

# TOGETHER IN FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP No. 12

OFFICE OF ECUMENICAL & INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS  
DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

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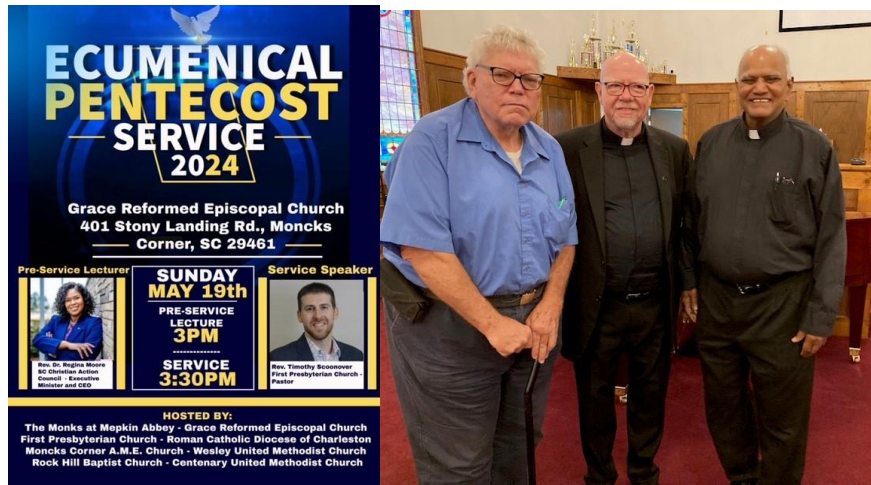
## CELEBRATING PENTECOST AT MONCK'S CORNER

The Trappist monks at Mepkin Abbey have, for several years now, hosted an ecumenical Pentecost event, with the cooperation of this diocesan office. Father Joseph Tedesco, OCSO, the superior at the Abbey, this year suggested that one of his ecumenical friends host a Pentecost celebration. Reverend Tory Liferidge, pastor, offered Grace Reformed Episcopal Church in Moncks Corner as the site. Instead of the customary sacred concert, complete with professional choir and orchestra, music was offered by Moncks Corner AME Church. The unity prayer for Pentecost was preceded by a presentation on homelessness and the call to all Christians to respond to the needs of those who find themselves without a roof over their heads and a place to rest.



(L) Rev. Tory Liferidge, pastor of Grace Reformed Episcopal Church, introduces Rev. Nicole Franklin of Oaks Wesleyan Church, Goose Creek, who is heading an effort to provide affordable housing units to homeless people in the Goose Creek-Moncks Corner area. (R) The choir warms up with a soulful praise song.

(Pentecost scenes, continued)



(L) The ad for the program, featuring Rev. Dr. Regina Moore, Executive Minister of the South Carolina Christian Action Council, presenting on housing issues, and Rev. Dr. Timothy Schoonover, Presbyterian minister who preached the prayer service. (R) Rev. Monsignor D. Anthony Droze, VG, and Father Marreddy Allam, pastor at St. Philip Benizi (Moncks Corner) and Our Lady of Peace Mission (Bonneau) meet a local parishioner after the service.



Some of those who gathered in Moncks Corner were indeed monks, and some were religious sisters. Father Joe Tedesco, OCSO, has been one of the champions of ecumenical cooperation in the Moncks Corner area. Others from a variety of churches helped to fill the seats as Rev. Dr. Moore spoke about the Christian call to shelter the homeless.



## **ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES AROUND THE DIOCESE AND AROUND THE STATE**

Since the last issue of this newsletter, there have been a number of Lenten and Easter season activities which engaged various Christian communities. There have also been a number of interfaith events, along with civic community programs in which numerous faith communities participated. This edition of “Together in Faith and Friendship” offers a pictorial record of some of the special events.

### **IN MARCH**

Father Oscar Borda, pastor of St. James the Younger in Conway, has been joining in ecumenical events in the Conway area for some time. This year, it was Catholics’ turn to present a talk at a multi-church luncheon, hosted by Trinity United Methodist Church, Conway. The March 21 gathering for prayer, inspiration, and fellowship was attended by parishioners from area Catholic and Protestant churches who reflected together on “Rend your hearts, not your garments” ((Joel 2:13).



A look at the Lenten ambience and, below, some attendees.





## IN APRIL

The diocesan **Eucharistic Congress** on April 6 provided a rich opportunity to celebrate the “source and summit” of our Catholic faith—in liturgy, in moments of personal and communal prayer, and in inspirational keynote addresses and occasional break-out sessions. One of these was “The Eucharist and Ecumenism,” which offered us an opportunity to trace commonalities and sometimes vast differences in the ways in which Christians understand the Last Supper and its legacy. The closeness of Orthodox and Catholic sacramental tradition on the Eucharist itself, on Holy Orders, and on church governance helps to explain why inter-communion may be permitted among Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. The vast differences among Protestant denominations and non-denominational groups were also explored—which led a participant afterwards simply to shake his head and respond, “They don’t know what they’re missing! So sad!”



The breakout session on the Eucharist and Ecumenism

We have been cooperating with the South Carolina Catholic Conference and the South Carolina **Fair Lending Alliance**. With this in mind, we invited **Senator Tom Davis**, who has sponsored legislation to prohibit predatory lending, to address a group of Bluffton and Hardeeville residents. The meeting was held on April 15 at St. Gregory the Great Parish Life Center, sponsored by Catholics for the Common Good.



(L) Senator Davis addresses the group. (R) Daughters of Charity, Mercy Mission, Hardeeville, meet with their mayor.



The city of Irmo and the **Interfaith Partners of South Carolina** (IPSC) once again collaborated on Sunday, April 28, for the annual International Festival. This gathering has the intent of providing a day of fun, family get-togethers, and activities to build understanding among various cultural, ethnic, and religious groups in the Irmo area. It originated after a public official had made some religiously and ethnically charged remarks which IPSC challenged. IPSC and the civic community pushed for a positive event which would allow people of many races and faiths to gather together and get to know one another.

## IN MAY

The **National Day of Prayer**, celebrated every year on May 2, was marked in Bluffton this year by an outdoor gathering which lasted for nearly 3 hours. Bringing together members of Catholic, African Methodist Episcopal, United Methodist, Baptist, Missionary Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran groups, it included sacred music, talks on the important of cooperative efforts and fraternal care among Christians, and opportunities to bridge generational and other gaps. On display was the ecumenical quilt project (referenced in the No.11 issue of this newsletter), the fruit of youth from 12 denominations who were asked to reflect on their hopes and concerns for the world.



People gathered for the National Day of Prayer celebration and reunited with faith leaders and friends. The group on the left was an evangelical group. On the right are Catholics from St. Gregory the Great Council of Catholic Women, Catholics for the Common Good, and a few SSCM Associates.





(L) The youth quilt, crafted by young people from 12 denominations in Bluffton, Hilton Head, and Savannah, was on display and heralded.

(R) The fact that the arts express faith was evident as Sister Pam Smith reunited with Pastor Gwendoly Green of St. John Baptist Church, The two collaborated on a poetry and art exhibit back in 2013 at a children's bookstore.

(Below) Neither sunshine nor haze kept the crowd from meeting and greeting before the prayer, praise, and singing.







On May 5, the **May River Cleanup** in the Lowcountry engaged Catholics for the Common Good, a group dedicated to Catholic social teaching, racial justice, and environmental and ecumenical action. They joined Scouts, school children and youth working for service hours, state and local officials, police, and families.

Coming this summer for the Catholics for the Common Good is the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual International Friendship Potluck. This year it is scheduled for July 27 at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Future events for the group include the Walk for Water, in support of the ecumenical (and international Water Mission, based in North Charleston, and a series of events engaging school children, young adults, and members of the civic community in events focused on racial understanding and care for the environment.





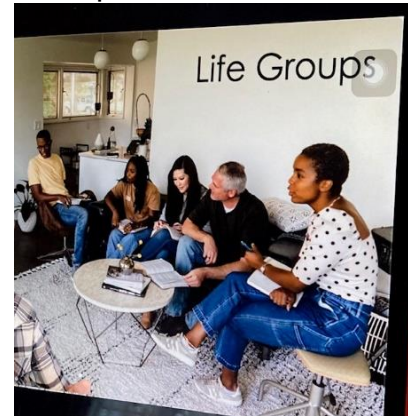
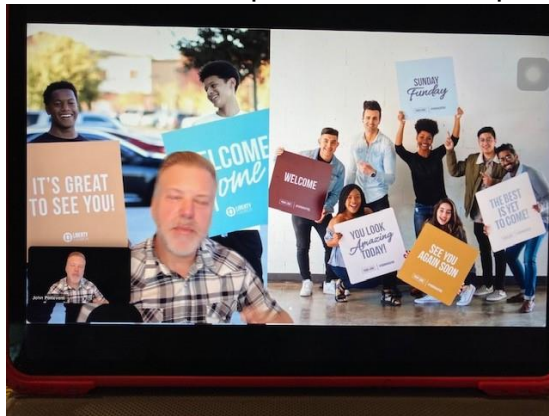
### Faith Based Affinity Groups

- Running Group
- Environmental Care
- Creative Arts
- Hiking/Walking
- Global Missions

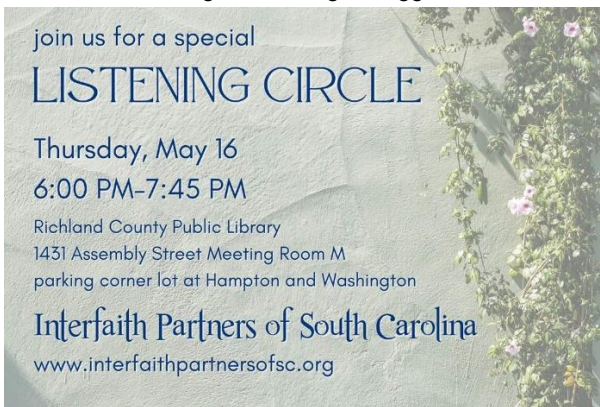
John Poitevent and Great Catholic Parishes share some slides taken with active church groups.

**Great Catholic Parishes**, led by its founder John Poitevent, on May 15 presented a webinar on “What Catholics Can Learn from Protestants.” The focus was primarily on the kinds of relational skills and activities and communications media that help well-attended non-

denominational churches sustain members. Much of what was presented coincided with what we have learned about how Small Christian Communities, Cursillo, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP), and many other interest and devotional groups help activate and enliven parishes and deepen the faith of parishioners.



A minister from Augusta, Georgia, suggested this event to IPSC, and the response to it suggests that it will go on.

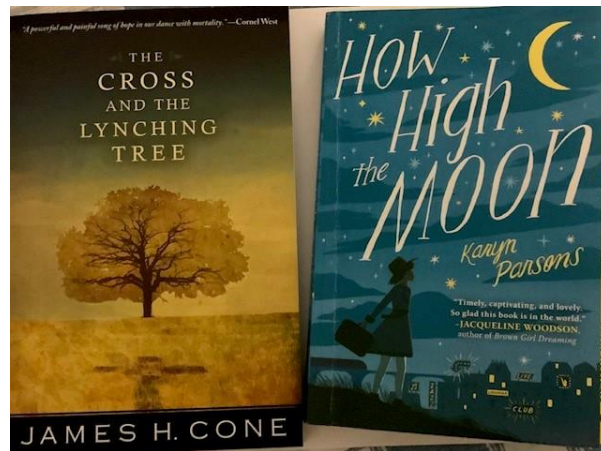
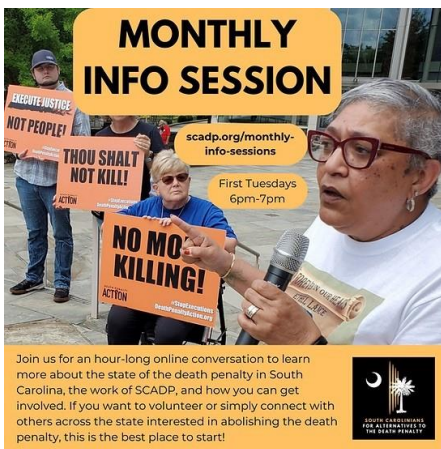


May 16 found a delegation from the Interfaith Partners of South Carolina participating in a **Listening Circle** in Columbia. Clergy and members of the IPSC board, representing a diverse group, met at the Richland County Library and engaged in respectful presentations on one another’s’ core values and concerns for making a better world. A Unity Church minister and a retired Lutheran Bishop Herman Yoos were among the faith leaders present. The Listening Circle motif is expected to continue later this summer, with dates and times to be announced.



## MONTHLY AND ONGOING

**South Carolinians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty** continue to hold bi-monthly board meetings, interspersed with bi-monthly committee meetings. The general public can participate in monthly info sessions. The group, on which we hold board membership, offers alerts when there are opportunities to petition for clemency when executions are pending in other states—and also advocates with the SC state legislature to end the death penalty (which is currently on hold as constitutionality of the states' methods are being reviewed). SCADP is also dedicated to educating people about restorative justice and rehabilitation of people who have committed capital crimes (like Rev. Jimmy McPhee, who has given testimony around the state). SCADP also hosts a bi-monthly book club, which often invites authors to speak about their experiences and their written work. Sister Helen Prejean (*Dead Man Walking*) was a presenter earlier this year. The March selection was “The Cross and the Lynching Tree.” May’s selection, “How High the Moon,” by Karyn Parsons, has been deferred to Sunday evening, June 23, at 7:00 PM.



**Interfaith Partners of Aiken** continue to meet online on the third Thursday of the month at 2:00 PM. Current plans include an interfaith Thanksgiving service, to be hosted by First Baptist Church in Aiken, on Saturday, November 16 at 7 PM. Interfaith Harmony Month, to be celebrated in January 2025, will include an interfaith public forum on Saturday, January 18, and educational question-answer sessions at USC Aiken between January 21 and 23. Bill Collins, a parishioner at Mary, Help of Christians Church, has long been the convener of IP of Aiken and has had committed, regular attendance from Latter Day Saints, Episcopalian, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh colleagues.

**Charleston Interreligious Council** has activities throughout the year, and we have become recent allies with them in supporting special ecumenical gatherings and dialogues as well. While January and February are peak times for CIC events, the group also visits houses of worship throughout the year and holds interfaith conversations, often with the College of Charleston.

As mentioned in many of these newsletters, **Atlantic Institute**, **Rumi Forum** (with its monthly Scriptural Reasoning series), and **Focolare/New City Press** offer online and, at times, in-person ecumenical and interreligious conversations and gatherings.