



Interfaith Center of New York



2020 Annual Report

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The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY)

*works to overcome
prejudice, violence, and
misunderstanding by
activating the power of the
city's grassroots religious
and civic leaders and their
communities.*



Welcome to the 2020 Annual Report.

Since the **Interfaith Center of New York** first began working with grassroots faith leaders from diverse traditions 22 years ago, we believed that dialogue across religious differences could and should be a doorway into even more challenging conversations, namely conversations about racial difference.

Then 2020 came, and it tested that theory to its limits.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we were able to quickly focus our work where it was needed most this year. For example, starting in March, **ICNY reported on the rise in hate crimes and bias attacks against New York's Asian Communities** due to the pandemic, and began providing a weekly newsletter with tools to address this and other concerns facing New Yorkers throughout our time of crisis.

Then the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests shook the city and our country to its core, causing **ICNY** to reevaluate where our voice might be needed most. The answer was clear: **we worked to adopt more anti-racist practices internally while deepening our work with law enforcement and criminal justice reform externally.** Here are some highlights of our racial, criminal, and social justice impact this year:

- ▶ **We participated in weekly police-clergy conversations** that kept lines of communication open and sought to prevent violence in the demonstrations in June. We drew on our long-time work advocating for greater accountability and better diversity training at the NYPD starting with post-9/11's unwarranted mosque surveillance.
- ▶ **We catalyzed an ongoing dialogue between the NYPD's Chief of Community Affairs and the Youth Advisory Council of the CCRB** with the help of Rev. Frederick A. Davie, Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board (and new member of **ICNY's** Board).
- ▶ We joined Trinity Wall Street, Central Synagogue and others to protect the fifteen to twenty thousand New Yorkers—most of whom are people of color—caught in a cycle of incarceration and homelessness through the **#JustReentry campaign** that demands the city provide identification, humane housing options, and COVID-testing to those coming home from Riker's Island.

We are delighted to have a chance to revisit these and other recent **ICNY** highlights in the pages that follow, from our important work with **Census 2020** to the online presentation of the 2020 James Parks Morton Interfaith Award to both **Marian Wright Edelman** and **Anna Deavere Smith**.

None of this work or our growth in the area of race and religious difference would be possible without your support, and the staff and board of **ICNY** join me in wholeheartedly thanking you for your faith in us, and in our mission.

With gratitude,

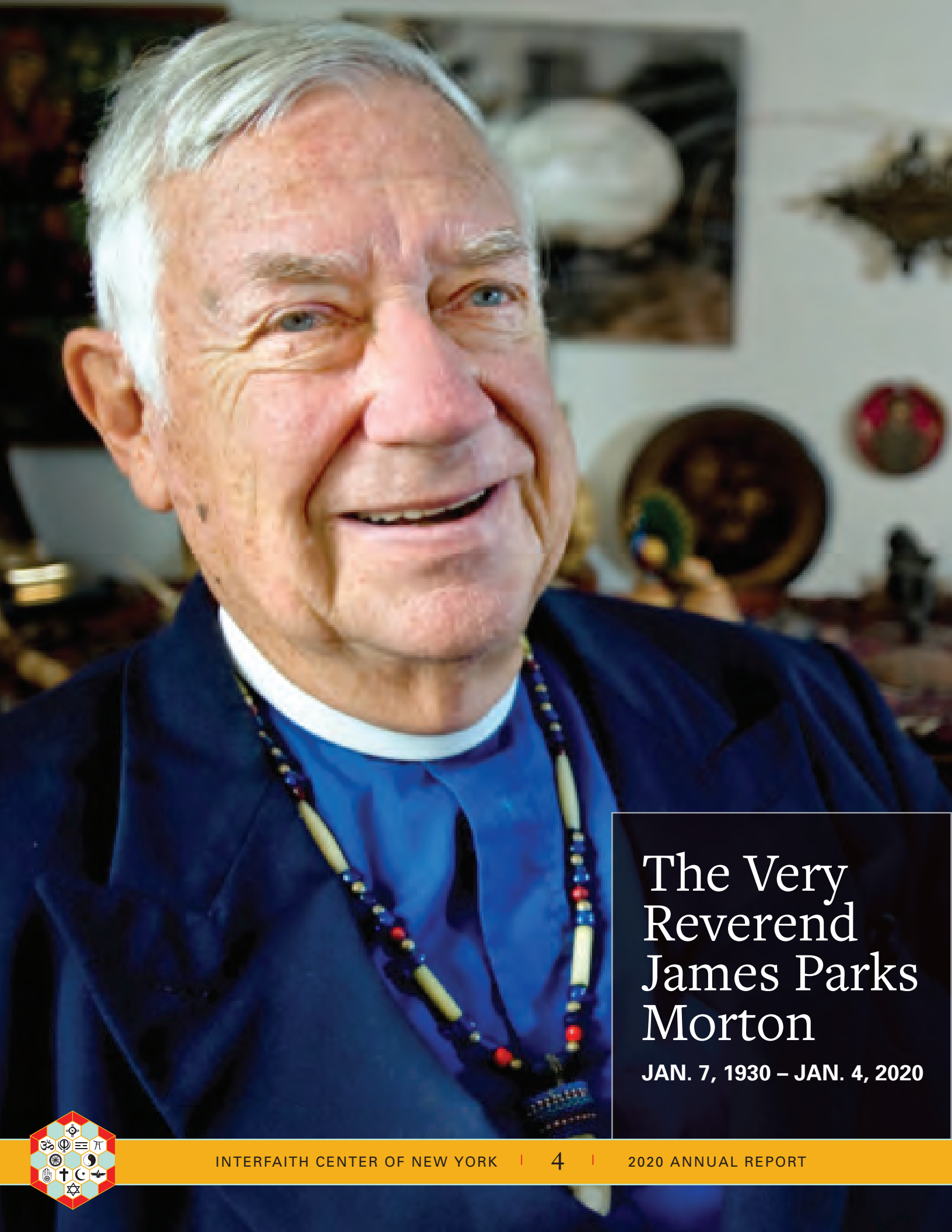


The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer



The Rev. Dr.
Chloe Breyer





The Very
Reverend
James Parks
Morton

JAN. 7, 1930 – JAN. 4, 2020



IN MEMORIAM

The Very Rev. James Parks Morton

The Interfaith Center of New York mourns the death of our founder and friend, The Very Rev. James Parks Morton.

A pioneer in interfaith work, peace-building, and environmental stewardship, Dean Morton created an organization for hundreds of grassroots faith leaders from African Diaspora, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Humanist, Muslim, Native American, Shinto, and Sikh communities in New York City.

After September 11, 2001, Dean Morton helped focus ICNY's work increasingly on providing assistance to immigrant and disenfranchised religious communities while also bridging the divide between the city's religious leadership and its secular civic institutions. Before founding the Interfaith Center in 1997, Dean Morton led the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for 25 years.

Our hearts are with Pamela, his family, and all those who had the great fortune to know him.

The James Parks Morton Fund for Interfaith Justice

Thank you to the first supporters of the James Parks Morton Fund for Interfaith Justice, whom we are proud to list below.

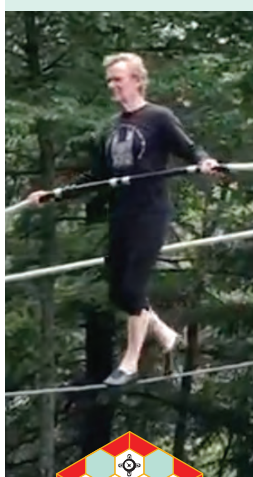
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To make a gift, please visit us at:
interfaithcenter.org/james-parks-morton-in-memoriam



James Parks Morton, Dean Who Brought Cathedral to Life, Dies at 89

Leading the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine for 25 years, he sought to make it central to urban life.
By Ari L. Goldstein
Nov. 17, 2018



Advocacy

As a **member of the Mayor’s Faith Advisory Council** created to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICNY worked with the New York Board of Rabbis to develop a rotation of diverse faith leaders to offer online prayers for the dead in a weekly **Friday morning service, anchored by the Dept. of Corrections Chaplain on Hart Island** where many victims of COVID were being buried in April. In addition, we supported the City’s decision to increase the amount of public burial assistance so that victims would not have to be buried as indigents on Hart Island.

As the pandemic continued, we witnessed an increase in homelessness, hunger, and poverty, leading us to join other diverse faith organizations to call for change in Albany. ICNY’s impact included spearheading a letter with the Legal Aid Society and Union Theological Seminary to request that the **Governor’s eviction moratorium be extended**, and that barriers to cash assistance be removed. ICNY also signed on to a letter of support for Project Renewal that works with the homeless on the Upper West Side.

In **convening diverse faith town halls** as part of the Governor’s Executive Order for **Police Reform and Reinvention**, ICNY is doing our work to make sure the city’s diverse communities have a place at the table when it comes to charting a future course with policing in New York City. In the area of police reform, we were gratified to see the repeal of 50-A, leading to the disclosure of disciplinary records of NYPD officers and ban on chokeholds. This step toward accountability was a measure that ICNY had recommended to the Court Appointed Facilitator of Floyd, Davis, and

Ligon cases against the City of New York when he convened his community advisory board in 2015.



Press conference asking Governor Cuomo to sign the new SCAR Act on September 15th, 2020

The SCAR Act Update

Since 2018, the Interfaith Center of New York, The New Sanctuary Coalition, and the New York State Council of Churches have advocated for **the SCAR Act** as a response to the Trump administration’s policy of separating refugee children and parents at the border and sending the children into the nation’s foster care system, including in New York State.

Last Summer, the **new Separation of Children Accountability Response Act S222-C (Benjamin)/ A1436-C (Epstein)** was overwhelmingly passed in both the New York Assembly and the Senate, a tremendous success but leaving still more work to be done. That is why ICNY organized a **letter signed by over 300 faith leaders asking the Governor to sign the bill into law**. Pictured here is a screenshot from the resulting press conference, co-led by the Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, calling on the Governor to take action. The press conference can still be viewed online. Please email us at info@interfaithcenter.org for details.

Finally, as part of the **Faith Communities for Just Reentry Coalition**, ICNY helped widen a religiously diverse coalition of faith communities brought together by Trinity Church Wall Street to remove the massive obstacles to reentry for people coming out of City jails. The platform for change includes ensuring ID when incarcerated individuals leave Riker’s Island, that health-care transitions with people when they leave the jail, and that reentering citizens don’t face discriminatory laws barring them from the New York City Housing Authority.



Music Series Honoring Those Lost to COVID-19

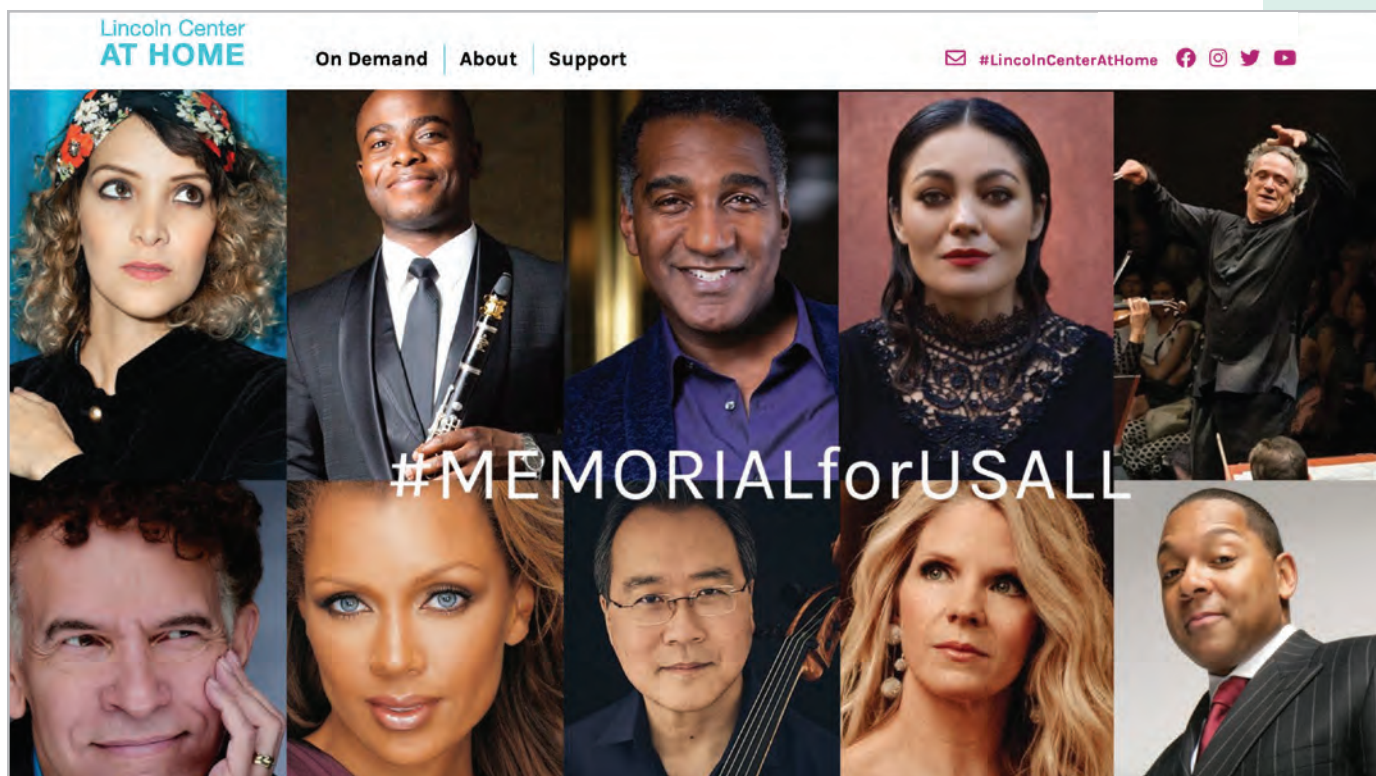


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND LINCOLN CENTER

In the midst of the pandemic and the need for social distancing, many of the rituals of grief with the passing of a loved one were no longer possible. Sensing the need, ICNY and our faith partners including the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), Union Theological Seminary and the New York Board of Rabbis enlisted New York City artists and come together with Lincoln Center and Jazz at Lincoln Center to offer a weekly *Memorial for Us All*. Names of those who had died from COVID-19 were submitted and scrolled across the screen as some of the world's most renowned musicians performed, including **Wynton Marsalis**, **Yo-Yo Ma**, **Brian Stokes Mitchell**, **the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra**, and **Vanessa Williams**. Through music, Memorial For Us All offered all New Yorkers a moment to grieve and heal together.

To view the series, please head to:
[Lincolncenter.org/lincoln-center-at-home/series/memorialforusall](https://lincolncenter.org/lincoln-center-at-home/series/memorialforusall).





Organizing

2020 CENSUS

With the extension of the 2020 Census deadline from June to October, ICNY stretched our resources and created a **special COVID-19 addendum to our *Interfaith 2020 Census Coalition Toolkit*** so that faith communities could do virtual census outreach.

With grant support from Robin Hood, and in partnership with United Sikhs and the Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus, ICNY successfully partnered with 38 Sikh and Hindu faith leaders, reached a combined total of 35 congregations in both communities, as well as 3,257 individual community members, and 4,280 more via phone and text banking.

We also held a panel of diverse faith leaders from Harlem to discuss the importance of the census for each of their faith traditions. The success of the panel, which was hosted at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, led the US Census Bureau to feature us in a film they aired on February 18th, 2020 at the National Cathedral in Washington DC during the 2020 Census Interfaith Partner Summit. Pictured here is Hanadi Doleh, ICNY Program Associate for Community Partnerships, as featured in the film.

The result? New York City reported a 61.8 percent self-response rate, which far outpaced most major cities in the United States.

“New York City’s diverse faith leaders and their communities have always provided the threads that hold together our city’s civic fabric. In our lifetimes, never have these bonds been so strained than with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

—The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer and Peter B. Gudaitis, MDiv, Executive Director & CEO of New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS)

PARTNERSHIP WITH THRIVE NY

In February of 2020, the Interfaith Center of New York and New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) partnered with Thrive NYC to produce a 55-page online publication ***Mental Health Toolkit for Faith and Community Leaders***, which we then launched with the help of the authors in a series of seven webinars in May and June.

Two of the webinars focused on complicated grief and trauma, while the remaining five were each focused on a single religious tradition to enable in-depth conversation about the Toolkit and how it might

apply in specific congregational contexts. Overall, the webinar centering on African Diaspora traditions garnered the highest number of attendees. Other target populations address were those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including African American churches, Latino congregations, and many of the predominantly immigrant faith communities, namely Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh.

News of the ***Mental Health Toolkit*** has spread, and representatives from the Oregon Department of Mental Health and The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts have separately reached out to us, hoping to emulate the Toolkit and its success in their states.

Mental Health Toolkit for Faith and Community Leaders



Interfaith Civic Leadership Academy (ICLA)

ICNY's ICLA is giving diverse religious leaders the tools they need to make a difference.

With the support of the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, ICNY once again selected 15 religiously diverse fellows from across the five boroughs to meet once a week beginning in June of 2020 via Zoom. Fellows receive training from top civic leadership experts including the Advocacy Institute, Metro IAF, and the CORO Foundation with the goal of equipping them to create independent community projects at the end of 12 months.

“I believe that open conversation, an open mind, and a willingness to be flexible is the only way to combat the obstacles that stand in the way for a better world. The Interfaith Civic Leadership Academy understands this also, and has proven it by offering this gracious course.”

– REV. DEBORAH MCKEEVER, former Deputy Director of Housing for HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) and current Brooklyn-based minister at Sacred Fellowship Ministries (SFM).



“As an aspiring interfaith leader, I have appreciated that the Leadership Academy has provided a complete framework and supportive peer community with which to think through interfaith work in a new light. I can honestly say that this program has provided me with a new method of interfaith organizing that is already proving to be successful.”

– JEREMY TIBBETTS, coordinator at Yavneh On Campus, an initiative building local Jewish communities on over 40 college campuses.

“I am thankful for the opportunity to listen and learn from my fellow cohort members and to also share my perspectives. While we are all passionate about our work and the communities we serve, ICLA, through its workshops, made us all realize that we have strength in numbers and our work should stretch far and beyond the boundaries that are set up to handicap us regardless of religion, race, gender, or identity.”

– VIJAH RAMJATTAN, founder of the United Madrassi Association Inc. (UMA), committed to bringing about unity & ecological justice within the Madrassi/Tamil Diaspora.



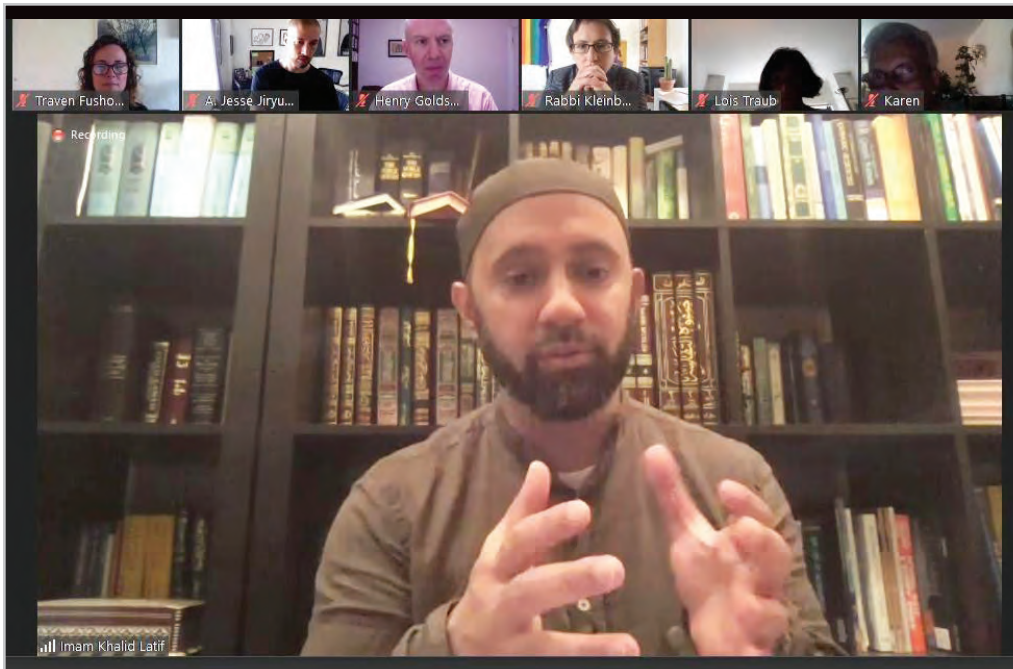
Being Together While We're Apart: Building Community and Providing Care in the Pandemic and Beyond

The social distancing and self-isolation required to fight the COVID pandemic have cast a stark new light on the human need for social and emotional connection. Faith communities have responded to this crisis of connection by developing new forms of religious practice online, and mental health care providers have offered tele-mental health services on an unprecedented scale.

On July 22, the Interfaith Center of New York, the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute, and the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services hosted a full day, New York State accredited online conference for social workers and their colleagues. The conference explored the strengths and weaknesses of online care and community building, and how accessible these forms of virtual engagement might be to all New Yorkers.

"I have found myself thinking about and reflecting about yesterday's conference off and on all day...the speakers were stunning, the schedule was perfect and the technology was flawless. I learned, was inspired and grew—and will take much of what I encountered into my teaching. Heartfelt thanks for the opportunity."

Deborah P. Waldrop, PhD, LMSW



Speaker Imam Khalid Latif, Executive Director of the Islamic Center at New York University is pictured with participants listed from left to right: Traven Fusho Rice, A. Jesse Jiryu Davis, ICNY's Dr. Henry Goldschmidt, Rabbi Dr. Sharon Kleinbaum, Lois Traub, and Karen Nassauer





The 38th Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreat for Social Justice: The Climate Crisis and New York Faith Communities

On October 8, 2020, the Interfaith Center of New York, the Center for Earth Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, and the Jewish Theological Seminary hosted a conference for religious and civic leaders to explore faith-based perspectives on climate change and sustainability, both locally and globally. The conference supported diverse New York faith communities as they addressed the unprecedented challenges of the climate crisis.



The conference included a keynote panel featuring leading climate advocates from city government, faith-based, and secular organizations; a multifaith panel reflecting the voices of diverse religious leaders; small-group discussions; prayers and reflections; and an experiential ritual highlighting our ties to the natural world that sustains our city.

For the first time in ICNY’s history, the MMR was conducted 100% online and it garnered national and international attendance. Some participants attended from as far as the Middle East. Our goal was to bring together diverse civic and religious leaders, in open dialogue about the environmental issues facing our communities, and to develop strategies for action on the climate crisis. We successfully shared a number of practical resources and next steps, and created a listserv for conference participants to continue to work together.

Top of page: Eugenia Cooper Newton, The Center for Earth Ethics and Dwaine Perry, Chief of the Ramapough-Lunaape Nation; *Inset center, clockwise from the upper-left:* Rev. Chloe Breyer, ICNY, Karenni Gore, Director Institute for Earth Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, Daniel Zarrelli, Director of OneNYC, Peggy Shepard, Founder of WE ACT for Environmental Justice. *Inset above, clockwise from the upper-left:* Henry Goldschmidt, Program Director, ICNY; Gopal D. Patel, Co-Founder and Director, Bhumi Global, Rabbi Jennie Rosenn, Founder and CEO, Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action, Imam Saffet Catovic, Co-Founder and Chair, Green Muslims of New Jersey, Rick Chavolla, Board Chair, American Indian Community House.





ICNY's podcast "Interfaith Matters"

ICNY's podcast series explores the intersection of faith and social justice. Since its launch in 2016, the series has interviewed leaders from many diverse traditions and communities, educating people about the faith practices of their neighbors, and exploring how faith leadership can activate communities to address social justice concerns.



Be Strong and Courageous: Facing the Challenges of Pastoral Care in a Time of Social Distancing

Podcast air date: April 6, 2020

Pictured (clockwise from top left): **AJ Debonis**, #InterfaithMattersPodcast Host, **Rev. Kyndra Frazier**, CEO KYND Consulting, **Father Mark Lane**, Brooklyn Oratory parish of St. Boniface, **Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein**, Rabbi-in-Residence, Hazon: The Jewish Lab for Sustainability



Det. Mohamed Amen on NYC's Many Faiths & the NYPD

Podcast air date: October 18, 2020

Pictured: **Detective Mohamed Amen**, NYPD Clergy Outreach Unit



Treasurer's Report

COVID-19 clearly had a disruptive impact on nonprofit entities, with over 40% of surveyed nonprofits seeing a year over year decline in private donations and 75% needing to make budget cuts in response¹. We are grateful to our generous donors who ensured that ICNY was impacted less than many of our peer organizations. The necessary decision to shift our annual gala to a virtual format had a negative impact of \$95,000, but this was more than offset by an extraordinarily generous one-time private donation shortly after our fiscal year end.

ICNY enjoyed its best year in five years on the foundation grant side. Significant grant support from Trinity Wall Street, the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, and Diane and Arthur Abbey contributed in fiscal 2020 made possible both new and continued programming. We are investing a small amount of incremental funds to improve our foundation process, with Jonill Mayer our Development Director moving her role from four days per week to full time. Our expectation is that this will provide a strong return on investment as she provides leadership and focus to complement the historic efforts of our program staff.

The combination of individual and grant support allowed ICNY to maintain its staff team without furloughs or layoffs. This talented and dedicated group of professionals carried on their work without missing a beat, despite significant challenges of social distancing requirements and the need to change historic program delivery models. We applaud their resolve and creativity.

Our budget for fiscal 2021 is essentially flat vs. fiscal 2020. Sufficient cuts were found in the administrative expense category to ensure a full continuation of our programs. Fundraising challenges are expected to persist in fiscal 2021, with our gala again being moved to an online format. This suspension of a historically significant source of funding does create challenges. We are thankful again both that we are an organization built on faith, and that we have committed and dedicated supporters for our mission.



Kevin Oro-Hahn, *Treasurer*

¹ "Survey of COVID-19 Impacts on Fundraising Operations", Grenzebach Glier and Associates, Sept 2020



FISCAL YEAR 2020 REVENUE AND SUPPORT

■ Contributions and grants	759,031
■ Contract revenue	53,002
■ Program Fees, Special Events, etc.	77,071
■ In-kind contributions	79,269
TOTAL	968,373



FISCAL YEAR 2020 EXPENSES

■ Programs	345,185
■ Administrative	210,289
■ Fundraising	145,014
TOTAL	700,488



Thank you to our Donors

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at info@interfaithcenter.org to give us
the opportunity to correct our error.*





2020 Gala

Congratulations again to this year’s recipients of the James Parks Morton Interfaith Award, **Marian Wright Edelman** and **Anna Deavere Smith**. We wish to express our gratitude to everyone who participated in the online-only event, in particular artists **Paul Winter**, **Philippe Petit**, and **Judy Collins**, who generously helped us honor our founder, the **Very Rev. James Parks Morton**, as well as host **Nancy Giles** and speakers and performers Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director Jazz at Lincoln Center, **Ruth Messinger**, ICNY Board Member, **Dr. Serene Jones**, President of Union Theological Seminary, **Henry Timms**, President and CEO of Lincoln Center, **Julie Menin**, Director of the NYC Census, and Manhattan Borough President **Gale Brewer**.



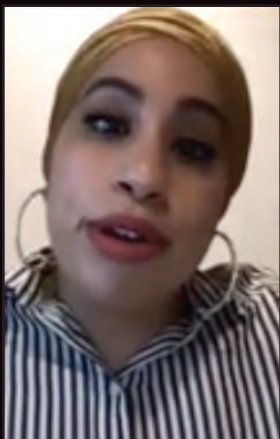
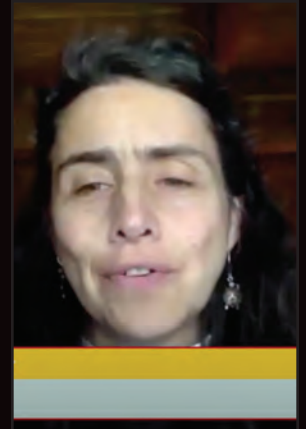
The James Parks Morton Interfaith Awards



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER



Ruth Messinger
Former Manhattan Borough President, Board Member, ICNY



Please join us in welcoming our four new Board Members



Faria Abedin has been involved in numerous philanthropic and community outreach efforts. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Women for Women International's Global Board of Directors and the NYU President's Global Council. In addition, she serves on the NJ Homeland Security Interfaith Advisory Council, Shoulder To Shoulder Advisory Board and the leadership of the Mizaan Retreat, hosted annually by Princeton University's Muslim Life program. In years prior, Faria served as a board member of Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Medina Clinic, Duke Islamic Studies Center, and the Duke Kenan Institute for Ethics. She has served as Board President of the Princeton Girlchoir and the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. Faria holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Maryland and an M.S. in Computer Science from The Johns Hopkins University.



Steven Chanie is a healthcare regulatory attorney with a deep knowledge of and experience with state and federal regulatory issues. He has, for instance, been deeply involved in regulatory due diligence for major transactions and has worked with clients on an ongoing basis as an advisor to their compliance program staff, legal counsel's office, and Board of Directors. Prior to entering private practice, Steven was Chief of Appeals at the Queens County District Attorney's Office (1993 - 1996), Counsel to Field Operations, and chief appellate counsel at the New York State Organized Crime Task Force (1987 - 1993), and an Assistant District Attorney at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office (1983 - 1987). Steven has also taught Healthcare Law, Appellate Advocacy and Criminal Procedure as an adjunct professor at Brooklyn and Pace Law Schools. He is also presently enrolled at the Union Theological Seminary in the Masters of Divinity program.



A Presbyterian minister in the Presbytery of New York City, **Frederick A. Davie** joined Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York on August 15, 2011, as Executive Vice President. He came to Union from the Arcus Foundation, where he served as Interim Executive Director and Senior Director of the Social Justice and LGBT Programs. As a Program Officer at the Ford Foundation, Mr. Davie developed a national program to support local faith-based and community juvenile justice programs to reduce rates of incarceration and recidivism. Mr. Davie has also served in a number of leadership roles in public administration for the City of New York, including Deputy Borough President of Manhattan, and Chief of Staff to the Deputy Mayor for Community and Public Affairs. He was appointed by Mayor de Blasio as acting chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) in April of 2017, chair in April of 2018, and reappointed chair in July of 2020 by Mayor de Blasio and Speaker of the City Council Corey Johnson. In June of 2020, Rev. Davie was appointed to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) by US Senator Charles Schumer.



Steven Waldman is the President and Co-Founder of Report for America, an initiative of the GroundTruth Project. He crafted the plan for it after authoring the Federal Communications Commission landmark report "Information Needs of Communities," which NPR described as "one of the most comprehensive overviews of the U.S. media ever produced." An experienced entrepreneur, he co-founded the multi-faith religion website Beliefnet.com, which won the National Magazine Award, and LifePosts.com, a platform for online memorials. Earlier, he was National Editor of U.S. News & World Report and National Correspondent for Newsweek. He was Senior Advisor to the CEO of the Corporation for National Service and wrote a book on the creation of AmeriCorps called "The Bill." He's also the author of the national bestseller, "Founding Faith."



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The Interfaith Center of New York

475 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, SUITE 540

NEW YORK, NY 10115


PHONE: 212-870-3510 | FAX: 212-870-3499

www.interfaithcenter.org | info@interfaithcenter.org

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