San Francisco Foundation

FAITHS 2025 ANNUAL RETREAT SUMMARY

Monday, January 27, 2025
East Bay Community Foundation

Quick Recap

The Faiths program committee gathered for a day of collaboration and restoration, led by the FAITHS team (Michelle & Sayron) alongside, the FAITHS Retreat Committee (Tania Alexander, Karini Pereira-Bowers, Tessa R. Callejo, Rev. Ken Chambers, Majeid Crawford Gloria Crowell, Chanterria McGilbra, Rev. Dereca Blackmon, Zae Illoo), with discussions on healing, restoration, and self-care in the faith community and social justice work. The meeting also focused on community support, collaboration, and the importance of self-care and resilience, with participants sharing personal stories and experiences. The conversation ended with a call to action for participants to build relationships and work together to achieve common goals, and announcements about upcoming events.

FAITHS Retreat Committee

The meeting served as a gathering of faith-based community leaders, convened and facilitated by the FAITHS team and Retreat Committee, with the primary objective of discussing avenues for collaboration and community restoration. The agenda included opening words and reflections, a land acknowledgement, and a FAITHS interfaith statement.

Opening Reflection Questions:

- What is the “such a time in as this” moment in my life right now?
- How can I respond to this moment with faith and courage?
- Who can I partner with to bring about positive change?
- What steps can I take today to live out my calling in this season?

Reading of Recognition Statement That We Gather on Indigenous Land

We acknowledge that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Chochenyo Muwekma Ohlone who are the original inhabitants of the historic and sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. As the indigenous stewards of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Chochenyo Muwekma Ohlone have never ceded, lost nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. As Guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the Ancestors, Elders,

and Relatives of the Chochenyo Muwekma and all Ohlone communities of the Bay Area and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

FAITHS Interfaith Statement adopted from San Francisco Interfaith Council:
"This is an interfaith community. Whatever our individual belief, it can be freely expressed here with no apologies. If we are invited to offer a prayer in this setting, it should be offered according to the tradition, we are free to do so without fear of offending those who come from another tradition We come together as people of faith to learn from each other that we might better understand the multiplicity of faith traditions in our city and in our world".

FAITHS Mission Statement
The Foundation Alliance with Interfaith To Heal Society (FAITHS) enhances the human service delivery and advocacy capacity of San Francisco Bay Area faith organizations, builds relationships within and beyond the faith community, identifies opportunities to support strategic community development efforts, and educates philanthropy about strengthening communities through faith-based institutions.

Welcome and San Francisco Foundation's Response regarding Racial Equity
The meeting also featured a welcome from Fred Blackwell, CEO of the San Francisco Foundation, who discussed the foundation's commitment to racial equity and economic inclusion in the Bay Area. He emphasized the importance of staying the course, being responsive, and resisting when necessary. The conversation ended with a discussion on how to engage with the community and build solidarity in the face of challenges.

SFF Response:

- Be Stable
- Be Responsive
- Resist

Healing and Restoration in Social Justice
This discussion focused on healing and restoration in social justice work. Reverend Dereca Blackmon emphasized the importance of self-care and recognizing personal achievements while fighting for change. She encouraged participants to acknowledge something they overcame in 2024 and to call upon an ancestor for strength. Reverend Blackmon shared personal stories about her ancestors, including a great-grandfather who inherited valuable oil property but died mysteriously, and a great-grandmother who owned spiritual texts. She also discusses her recent experience conducting a memorial service for a cousin who was a South African priestess, highlighting the importance of family connections and spiritual heritage.

Reflective Session and Ancestor Calling

Reverend Dereca led a reflective session where participants were encouraged to celebrate their achievements from 2024 and identify an ancestor they wished to call in for 2025. The session was divided into smaller groups to allow for more individual time for reflection. Sayron then moved the participants into breakout rooms for further discussion. The conversation ended with a sense of celebration and anticipation for the future.

Prompt Questions:

- What is God/Spirit's highest idea for my ministry in 2025?
- What do I need to release?
- What do I need to embrace?
- Who do I need to become?
- What else do I need to know?

Honoring Ancestors and Personal Growth

In the meeting, Reverend Dereca led a session where participants shared stories about their ancestors and people they wanted to honor. They acknowledged their roots, the sacrifices made by their ancestors, and the struggles faced by various communities throughout history. The participants also shared personal stories about their family members and how they have influenced their lives. The conversation ended with a musical performance and a call to action for participants to reflect on their personal growth and the work they need to do in the coming year. Tania Alexander concluded the session with a performance of "Available to You" by Reverend Milton Brunson.

Community Collaboration and Support Meeting

Chanterria and Zae led groups focused on collaboration and support within the community. The meeting involved various activities, including a fishbowl activity where participants discussed their needs and resources, and a deepening connection activity where groups discussed potential collaborations based on their areas of work. These sessions also highlighted the importance of community support and collaboration, with examples of successful partnerships and collaborations shared. The conversation ended with a call to action for participants to build relationships and work together to achieve common goals.

Fishbowl Prompt Questions:

- Who needs help?
- Who needs resources?
- Who can provide resources?

Thematic Spaces:

- Housing
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Unhoused/Homelessness

- Immigration
- Food Insecurity
- Resilience in the work
- Cultural Awareness
- Re-entry systems involved/ incarceration

Prompt Questions:

- Describe the project you are working on that you seek deep collaboration with partners?
- What would your ideal collaboration look like for this project?
- How would this project mutually benefit both you and your partner?

Results Summary:

- **Conduct thorough community needs assessments:** Utilize surveys, focus groups, and community conversations to identify specific needs within their service area.
- **Inventory internal resources:** Assess available resources, including volunteers, staff, facilities, and financial capacity.
- **Build strong community partnerships:** Collaborate with other faith-based organizations, social service providers, government agencies, and local businesses to identify and leverage available resources.
- **Develop a clear referral system:** Connect individuals in need with appropriate resources and services through a well-defined referral system.
- **Mobilize volunteers:** Engage volunteers to assist with needs assessments, resource distribution, and service delivery.
- **Advocate for policy changes:** Advocate for policies that address the root causes of poverty and social inequities.

Exploring Self-Care and Spiritual Intimacy

Karini led a session on self-care and rejuvenation, emphasizing the importance of intimacy with the spirit and taking action towards self-care. She discussed the concept of 'SPICES' representing personal needs such as social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional, and spiritual. Karini also shared her personal journey and experiences, including her work with Youth Spirit Artworks and her background in community coaching and somatic coaching. She encouraged the group to explore different practices and find what works best for them, rather than sticking to one method. The session concluded with a discussion on the importance of belonging and connection with something greater than oneself.

Stress Management and Self-Care Strategies

Karini led a discussion on stress management and self-care, drawing from the results of a questionnaire. She emphasized the importance of understanding and managing stressors, and how they affect behavior. She introduced the Community Resiliency Model and the iChill app as tools for managing stress. She also discussed the importance of listening to one's body and understanding the physical and emotional responses to stress. Karini

shared strategies for handling stress, including mental approaches like positive outlooks and mantras, and social approaches like strengthening connections and joining groups. She also highlighted the importance of inclusive practices in fostering a sense of community.

Self-Care, Resilience, and Community Building

Karini led a discussion on the importance of self-care and resilience, emphasizing the need to prioritize physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well-being. She shared personal practices such as deep breathing, body work, and meditation, and encouraged others to explore similar techniques. Dr. Michelle L. Myles Chambers closed out the retreat by highlighting the importance of community and collaboration, referencing the work of Dr. King and the concept of the "beloved community." The conversation ended with announcements about upcoming events and a call for feedback on the day's activities.

Self-Care Assessment Reflection Questions

General Self-Care Questions

- What self-care practices do you currently engage in?
- How often do you prioritize self-care in your routine?
- What barriers do you encounter when trying to practice self-care?

Awareness and Education

- How knowledgeable do you feel about self-care strategies?
- What types of self-care education or training have you received in the past?

Emotional and Mental Health

- How do you currently manage stress and emotional challenges related to your work?
- What mental health resources do you find most helpful?

Physical Well-being

- How do you incorporate physical activity into your daily life?
- What nutritional habits do you follow?

Spiritual Well-being

- How important is spirituality in your self-care routine?
- What spiritual practices do you engage in?
- How do you find meaning or purpose in your work?

Social Support

- How do you engage with colleagues and peers for support?

- What role does community play in your self-care routine?

Feedback and Improvement

- What topics related to self-care would you like to learn more about?
- How can our collaborative group better support your self-care efforts?

Implementation

- What strategies would you find the most helpful in integrating self-care into your work?
- Would you be interested in participating in workshops or group activities focused on self-care?
- What in the realm in self-care would you like us to know that you don't see here?

Announcements

- FAITHS Grant Decisions are rolling out this week. Please reach out to Michelle or Sayron with any questions that you may have!
- We value your feedback! Please take a moment to share your thoughts on the FAITHS Retreat so we can better serve you in the future. **Survey Link**
- We would love to continue to collaborate with you throughout this year. All are required to RSVP via Zoom for in-person and/or hybrid FAITHS Leadership Council Meetings. You can find more information about those on our website: www.sff.org/faiths
    - **FAITHS FLC 2025 Meeting Schedule**
        - March 6, 2025 https://sff.zoom.us/meeting/register/ieRPQutRTui630VdthaUhA
        - June 5, 2025 https://sff.zoom.us/meeting/register/HTjuZtcrTRuaW_XA62zQeQ
        - September 4, 2025 https://sff.zoom.us/meeting/register/hZh15CtaT3OytwZvgh0vDA
        - November 6, 2025 https://sff.zoom.us/meeting/register/B42IZz6uQuOUsrFxBnhHqw
- Consider attending the Oakland Ballers community event at West Side ICAC hub on February 20th from 9am-2pm. More information **here.**
- The NAACP San Francisco Chapter is honored and excited to announce our 102nd Annual Freedom Fund Gala, themed "All In," which will take place on ***February 21, 2025, at 6 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, located at 5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA 94103***. Register **here.**
- Please take a moment to complete **survey** on disaster preparedness capacity from Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative.