



Interfaith Organizations to host forum promoting understanding and diversity

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WOOD RIVER - In a nation that seems to be increasingly interested in building walls and setting boundaries in a world that is ever-more diverse, a coalition of churches and interfaith organizations is seeking ways build bridges to foster understanding and acceptance of differences. To that end, an interfaith dialogue called “The Golden Rule: Uniting Faith Traditions” will be held at the Center for Spirituality and Sustainability, Edwardsville on Saturday, April 9 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event is open to anyone who would like to attend and is free of charge. The Center is housed in the geodesic dome on the campus of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and directions can be found on the Center’s website or by using a mapping app and searching on the Center’s name. Free parking is available in SIUE Visitor Lot B.

“As a starting point, we tried to think of what various faith groups might have in common,” said key organizer of the event, Karen Wilson of Alton, and a member of College Avenue Presbyterian Church in Wood River. “We decided that we would begin with the position that nearly every faith group has a version of The Golden Rule in its system of belief.”

At the event, local adherents of five different faith groups will share what their faith’s version of The Golden Rule means in their tradition. Those presentations will be followed by moderated questions from attendees as well as further conversation. The speakers for the event and the faith group each represents include: Dr. Christopher Gourdine, Assistant Professor, Management, Lindenwood University-Belleville (Baha’i); Ven. Haewon Sunim, Abbot/Spiritual Director, Boundless Buddha Zen Society, St. Louis (Buddhist); The Rev. Dr. Deborah Krause, Academic Dean, Professor of New Testament, Eden Seminary, St. Louis (Christian); Dr. James Croft, Outreach Director, Ethical Society of St. Louis (Humanist); and Mrs. Maysa Albarcha, Board Member, Islamic Foundation, St. Louis (Muslim).

“Finding commonalities can often be the key to understanding, appreciation and acceptance of diverse cultures and faiths,” said Wilson. It is hoped that this event might be a starting point on that path.

“The Golden Rule: Uniting Faith Traditions” is being sponsored by College Avenue Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), Wood River, IL; The United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), Wood River, IL; Center for Spirituality and Sustainability, Edwardsville, IL; and Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis. Representatives of the organizations listed are the planning team for the event.

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