



AAIC

**AKRON AREA
INTERFAITH
COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2022**



September 8, 2022

Dear Friends of the Interfaith Movement:

In January of 2022, the Rabbi and several members of a synagogue in Houston, Texas, were taken hostage by a gun-wielding British Pakistani, during sabbath services. In the end, the hostages were safely released. But the incident itself could be seen as 2022 picking up right where 2021 ended, which was as the year with the highest annual number of antisemitic incidents ever recorded by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

In 2021, ADL tabulated 2,717 anti-Semitic incidents across the United States. This represents a 34% increase from the 2,026 incidents recorded in 2020 and is the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. As one might see in the accompanying chart, there is a significant upswing in such acts of hate in the United States.

What explains this terrifying present trend? How does it fit into the historical picture of hate directed at Jews? What can we do, as a multi-faith community, to assist our Jewish neighbors right here in Akron?

Those are questions that the Akron Area Interfaith Council aims to take up in a proposed

three-part series on anti-Semitism, both nationwide and here in Akron.

Evening one, **Thursday, Oct 27, 7:8:30 pm**
“We’ve Seen This Before: The Historical Path of Anti-Semitism,” with Dr. Christopher Seeman, Professor of Theology, Walsh University, will do precisely what the title suggests, examine the historical phenomenon of anti-Semitism, to help us see what has always been there and pick out new venues and sources of hate. Location: First Congregational Church, 292 E. Market St.

Evening two, **Thursday Nov 2, 7-8:30 pm**
“Rising Numbers: Anti-Semitism in America Today,” with Jim Pasch, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) will be an exploration of the factors that might help us to understand the striking rise in hate crimes directed at Jews, right now, and in our country today.

Evening three, **“Strength in Numbers: What Our Interfaith Community Can Do,”** will be a panel discussion of how all of Akron can stand with our Jewish neighbors to help assuage their fears of facing these trends alone, to let them know that they are not alone. Local religious leaders will offer their understanding of Akron’s needs and resources.

For more information, contact us at akronaaic@gmail.com. To learn more about us, visit <https://www.akroninterfaith.org/>

A Prayer for Peace and Justice

God of Peace and Justice,
As we journey through the Year,

Make us weavers of your peace that will only come through justice,
taking up the threads of peacemakers who have gone before,
adding our collective contributions with creativity,
and making space for future generations to join this tapestry.

Keep us firmly rooted in your love, love that transcends time and space.

Guide us with clarity of vision
to study the past in order to learn from history
and heal wounds that still hurt us.

Let us acknowledge your presence as we look to the future.

(Prayer continued on page 3)

Look for Citizen's Police Oversight Board on November 2022 ballot

The push to create a Civilian Review Board for Akron police took a big step forward Thursday, September 8th. That's when Akron City Councilmembers voted 12 to one to put a charter amendment, which would establish the review board, onto the November 2022 ballot. The vote was held during a special meeting on the 8th, which beat the September 9th deadline to place the amendment onto the ballot for the November election.

Members of the Akron NAACP, Black Elected Officials of Summit County, City Council and local pastors (including members of AAIC) circulated petitions for the ballot initiative. Together they collected 7,000 signatures. Before city council could consider putting the measure on the ballot, petitioners needed to collect signatures from at least 10% of the Akron residents who voted in the 2019 general election. That put the minimum number of valid signatures at 2,678. The Summit County Board of Elections validated that 3,315 signatures were from registered Akron voters.

So, what comes next?

- ◇ Two Republicans and two Democrats on the Summit County Board of Elections must approve or create fair and accurate ballot language.
- ◇ The issue gets a number and is put on the ballot.
- ◇ If votes approve the measure, then the charter amendment then goes back to Akron City Council, which would legislate the creation of the Citizen's Police Oversight Board and an Office of the Independent Police Auditor no later than June 30, 2023,
- ◇ The city would have to fill the police review board within 90 days of the legislation.

Once the nine-member Citizens' Police Oversight Board is in place, it would have the power to oversee and review policing policies, launch investigations and directly supervise the city's independent police auditor.

-Reesá Mathews



(Prayer continued from page 2)

Nourish our enthusiasm,
Help our dreams emerge, and enable hope to blossom.

Together, we will learn from one another,
amplify prophetic voices,
and weave the work of peace, justice,
mercy, and love that transforms.

We ask all of this through You,
Way of Nonviolence, Weaver of Peace. Amen.

Adapted from [PaxChristiUSA.org](https://paxchristiUSA.org) **50th Anniversary Prayer**
(Inspired by Message of Pope Francis for the 2022 World Day of Peace)

Akron Interfaith Advocates against the Death Penalty and Church of Our Saviour Episcopal invite you...



"Instead of spending millions on death penalty trials and decades of appeals, we should... reduce, prevent and solve crimes. If we care about victims' families like mine, we should prioritize services that benefit all of us, instead of pouring millions into an arbitrarily applied death penalty."
-- **Jonathan Mann**,
murder victim's family member

"Ohio's death penalty Statute has, in practice, resulted in a 'death lottery' that should be abandoned."
-- **Hon. Paul Pfeiffer**,
retired
Ohio Supreme Court Justice

For more info, contact:

Jeff Campbell, Director
Catholic Commission of
Summit County
jcampbell@ccdoble.org

Experience this panel of compelling guest speakers, who will share insights into Ohio's use of the death penalty, why we don't need it ...and why we should abolish it.

Witness to Innocence and Mercy: The Tragic Flaws of Ohio's Death Penalty

Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2022, 7:00-8:30 PM

Location: Church of Our Saviour Episcopal
471 Crosby St., Akron, OH 44302

ABOUT OUR PANEL MEMBERS:

Rev. Debra Q. Bennett, Rector, Church of Our Saviour, and member of Episcopal Diocese's Commission on Racial Understanding

Jonathan Mann, murder victim's family member; Ohioans To Stop Executions board
Bernard A. Smith, retired U.S. federal prosecutor, Dept. of Justice (Cleveland)

- Hear a murder victim's family member call for mercy and reform
- Feel the impact on those directly affected by Ohio's death penalty
- Learn about the inside legal view of a retired U.S. Federal Prosecutor
- Be moved to action for equity & justice by Ohioans To Stop Executions

Program is free. All are welcome. No RSVP needed.

Sponsored by: Akron Interfaith Advocates against the Death Penalty,
Church of Our Saviour Episcopal and
Trinity Cathedral Episcopal Peace Fellowship-Episcopal Dioc. of Ohio

Join the statewide advocacy effort and learn more at
#NoDeathPenaltyOH online at nodeathpenaltyoh.com

LOVE AKRON'S 11TH ANNUAL AWARDS BREAKFAST

SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

JOHN S. KNIGHT CENTER
77 EAST MILL ST. AKRON, OH 44308

7:00-8:30AM
(DOORS OPEN AT 6:30AM)

IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL TICKET OPTIONS AVAILABLE!
FOR TICKET REGISTRATION & SPONSORSHIPS, VISIT:
WWW.LOVEAKRON.ORG/ANNUAL-BREAKFAST/

CO-CHAIRLED BY:



LOVEAKRON



*Bishop Samuel &
Elder Meranda
Hampton II*



*Steve &
Holly Wilt*

W: LOVEAKRON.ORG | E: OFFICE@LOVEAKRON.ORG | P: 330 384 8124

Racism is a Public Health Crisis

Community Conversation and Solutions

September 8 | October 13

November 10

at 6:00 PM

8 Point Bistro

1912 Buchholzer Blvd

Akron Ohio 44310

@thefreebloc



Dinner will be Served



8 WEEK COURSE

Political Education | Organizing Skills & Principles | Wellness Practices

SATURDAYS ONLY

10AM-12PM

848 W. Exchange St. Akron, OH 44302

BREAKING GROUND

Nearly 100 people were on hand Wednesday, September 9th, for the groundbreaking of the Sojourner Truth Memorial Plaza. The plaza will be on North High Street in Akron, close to where Truth gave her famous “Ain’t I a Woman” speech during the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention in 1851, at the site of the former Universalist Old Stone Church,

City leaders along with volunteers of the Sojourner Truth Project Committee celebrated this moment, which was a long time coming. Truth Project Committee Leader, Towanda Mullins, acknowledged the work of the late Faye Hersch Dambrot, who had the idea to honor Truth more than 20 years ago, and Summit County Executive, Ilene Shapiro, who chose women to resume and complete Dambrot’s efforts several years ago, before the Coronavirus-19 shutdown. “The dedication and the strength of mind, unwavering attitudes through the pandemic,” said Mullins, “We refused to lose. She’s going up.”

The 10,000-square-foot plaza will neighbor the United Way of Summit and Medina Counties office. “The first thing you will see when you cross the Y-bridge is this beautiful, incredible statue done by our local, internationally known artist, Woodrow Nash, on the backs of literally hundreds of women who have stood time and time again to ensure that this history doesn’t go away,” said Jim Mullen, president and CEO of United Way of Summit and Medina. “It is not just a plaza, it’s not just a park. This will be a place for everyone in this community to come to learn, understand, have fellowship and gather for years and years to come.”

-Reesá Mathews





MISSION

The Akron Area Interfaith Council (AAIC) exists to initiate, coordinate and enable effective interfaith responses to the social, moral, ethical and cultural issues of our community and to promote freedom of religion, equality and understanding.

VISION

We envision a strong network of faith communities that collaborate to make our city a haven for all.

GUIDEPOSTS

- Diversity is a blessing and enriches us all; the diversities of all peoples, languages, cultures, and colors must be cherished and celebrated.
- We are responsible for each other's welfare.
- Because of the importance of individual's faith traditions in developing underlying values, faith communities can contribute to the development of a more just, humane, and ecologically responsible society. [We refer here to "faith traditions" vs. "religion" as AAIC is interested in reaching not only congregations but also those who are searching and may not have a specific faith affiliation (such as the NONEs).]
- Members of AAIC oppose any and all forms of discrimination, especially those based on faith, gender, race, heritage, nationality and sexuality
- Advocacy and Social Justice: AAIC has consistently put issues of social justice at the forefront. Our past history shows a deep concern for inclusiveness. The group has been focused on the issues faced by the immigrant populations in Akron, ongoing issues of racism in the community, hunger, as well as xenophobia.

TO JOIN AAIC

Please visit our website for information on yearly dues:
Individual membership— \$30.00/yr., Institutional— \$50.00/yr.
Send your check or donation to:

Akron Area Interfaith Council
3300 Morewood Rd.
Akron, Ohio 44333

or send a membership fee via the following link: <https://donate.fundhero.io/aaic/aaicmembership>.

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month. We are meeting in person and via Zoom.

Website: <http://www.Akroninterfaith.org>

Facebook Group: facebook.com/groups/1659434494108484

Phone: 234-206-0088