

HARC

Hagerstown Area Religious Council
we can do more **TOGETHER**

HARC's mission:

To embody
mercy, justice, and love
as diverse faith partners
in Washington County, Md.



Annual Report 2018



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On the cover

Top photo: Families learn together at one of HARC's 2018 Learning Parties.

Middle photo: Benediction at 2018's Community Thanksgiving service held on Nov. 18 at John Wesley United Methodist Church in Hagerstown.

Bottom photo: Barb Ware and Barb Hendershot participate in 2018's Hike for Hunger & Hope near the C&O Canal Towpath.

From the President...

There's a real power in how we remember certain tragic moments. We know we can have the most vividly emotional recollections of hearing certain horrible national news. It can be a defining experience. It might be remembrance of hearing of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the specter of watching the Challenger explosion, or learning of the fateful attack of 9/11.

These are indelible moments of memory etched in time. Of course, we have all experienced similar personal moments of pain, receiving difficult personal news. But there's something unique about the very strong emotional reactions when we relate collectively to a shared shocking experience.



Rabbi Ari Plost
President, HARC

I had just walked out of my own synagogue on Shabbat morning when I answered my phone to hear the news of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. I had not heard the news earlier because, well, I was doing what Jews do on Shabbat morning, studying and praying. The next few days are quite frankly, a bit of a blur.

My phone would not stop ringing as the impact kept pouring in. In this interconnected world, the reports came from those directly impacted who had relatives or friends or friends of friends who were victims. I heard from those who were marshaled to respond as Jewish leaders, in Pittsburgh and across the country. I heard concern, even some fear from those closest to me — my parents, my wife, my kids. My gut was twisted and my heart truly hurt. I did not sleep much in those days.

Beyond the terrible memory I have of that immediate time, I also have another equally vivid, positive memory. I will never forget how my synagogue on Monday evening was overflowing with congregants represented by many faith backgrounds. I remember how my fellow clergy and friends from HARC came together in solidarity and support. Something so awful had led to an experience so overwhelmingly good in response.

With the chaos of our world, it might be tempting to wring our hands and wonder what we can do to oppose such unbridled hatred and division.

HARC is important because we build faith-based relationships of solidarity.

HARC is important because we provide a powerful platform to confront the hate that has become part of our public discourse.

HARC is important because we learn together of the impact of discriminated religious minorities and the enduring legacy of that marginalization.

HARC is important because we work together to challenge ignorance by addressing systemic injustices that impact all of us.

The Hebrew word for the temple “sacrifice,” a practice that later evolved into prayer, has an etymological root that means “closeness.” It is the same root word for a relative of a family. To be in relationship, whether with God or with one another, is to bring ourselves close to one another. When we draw close as HARC, for any of our many worthy and important purposes, we stand against hate and embrace the love that God intends for our world.

Thank you for all you do and for being close.
Shalom,

Rabbi Ari

Rabbi Ari Plost
President

Hagerstown Area Religious Council
ariplost@gmail.com
301-733-5039



Kathy Powderly
Executive Director, HARC

From the Executive Director...

As I look back on another year, I am once again amazed by how much God continues to bless our work together through HARC. I never realize just how much we do until compiling this report, looking back over the year as a whole. The annual report gets longer each year as we grow, and as we find out what God is up to and *get in on it*. As we listen and follow what God has planned for us, we are given abundant support and growth to do this important work.

Together we:

- fed more than 1,000 children who would otherwise go hungry through Micah's Backpack
- put more than 11,000 books into the hands of children
- helped more than 50 families with skills to prepare children to enter school ready to learn
- helped to re-settled 44 people (including 17 children and 3 seniors) into stable housing after the condemnation of the Garden View Hotel
- assisted many others in need in our community, while helping prevent misuse of church funds
- continued to build bridges of understanding among faith traditions
- cared for one another in times of need
- worshipped and fellowshiped together and shared information and resources
- began to explore issues of systematic injustice, seeking ways to bring God's justice to our community

We are truly stronger together.

We can do more together.

This annual report highlights many ways in which we can do more together. Thank you to all of you who have blessed HARC, the community, and me with your gifts, talents, service, and friendship.

May God continue to bless our work together in 2019 and beyond!

Kathy

Kathy Powderly
Executive Director

Hagerstown Area Religious Council
kathy.HARC@gmail.com
301-842-HARC (4272)
www.harccoalition.org

Micah's Backpack

HARC partners with 50 churches and organizations, Washington County Public Schools, and the Maryland Food Bank to ensure elementary school children and homeless middle and high school children get bags of nutritious food on the weekends during the school year.

HARC recruits new sponsoring congregations, applies for and manages grants, and organizes bulk purchases with the Maryland Food Bank. The program continues to grow and, sadly, the need has not diminished.

2018 Updates:

- Currently serving **1,000 children** in 33 schools
- 50 sponsoring churches/organizations participate
- More than \$60,000 received in grants and donations to support the program.

Thanks to the following for their generous grants in 2018:

Belk

Rotary Club of Hagerstown-Sunrise

The Nora Roberts Foundation

United Way of Washington County

The Richard N. Funkhouser Foundation

Matthius Washington County Trust

First Energy Foundation

Orrstown Bank

The Hagerstown Lions Club

- Members of Kiwanis Club, MCI-H employees, and Belk employees helped with bulk food distributions.



Volunteers from Kiwanis, Belk, and the Micah's Backpack team distribute food to sponsors at the Maryland Food Bank, Western Branch.

Thanks to the following sponsoring churches and organizations, who do the bulk of the day-to-day work of providing food for children through Micah's Backpack:

Bethel United Methodist Church
Brownsville Church of the Brethren
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Concordia Lutheran Church
Creid Samhlaigh Corporation
Emmanuel United Methodist Church
Evangel Baptist Church
First Christian Church
Gateway Ministries
Hagerstown Church of the Brethren
Hagerstown Church of the Nazarene
Haven Lutheran Church
Hilltop Fellowship Church
Hollowell Brethren in Christ
Hub City Vineyard
Interfaith Service Coalition
John Wesley United Methodist Church
Kreative Kreations
Marsha Green & Family
Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church
New Life World Ministries
Otterbein United Methodist Church
Paramount Brethren in Christ
Presbyterian Church of Hagerstown
Redeeming Grace Church
Rehoboth United Methodist Church
Salem Lutheran Church
Shiloh United Methodist Church
Smithsburg Valley Church
South Washington County Food Pantry & Churches
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
St. Ann Catholic Church
St. James School
St. John's Episcopal Church
St. John's Lutheran Church
St. Joseph Catholic Church
St. Maria Goretti High School
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Funkstown
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Smithsburg
Trinity Lutheran Church, Hagerstown
Trinity Lutheran Church, Smithsburg
Unitarian Universalist Church
Valley Assembly of God
Valley Grace Brethren Church
Williamsport United Methodist Church
Zion Lutheran Church
Zion Reformed United Church of Christ

I was doing my normal shopping for Micah's Backpack at Walmart and had two carts full of food. When I was trying to figure out what line to get in, one of the checkout clerks asked me "What do you have all that food for?" I explained it was for Micah's Backpack and a little about the program. "We just applied for that for my son," he said. "God bless you all, God bless you!"

— a church coordinator

New sponsors are needed for next school year. If you can help, please contact Kathy Powderly at 301-842-HARC (4272) or kathy.HARC@gmail.com.

A kid came to me and said "I'm hungry," which I knew he must really be because kids won't usually talk about it. The counselor who told him to see me said he told her his mother lost her day job and now only had her night job, and they were hungry. I gave him bags for three weeks and on the fourth week he said, "I don't need it anymore. My mom got another day job."

— a school administrator

Learning Parties

Testing conducted in 2017 indicated that only 37% of children in Washington County entered Kindergarten fully ready to learn, meaning 63% were not ready. While quality preschool programs help address this issue, parental involvement is known to be the most important factor.

Learning Parties are hands-on, interactive “parties” aimed at teaching parents fun, easy, and meaningful ways of preparing their preschool-age children to enter Kindergarten “ready to learn.” Learning Parties also foster support and relationships among parents and between congregations and families.

In 2018:

- 7 HARC-sponsored Learning Parties were held in 7 locations
- More than 100 parents and children age 5 and under were served (some duplicated)
- *Thanks to the following for hosting and coordinating Learning Parties:*
 - St. Mark’s Lutheran Church
 - St. John’s Episcopal Church
 - Otterbein United Methodist Church
 - Trinity Lutheran Church in Smithsburg
 - Sunrise Rotary Club
- Parents found supportive networks among their peers and volunteers
- A number of families returned for more than one Learning Party and several remained engaged with the host church

Want to host a Learning Party in 2019? Please contact Kathy Powderly for more information: 301-842-HARC (4272) or kathy.HARC@gmail.com.

What parents say they learned or will do differently after the Learning Party:

“Get Johnny a library card.”

“Let her read me her own stories.”

“Ask more questions.”

“Play with my children.”

“Talk with my kids more about learning.”



Learning Parties engage children and their families in the fun of learning.

“I loved to hear all of the stories and ideas from the others. The hosts were very knowledgeable and full of ideas. We all enjoyed these parties and learned a lot. Wish I knew about these sooner.”

— a Learning Party parent

7th Annual Community Book Drive

The Community Book Drive is a partnership of HARC, The Hagerstown Rotary Club, the United Way of Washington County, the Washington County Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), and FedEx Ground as part of the United Way's Day of Caring.

This year's Community Book Drive brought in more than **11,000 books** for children's literacy efforts! There were over 50 collection sites all over Washington County, including **18 houses of worship**. Thanks to all who participated.

Books are distributed to vulnerable children through the new **Community Book Warehouse**, where organizations and schools serving children in need and individuals can go to get books each month. More than 5,000 books have already been distributed from the September book collection.

Over the past seven years, the book drive has collected and distributed more than **83,000 books** for children's literacy efforts.



Volunteers organize donated books for the Community Book Drive as part of the United Way's Day of Caring.

Food Resource Collaborative

HARC continues to maintain a list of Washington County food and clothing resources that is shared with and distributed by houses of worship and local agencies to people in need. For the most updated list, visit the HARC website: **www.harccoalition.org**

Resources for Crisis Assistance

HARC continues to collaborate with Reach and other area agencies to help houses of worship help people in need in Washington County and to be good stewards of limited funds. Many of our partner congregations contacted us for resources and information, recommendations on vetting of individuals and families, and to help out in a crisis.

In our largest crisis collaboration ever, we partnered with Community Action Council to re-settle 44 people — including 17 children and 3 seniors — into stable housing after the condemnation of the Garden View Hotel. The Lord does some powerful work through our hands when we are working together!

Being Muslim in Washington County

HARC co-hosted this forum as a joint meeting with our own Interfaith Coalition, welcoming members of the Islamic Society of Western Maryland to speak about their own experiences of being Muslim in Washington County, as well as changes they have seen over time in America. Our guests also spoke about what we might be able to do together to decrease fear and prejudice and increase understanding.

'We're glad you're our neighbor' signs

HARC continues to offer these signs to the community as a way to extend love and welcome to ALL of our neighbors as an extension of our faith.

There are now more than 150 signs all over Washington County, witnessing to a welcoming community of faith.



"Love the stranger as thyself" (Leviticus 19:34) • Hagerstown Area Religious Council

Want a sign for your yard or house of worship property? Order online at <http://harccoalition.org/donate/> OR call 301-842-HARC (4272). Signs are \$15 each to cover our costs.

Gun Violence Forum

After the Parkland, Florida, school shooting, HARC held a forum for clergy to discuss challenges with talking about the gun violence issue in their own congregations. Challenges included balancing their own convictions with creating a space for people with differing views to come together in peaceful dialogue. We believe that houses of worship should be safe spaces where people of differing perspectives can come together to talk to one another and seek solutions that are grounded in faith.

R.I.S.E. Rally

HARC joined **R.I.S.E. Coalition** of Western Maryland (Resources for Immigrant Services and Empowerment) for a rally in downtown Hagerstown in August. The purpose of the rally was to highlight the diverse community of Hagerstown and provide a space for members of the African American, Muslim and immigrant communities to share their stories and experiences. HARC remains connected to RISE and the Western Maryland Immigrant Rights Coalition and supports their work of celebrating the diversity in our community.

Thomas Kennedy Center & Memorial Park

HARC joined in the groundbreaking of **Thomas Kennedy Memorial Park** as well as sponsoring the Thomas Kennedy Center project and hosting a program to learn more about Thomas Kennedy's contribution to religious liberty in Maryland. Thomas Kennedy's legacy of his tireless efforts to advance religious liberty and inclusiveness in 19th-century Maryland still applies to us today. HARC will continue to support this effort.



Thomas Kennedy
1776-1832

Response to Tree of Life Tragedy

Our Washington County community of faith responded to the shooting tragedy at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh by showering our local synagogue with an outpouring of support. More than 200 people – including more than 20 faith leaders – flooded Congregation B’Nai Abraham to offer their support during a vigil planned by Rabbi Ari Plost, and countless more reached out to offer their sympathy and friendship. This could happen only after laying the foundation of unity among our houses of faith and kinship among our faith leaders. We are so blessed by our one-ness!

Washington Goes Purple

HARC and our Interfaith Coalition participated in Washington Goes Purple, a county-wide effort to raise awareness and prevention of opioid abuse. We hosted a Washington Goes Purple program with Emily Keller, Hagerstown City Councilwoman, and Vicki Sterling, Director of Behavioral Health Services for the Washington County Health Department. Many of our houses of worship committed to dress our buildings in purple for September, host awareness programs, and speak from the pulpit about the opioid and substance abuse crisis. The first Saturday in September we partnered with Veritas UCC to host a Purple Prayer Walk in downtown Hagerstown, walking streets in all directions and praying for and with those in crisis, and standing in solidarity as a community of faith in support of those battling addiction.



Representatives from HARC, along with other community leaders, participated in Washington Goes Purple events in September 2018.

South End Faith Network (SEFN)

This active collaboration of houses of worship in the south end or “Bester area” of Hagerstown began in 2016 and has continued to grow relationships and partnership opportunities. The collaboration is led in partnership with the Bester Community of Hope. The purpose is to strengthen the neighborhood and our individual houses of faith through collaboration and communication.

In 2018:

- An “**Adopt a Block**” concept was introduced by Lifehouse Church. Congregations are encouraged to “adopt” their own street/block or partner with another congregation. This is a great opportunity to build relationships with people in your neighborhood with an easy model to follow in your own way.
- We are partnering with Hagerstown Housing Authority to schedule a rotation of meals for residents at **Potomac Towers** two days per week, starting in January 2019. This is to replace service from the Commission on Aging, which continues to serve meals three days per week. Five of eight monthly rotation slots are already filled by churches in the SEFN committing to provide meals. Any congregation is welcome to help!
- Faith community members in this group “plugged in” to neighborhood efforts, including a block party, Babypalooza, “Walking School Bus,” Bester Elementary PTA events, and more.
- Several congregations partnered to offer events to the community, including a summer block party held at St. Andrew’s United Methodist Church.
- Information, events, and resources were shared among the group throughout the year to increase communication and decrease duplication of efforts.

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and Building Resilient Communities

In November 2017 Kathy Powderly, HARC Executive Director, and Steve Youngblood, Program Manager for Washington County Department of Social Services, were trained as part of the first ACE Interface Master Trainers cohort in Maryland.



ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (a.k.a. childhood trauma), are common and present one of the greatest health crises of our time, with a cause and effect relationship to many of our communities' health and social problems, including mental illness, suicide, substance abuse, heart disease, lung disease, obesity, and more.

The opportunities for awareness and prevention are huge, and the focus of ACEs' presentations and trainings offered to the community is to create understanding and ways to build resilient families and communities. Faith communities play a big role in preventing ACEs and helping people heal and build resilience. Faith and healthy relationships are an important part of resilience efforts.

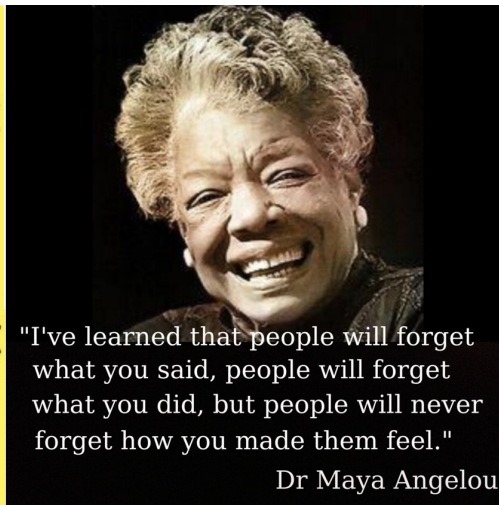
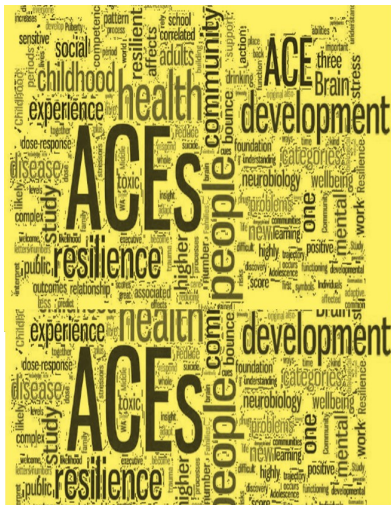
In 2018, Kathy and Steve presented information to seven groups: Robert W. Johnson Community Center staff, HARC members, Hebron Mennonite Church members, South County Ministerium, Meritus Spiritual Care Conference, Hagerstown Torch Club, and a foster parents support group.

We look forward to more opportunities in 2019 to share information and resources and to partner in what is becoming a community-wide effort to become a “trauma-informed” county. As a start, HARC will be partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Washington County to provide ACEs/Resiliency training to their staff, “Bigs” and families, and with the Early Childhood Advisory Council to implement “trauma informed practices” into early childhood education efforts.

For more information and Building Blocks contact Kaia at 301-842-XXXX

**For more information on ACEs
and Building Resilient Communities,
contact Kathy Powderly
at 301-842-HARC (4272).**

Faith communities
play a big role in
preventing adverse
childhood experiences
and helping people
heal and build
resilience.



Interfaith Coalition of Washington County

The Interfaith Coalition of Washington County, Maryland, was formed by the Washington County Council of Churches (now the Hagerstown Area Religious Council) in February 2002. Representatives from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faiths came together to provide a forum for interfaith dialogue in our community following the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

People from Baha'i and Buddhist and Hindu traditions, as well as other religious and humanist communities, participate today. We see our coalition as an outreach of HARC, with whom we partner.



Rev. Ed Poling
Coordinator
Interfaith Coalition

The mission of the Interfaith Coalition of Washington County is to bring together people of different beliefs to promote peace, respect, and compassion in our local community.

Through dialogue and public presence, we

- welcome each person's unique spiritual perspective,
- strive to learn more about each other, and
- seek to honor the diversity of our various traditions.

Planning Team members

Coordinator: Ed Poling
Vice Coordinator: Valerie Wills
Secretary: Carol Haggerty
Treasurer: Salih Yumlu
Publicity: Sandy Boyer
At-Large: Kalim Ahmed, Temm Bikle, Ed Branthaver, Julie Ferron, Paula Myers, Zunny Miller-Matema, Gwen Skrabak, Tom Thorsen

Events & activities in 2018

Interfaith Book Club: Organized by Gwen Skrabak and Kathleen O'Connell. A Seeker's Circle Book Club met six times through the year at the Washington County Free Library, choosing books that describe the religious life and traditions of several of the world's religions, and current issues in interfaith dialogue.

Winter Interfaith Retreat: February 3, at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministry Center. An all-day retreat introducing "Interfaith Sacred Listening Circles." An opportunity for in-depth listening and sharing across faiths in a small group setting of trust, led by Ed Poling and a team of spiritual companions.

Joint Meeting with HARC: February 13, "Sibling Rivalry in the Abrahamic Family." A panel discussion by leaders of Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions of what our sacred texts say about how we are to relate to people of other faiths. With Rabbi Ari Plost, Rev. Audrey Hollenburg-Duffey and Imam Syed Burmi.

Buddhist Peace Walk &**Potluck Gathering: April 4.**

On the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we hosted a delegation of Buddhist monks and nuns from Massachusetts on their spring peace walk. The afternoon included a peace walk from the Dunker Church on the Antietam Battlefield to Tolson's Chapel in Sharpsburg. The evening program included a tour of historic St. Mark's Episcopal Church and potluck gathering in the fellowship hall. Tim Bullock and others from the Buddhist delegation spoke about the purpose and mission in their peace walk.

Their theme was "Peace for the People; Peace for the Earth." This event was coordinated by Temm Bikle.



Peace Walk in Washington County on the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Interfaith Forum: May 15. "Can We Know God Through Experience?" A video presentation with discussion, exploring how human experience plays a vital role in religious development, led by Gwen Skrabak, at Christ's Reformed Church.

Japanese Noodle Float: August 11 at Hagerstown City Park. A fun food activity organized by Temm Bikle.

Participation in Washington Goes Purple: September 15 at University Plaza. Interfaith prayers shared by Valerie Wills on a prayer walk and vigil to raise awareness of the opioid addiction crisis in our community.

Global Feast For Peace: A shared multi-cultural meal to celebrate the United Nations International Day of Peace on September 23 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Keynote speaker was Todd Rutstein from Bah'ai faith, "The Unity of the Human Family." Drum Circle led by Tri-State Drum Circle. Hosted by Rev. Anne Weatherholt.

Presentation on Thomas Kennedy Center: October 3. Rabbi Ari Plost and Executive Director Tom Riford shared the vision and efforts of Thomas Kennedy, a local 19th-century delegate to the Maryland General Assembly who worked tirelessly to pass legislation to allow Maryland citizens of Jewish tradition to vote and hold public office. Held at Congregation B'nai Abraham.



Ven. Temm Bikle and Miki Fukui try out the Japanese noodle float.

Prayer Vigil at B'nai Abraham: October 29. Following the tragic events at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Rabbi Ari Plost organized a local vigil. Ed Poling spoke briefly, along with area clergy.

Interfaith Forum: November 1. "Women, Religion, Violence and Power" A panel discussion led by Rhoda Keener, Director of Sister Care in the Mennonite Church USA on women's experiences in different faith traditions. Panel included Rachel Nichols from B'nai Abraham and Anila Haq from Islamic Society of Western Maryland. This event was held at Hebron Mennonite Church.

HARC Interfaith Luncheon: December 11 at St. John's Episcopal Church. A panel discussion with several members of the Islamic Society of Western Maryland on "Being Muslim in Washington County." Discussed the challenges, stereotypes, and phobias of being a part of a religious minority in a predominantly Christian area.

Events planned for 2019

Interfaith Book Club, Washington County Free Library, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 17: *The Importance of Living* by Lin Yutang

Thursday, March 21: *The Religion of Ayahuasca* by Alex Polari de Alverga

Thursday, May 16: *Sister Wendy's Book of Meditations* by Wendy Beckett

Interfaith Winter Retreat: Saturday, February 2 at Shepherd's Spring Retreat Center. Theme: "Turning Toward Compassion: Conversation of Hope in Troubled Times." Led by Leah Rampy, former executive director of Shalem Institute in Washington, D. C.

Interested in learning more?

Learn more about our work and upcoming events:

- On the HARC website: <http://harccoalition.org/interfaith-coalition/>
- On Facebook: Search **Interfaith Coalition of Washington County**
- Contact Ed Poling, coordinator, at elpoling1@gmail.com or phone **301-766-9005**
- Herald-Mail Calendar of Events page

The **Interfaith Planning Team**, which envisions, coordinates, and carries out these events, meets regularly through the year. If you're interested in interfaith dialogue, you are encouraged to attend or share your ideas with a Planning Team member, or call 301-766-9005 for more information.

We continue to be enriched by the ongoing dialogue among people of our many religious and humanist traditions in Washington County. Such venues for conversation help to create a climate of respect, understanding, and appreciation among the various communities.

In a world where there is suspicion and distrust of non-Western faiths and cultures, we must continue to be vigilant in our efforts to keep these conversations alive. We appreciate your continuing support as a religious coalition in Washington County and invite your participation in our programs.

Opportunities continue to be offered for clergy and other ministry professionals to engage in fellowship, learning, and spiritual growth:



Monthly HARC Lunch Meetings

Monthly HARC Lunch Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m. at rotating houses of worship and other partner locations. Many different programs were offered in 2018 centered around HARC's goals, purpose, and important community initiatives.

Pastor's Bible Study

A Pastor's Bible Study group meets every Thursday from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at Rooster Moon Coffeehouse, 1551 Potomac Avenue in Hagerstown. This is a time for pastors to participate in a study without having to lead it, to dig into scripture, and to build relationships. If interested, just show up or contact Rev. Kyle Powderly at pastorcht@myactv.net.

New Clergy Welcome Reception

A New Clergy Welcome Reception was held in August as an intimate gathering for HARC board members to welcome and get to know clergy new to the area, or those who have not yet connected with HARC.

Clergy (and Spouses) Trivia Team

The Clergy (and Spouses) Trivia Team meets Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at Barefoot Bernie's, 901 Dual Highway in Hagerstown. A maximum of seven can play on the team each week. If enough people are interested, we'll start a second team! If interested, contact Rev. Katie O'Hern at pastorkohern@gmail.com.

Clergy Movie Group

The Clergy Movie Group is just getting started! If interested, contact Rev. Robert Lewis at pastor.robertlewis@gmail.com.



Connect with HARC

News Flash

HARC produces a weekly e-newsletter with items of interest to the faith community. Houses of faith and other organizations throughout the county submit information on events and other news to be included. Sign up on the home page of our website or contact harcnewsflash@gmail.com. Many thanks to volunteer Barbara Hamilton for compiling the News Flash each week.

Website: www.harccoalition.org

HARC's website is kept up-to-date with events, news, and resources. Many thanks to volunteer Charlotte Trout for her help.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/harccoalition

Like our page! Volunteer Charlotte Trout maintains our Facebook page with news, events, and posts of interest. Also "Like" our HARC Hike for Hunger & Hope Facebook page.



Holy Week Services

HARC-sponsored annual mid-day Holy Week services followed by lunch. Much gratitude goes to John Wesley United Methodist Church for planning and hosting the event each year.

Good Friday Cross Walk

This annual walk followed the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday again this year. The event was held in City Park once again with more than 100 people participating across Christian denominations.

Service of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial)

HARC members joined with Congregation B’Nai Abraham in this service of remembrance, featuring a holocaust survivor as keynote speaker.

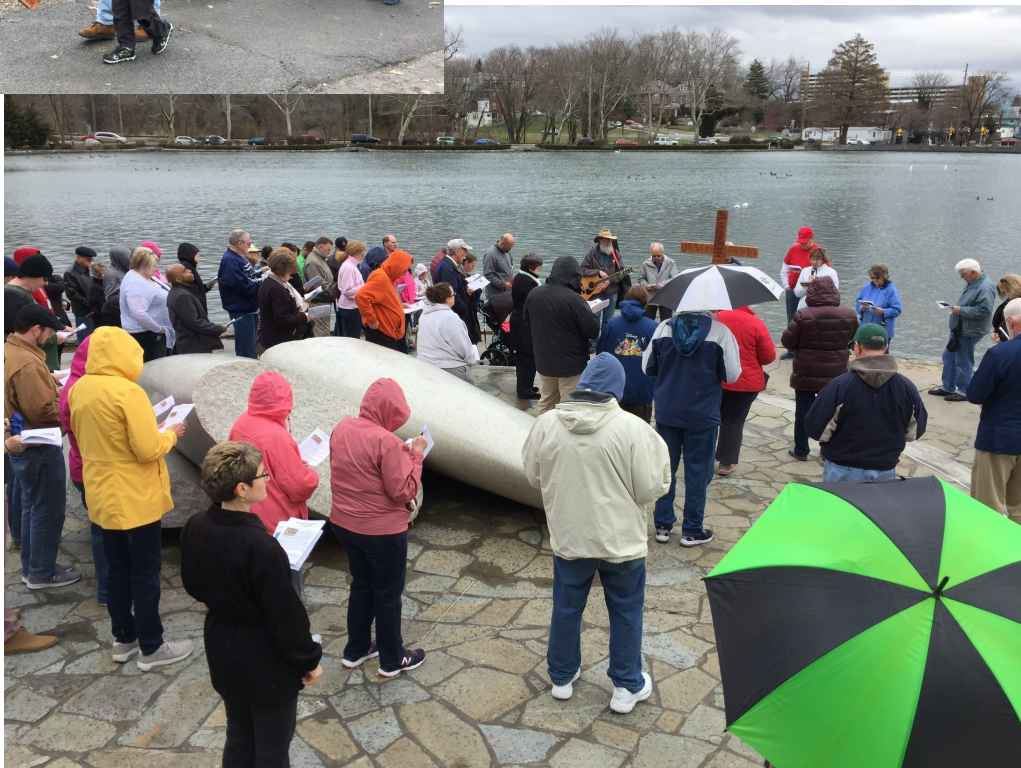
Washington Goes Purple Prayer Walk (see page 10)

Community Thanksgiving Service

This annual service was held the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving at John Wesley United Methodist Church. It was a beautiful service with leaders from the Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and Baha’I faiths all sharing their own traditions of giving thanks.



Good Friday Cross Walk
through City Park in Hagerstown.



Development Team

HARC launched a new Development Team in 2018 with a focus on public relations, member support, and fundraising to increase the sustainability of our work together.

This year we have already accomplished a great deal:

- Designed a new logo
- Redesigned the HARC brochure, business cards and letterhead
- Created a welcome packet for new clergy
- Held a new clergy welcome reception
- Researched and Board approved moving forward with a new website
- Began a focus on Board and individual giving, with the first end-of-year annual appeal letters going out in early December

Thanks to our small but talented team: Rev. Jake Caldwell, Rev. Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey, Kelly Conrad, and Kathy Powderly.

Thank You to HARC's major donors in 2018:

The United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington Conference
Maurice Johnston
Matthias Washington County Trust
Christ's Reformed Church (office space)
Hagerstown Church of the Brethren
St. Ann Catholic Church
Zion Reformed United Church of Christ



HARC Hike for Hunger & Hope

The 6th Annual HARC Hike for Hunger & Hope was held on the C&O Canal towpath once again with all hikes ending at Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Retreat Center. An additional, one-day "challenge hike" of 27 miles on the Catoctin Trail supplemented the main hike.

Please mark your 2019 calendar:
HARC Hike for Hunger & Hope
Main hike: Saturday, June 8, 2019

Challenge hike: Saturday, May 18, 2019

Both hikes suffered the consequences of an incredibly rainy year, with the main hike having to be postponed to September due to flooding on the towpath. But the support continues to grow and the two events raised more than \$16,000 in proceeds, which was divided between HARC and Micah's Backpack.

Thanks to the HARC Hike Planning Team: Ed Poling, Bill Pike, Barbara Hamilton, Beth Johnston, Carla Charles, Ed Maloy, Butch Eigenbrode, and Kyle Powderly.

HARC's Board of Directors:

President: Rabbi Ari Plost, Congregation B'Nai Abraham

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