

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

**Minneapolis Interfaith Clergy Embark on a Faith Filled Journey
To Strengthen Relationships, Understandings and Hope For Peace**

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—As the New Year begins, twelve Minneapolis senior clergy from downtown houses of worship will embark on a profound journey to increase their understanding and acceptance of each other’s faiths, and demonstrate a shared hope for peace.

Accompanied by a photojournalist to record the event, they will travel to Jerusalem, Old Yaffo, Galilee, and Bethlehem from January 9th through January 17th. The group will tour sacred sites; visit Palestinians, Muslims, Jews, Christians and peace groups; and dig deeper into their own beliefs to bring a greater understanding of their faith and others back to Minneapolis residents.

As the senior clergy of their Jewish, Christian and Muslim congregations, they (and their predecessors) have met monthly for more than a decade to support and learn from one another. Although this unique group of friends has much in common, each holds close a diverse set of beliefs and traditions.

“We are deeply committed to our own faiths. Yet we find common ground in our hopes to bring greater peace and unity to an area greatly divided by a long history of religious strife,” says Rev. Michael J. O’Connell. “Through this common ground, we plan to bring back to Minneapolis all that we learn, and to instill a greater acceptance and understanding of unity here in our congregations across the city.”

Participants traveling on this Faith Filled Journey include:

Rev. Arthur Agnew	Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Elizabeth Beissel	Augustana Lutheran Church
Imam Makram El-Amin	Masjid An-Nur Mosque
Rev. Albert Gallmon	Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. James Gertmenian	Plymouth Congregational Church
Rev. Kendyl Gibbons	First Unitarian Society
Rev. Timothy Hart-Andersen	Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rev. Suzanne Mades	Wesley United Methodist Church
Rev. Michael O’Connell	Basilica of St. Mary
Rev. Bruce Robbins	Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
Rev. Spenser Simrill	St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
Rabbi Marcia Zimmerman	Temple Israel

The trip and the clergy’s outreach to their congregations upon return will be captured on film to create a documentary. Veteran Minneapolis film maker and producer of this documentary, Denny Mahoney says “The film, like the trip is as much about the journey their faith takes as it is about the places that they will visit.”

For more information; a daily blog of the trip can be followed at www.journeyinfaith-mpls.org. The blog will feature their daily experiences as well as still images from the daily excursions.

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