

2021 Annual Faith, Farms, and Food Access Conference Plenary and Workshop Descriptions

Opening Plenary

Leaders representing Christian and Jewish perspectives will describe the relationship between sustainability, justice, food and agriculture from their traditions. The plenary will help participants reflect on the deep religious roots of projects and programs that we will discuss throughout the day. Speakers will describe diverse initiatives addressing food distribution; support of young faith-based farmers; and farmworker advocacy. Learn how these can facilitate religious practice and engage community members in new ways.

Speakers include: Rabbi Justin Goldstein, Yesod Farm; Bishop David Rice, Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin

1. Produce CSA's and Mobile Farmers Markets Respond to COVID

For over 20 years, farms have been establishing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) relationships that go beyond traditional customer relationships to facilitate deep connections between urban and suburban 'eaters' and the land and people that feed them. CSA members, or 'subscribers,' typically share the risk with farms by committing to purchase a diverse box of produce every week. Interfaith Food has supported faith groups setting up Congregational Supported Agriculture relationships with local farms since 2013. This session addresses how a CSA relationship can: build community; make it easier for busy congregants to eat seasonally and locally; support social justice and the local economy; and reconnect to religious holidays and precepts around food and agriculture. When the Pandemic hit, CSA's became more appreciated than ever. Innovative farmers markets adapted the model, and began 'no contact delivery' of boxes to consumers sheltering in place. We'll also hear about the Rollin' Root and how a Mobile Farmers Market can get fresh produce to people with limited transportation options. Also, you will get an introduction to how CalFresh (formerly known as food stamps) can be incorporated into a CSA or Mobile Market program at your site.

Speakers: Sonya Perrotti, Coyote Family Farm; Noele Kostelic, EAH; Karimah Hay, Agricultural Institute of Marin;

Moderator: Andy Naja-Riese, Agricultural Institute of Marin

2. Successful Farms and Gardens on Faith Community Owned Lands

One of the most challenging hurdles for beginning and immigrant farmers is to secure land to grow food. Meanwhile, religious institutions own land throughout the United States that is suitable for agriculture. These plots of land may vary in size from a 1,000 square foot community garden to over 100 acres. Partnerships can allow faith groups to simultaneously: save resources, advance food security, and help farmers make a living for themselves. Presenters will describe innovative projects including: a farmer leasing from a Seventh Day Adventist middle school that successfully transferred ownership 3 times in Sonoma County, CA. You'll also hear from a farmer who leased from her church

while developing a farm project, and is now established to the point she qualified for a USDA loan for a piece of land, with a home and infrastructure.

Speakers include: Jose Camacho, Camacho Family Farm; Chantal Mullen, Seed2Seed/the Farm and Forge; Jean Farmer, St. Stephen's Episcopal, Sebastopol

Moderator: Rob Bennaton, University of California Cooperative Extension

3. Food Waste Reduction and Recovery

Though hunger and food insecurity are all around us, as much as 30% of food in the United States is wasted. While much of this waste happens in the fields, a high percentage happens in home refrigerators or grocery store coolers. We've all faced the dilemma of what to do with extra food after an event! Addressing food waste simultaneously helps people access healthy food and minimize the negative impacts on climate change. Learn about groups that will help your congregation 'rescue' unwanted food, compost what can not be eaten, and harvest extra food in fields and backyards near your community.

Speakers Include: Xinci Tan, Zero Waste Sonoma; Eve Birge, White Pony Express;

Moderator: Ambrose Carroll, Green the Church and Church on the Side of the Road

4. Halal and Kosher: Exploring Relationships with Local Small Livestock Producers

What are the similarities and differences between kosher and halal requirements for meat slaughter and consumption? When Muslim and Jewish customers want to buy local and organic meat, how can they connect with livestock producers in their area? What do producers need to know to plan for and serve the markets within these religious communities? Hear from small-scale producers and processors directly involved in this growing market. University of California Cooperative Extension staff will also talk about what current and planned government regulations impact the ability to purchase directly from ranchers, and how a Meat CSA, and pending state legislation can create more options in this niche market.

Speakers include: Rabbi Mendel Rice, Bay Area Kosher; Mufti Abdullah Nana, Hallal Advocates/Islamic Center of Mill Valley; Mark Pasternak, Devil's Gulch Ranch

Moderator: Vince Trotter, University of California Cooperative Extension

5. Farming and Faith Fellowships for Young Adults

Young people experience life-changing growth when faith communities develop programs to teach about agriculture within a faith-based community and context. Hear about fellowships programs that have allowed hundreds of young adults to deeply connect to soil, soul and religious practice.

Speakers include: Sara Tashker, Green Gulch Farm/San Francisco Zen Center; and Nurya Love Parish, Plainsong Farm; Anastasia Cossette, Urban Adamah

6. Making the Most of Commercial Kitchens

Commercial kitchens are an important asset held by faith groups large and small. These can be used to facilitate entrepreneurship by small-scale businesses including farm enterprises in our communities looking to get started or scale-up. Before the COVID Pandemic several thousand faith-based groups had licensed commercial kitchens in the Bay Area that were not being used more than a few hours a week. However, some houses of worship demonstrated social-entrepreneurship by renting out their kitchens to private business people who wanted to process fruits and vegetables for sale and create value-added products. Faith-groups can support caterers and other business people that need a licensed commercial kitchen facility so they can earn a living. Leasing out your congregation's kitchen can: raise revenue; help low-income food entrepreneurs earn a living; and help feed your community. Learn about why farmers and other small-scale food processors are looking for certified commercial kitchen space, and the limitations of California regulations related to cottage enterprises. Get planning ideas about how you can safely and legally ensure your kitchen can be a community resource during a disaster such as a fire, flood, earthquake, or power outage.

Speakers Include: Kathy Matthies, Community Church of Sebastopol;
Pastor Michael Smith, Center for Food, Faith and Justice/McGee Baptist Church (Inv)
Moderator: Julia Van Soelen Kim, UC Cooperative Extension

7. Sustainable and Just Food Policy Advocacy

Faith-based advocates have shaped the outcomes of a range of social and economic policies throughout U.S. history. Learn about how congregations can impact grassroots and national campaigns to influence public policy in 2021 including state legislation and budget advocacy for senior nutrition and 'Farm to School' programs, as well as sustainable agriculture and farmworker housing. We'll discuss the victory to expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to 10's of thousands of additional California seniors and how faith-groups can build on this policy change. This session will also give you a taste of broader gains in terms of sustainable agriculture and food justice in the State Legislative session! Look into the crystal ball of advocates to see key policies we'll be asking faith-based advocates to work on in the coming months and 2022.

Speakers include: Krista Luchesi, Eldercare Alliance; Anna Tamayo, Office of Assemblyman Levine, San Rafael; Renata Brillinger, Calif. Climate Agriculture Network
Moderator: Steve Schwartz, Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative

8. Food Access: Responding to COVID

Beginning around March, 2020 faith leaders in charge of meal programs and food pantries were simultaneously faced with: a huge increase in demand for food; and a large drop in the number of essential volunteers, especially seniors. While some programs scaled-back or shuttered their doors temporarily, found a way to increase services while respecting health guidelines. We'll hear from an inter-faith pantry that maintained distribution of fruit, vegetables, and non-perishable food in San Geronimo,

Marin County. Learn about a Baptist church in Sonoma County that provided food and other benefits beginning with the start of the Pandemic, building on their 'history' of preparing 10,000 meals in a single month following the fires in 2017. Finally, learn about a unique farm founded by American Muslims in New Jersey developed to reflect Islamic values, that has provided space for faith communities to grow food for distribution to community members in need. You'll also hear about the local Street Chaplaincy that prepared over 5,000 meals for homeless individuals, and their 'pivot' to find a kitchen following COVID shelter-in-place orders.

Speakers: Margaret Krauss, San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church; Pastor Albert Rodriguez, *Primera Iglesia Bautista*, Oakland/Rohnert Park; Du'aa Moharram, Good Tree Farm

Moderator: Nick Morris, M. Div, The Street Chaplaincy

9. Negotiating Leases of Faith Community Lands to Support Beginning and Immigrant Farmers

The third of the Faithlands track break-out sessions will address principles and experiences of farmers and land managers partnering to have commercial production on land by religious groups. Learn about a faith-based school that leased to 3 different small-scale commercial farmers over a period of 8 years; and a Jewish farm and culinary camp that leased from an Adventist Boarding school for a summer camp. Learn about the unique perspectives and challenges that can arise when small farmers work with large institutional landowners.

Speakers include: Steve VandeVere, Redwood Adventist Academy; Casey Yurow, Eden West; Kathy Ruhf, Land For Good

Closing Plenary

Leaders with a national perspective will discuss how faith communities can support our brothers and sisters of all races and religions while building the sustainable food movement in 2021 and beyond! The first speaker will discuss advocacy efforts to make sure USDA nutrition assistance can better serve the needs of Muslims in need including refugees and asylees. Next we'll hear about the blessings that can unfold when land owned by a church is leased to a farmer to grow food to feed a community, and the budding national effort to grow more of these partnerships. The final panelist will address how faith-based groups can support BIPOC farmers, and the work nation-wide of Black Churches called to support both farmers and people in need of healthy food. A brief question and answer session will follow.

Speakers: Ammar Ahmad, Islamic Circle of North America; Howard Allen, Faithful Farms; Sha'Von Terrell, Black Church Food Security Network