual orientation, and age. Each Satsangh focuses on themes related to our mission.

Sadhana's December Satsangh is on Dec 11th, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm, as always at the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Brooklyn Heights, a beautiful community that has embraced Sadhana.

This Satsangh is a chance for us to come together and reflect on what these holy days and the holiday season mean to all of us, and to pray for peace in 2019.

[Click here for the Facebook Event](#)

[Click here for a printable version of the flyer](#)

Micah Institute:

Holiday and End-of-Year Calendar Luncheon



Date: Thursday, December 13, 2018

Time: 12:00 pm

Location: Riverside Church, [490 Riverside Drive, Room 10T, New York, NY 10027](#)

Micah wants to invite NYC's lay and ordained faith leaders to its December 13th luncheon at 12:00 noon at Riverside Church in Manhattan to acknowledge both the collective advocacy work of the interfaith community and the various religious holidays in December. We have worked on issues of Housing, Immigration, Economic Justice, Education and Policing Reform and we continue to make an important difference. So, let's come together in friendship for fun and light fare.

If you can join us, and we sincerely hope that you can, please email a confirmation to Joel Gibson at joelagibson@gmail.com.

Also, if you have a fun and flavorful dish or bite that you would like to share with others, please feel free to bring it along.

"Mindful Therapy for Anxious Times"

with author Mark Epstein, MD



Date: Saturday, January 12, 2019

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Location: First Presbyterian Church, [7 West 55th Street, New York, NY 10019](#)

Join psychiatrist Mark Epstein, MD, and staff from the [Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute](#) for an instructional and experiential day-long conference that will explore how mindful psychotherapy techniques can help manage and decrease anxiety. This conference is designed for mental health professionals and the general public who are interested in exploring the ways mindfulness can help us cope with precarious political and societal circumstances and events. How do we respond to these difficult times without becoming overwhelmed or cynical? How do we help others remain calm amid the turbulence when we share their worries?

Five Continuing Education Credits and Units (CECs, CEUs) are available to LMFTs, LMHCs, LCSWs, LMSWs, and CASACs.

PSI is happy to partner with the Interfaith Center of New York, Trinity Church Wall Street, and St. Bart's to bring you the 2019 conference.

[More info & tickets here](#)

Other Events & Resources

If you have an upcoming event that you think ICNY's audience might like to know about, please notify us by [filling out this event form](#). We have final discretion about what events are included in the Newsletter. Please note that a listing here does not imply ICNY endorsement.

Open Full-Time Positions at Turning Point for Women and Families



Turning Point for Women and Families is growing! We are seeking a passionate and committed individual to fill a full-time Outreach Coordinator position and a Domestic Violence Counselor/Advocate position.

[Click here to learn more about the Outreach Coordinator position.](#)

[Click here to learn more about the Domestic Violence Counselor/Advocate position.](#)

To apply, please send your resume with a cover letter, including names/email and phone contacts of three work-related references, via email to: jobs@tpny.org.

**CONNECT Faith Training:
Responding to Domestic Violence in Faith Communities**



Date: Thursday, December 6 & Thursday, December 13

Time: Both Thursdays 9:30am-4:30pm

Location: CONNECT NYC, [127 West 127th St, Room 432 NY, NY 10027](#)

CONNECT Faith presents "Responding to Domestic Violence in Communities of Faith," a 2-day training for Religious Leaders, Spiritual Activists and all people of faith.

Responding to Domestic Violence in Communities of Faith will help participants:


- Gain a basic understanding of the complex dynamics of intimate partner abuse and effects on individuals, families and communities.
- Learn about intervention strategies: practices and resources needed to help keep victims/survivors safe, and abusers accountable.
- Explore approaches to the challenging pastoral, theological and spiritual issues that abuse and violence in the family raise.
- Develop strategies for how you and your community of faith can play a critical role in breaking the silence and preventing domestic violence.

All are welcome! Suggested donation: \$25.

[Click here](#) to register, and select the 2-Day Faith Training from the dropdown list of trainings.

[Click here](#) for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: If you encounter technical difficulties with our registration form, please email connectfaith@connectnyc.org.

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ADL Calendar of Observances

December 2018

December 1	WORLD AIDS DAY International day of action on HIV and AIDS.
December 2–24	ADVENT • Christian Advent is a season of spiritual preparation in observance of the birth of Jesus. In Western Christianity, it starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. In Eastern Christianity, the season is longer and begins in the middle of November.
December 3	INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES Raises awareness about persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
December 3–10	CHANUKAH • Jewish Eight-day "Festival of Lights", celebrating the rededication of the Temple to the service of God in 164 BCE. Commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek King, Antiochus, who sought to suppress freedom of worship.
December 8	BODHI DAY • Buddhist Also known as <i>Rohatsu</i> , it observes the spiritual awakening (bodhi) of founder Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, ca. 596 BCE. Celebrated on the eighth day either of December or the 12th month of the lunar calendar.
December 10	HUMAN RIGHTS DAY On this day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
December 12	OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE • Christian Celebrates the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (by her title, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico and the Americas) before Juan Diego, an indigenous convert to Roman Catholicism, on the Mexican hill of Tepeyac in 1531.
December 15	BILL OF RIGHTS DAY Commemorates the signing into law of the ten original amendments of the United States Constitution in 1791.
December 21	WINTER SOLSTICE In the northern hemisphere, the shortest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of winter.
December 25	CHRISTMAS • Western Christian Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
December 26–January 1, 2019	KWANZAA A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and its continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" means "first fruits (of the harvest)" in Swahili.
December 29	WOUNDED KNEE DAY On December 29, 1890 more than 200 Lakota Sioux were massacred by U.S. troops at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.

The complete ADL Calendar of Observances for 2018 is available [here](#).

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Ways to Support and Promote ICNY:

