



Behavioral Health & Recovery Services

Office of Diversity & Equity, Spirituality Initiative
310 Harbor Boulevard, Building E
Belmont, CA 94002
Email: ODE@smcgov.org
<https://www.smchealth.org/spirituality-initiative>

March 30, 2021

Dear San Mateo County community members

Re: Faith Leaders in Support of COVID-19 Vaccination

As faith-leaders, we hold life sacred. We are created not just to survive but to live fully and to thrive – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have been experiencing suffering and loss among our congregants, our community members, and our own family members.

We have lost the ability to worship together, to celebrate loved ones' milestones, to grieve the passing of our sisters and brothers, to break bread, to work at our jobs and produce income, and to bring healing touch and presence when needed.

Because of the ravages of COVID-19, we will be forever changed.

As faith leaders, we are uplifted by the fact that we now have vaccines that can provide an end to this loss and suffering. We are not doctors, researchers nor public health officials, but we have been listening carefully to trustworthy sources and what is being said about the vaccine. We feel confident in what they say.

We know there is a lot of misinformation being circulated in our communities about the vaccine. However, we believe that the vaccine is safe, necessary to save lives and the path to end the pandemic. Millions of people around the world have safely received the vaccination.

As faith-leaders, we feel a responsibility to lead our communities. We encourage each of you to consult with your health providers and to receive the vaccination as soon as it is available to you. We also feel committed to continuing to encourage safety precautions by wearing a face covering, maintaining 6-foot social distancing, avoiding gatherings, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, , washing hands, and getting tested as needed. If you need assistance in obtaining a vaccination when you are eligible, contact your faith community. We understand that some faith groups may not get the vaccine due to religious belief. Together, either by vaccination or encouraging safety precautions, we are committed to those we serve and their wellness.

If you would like to add your name to this letter, please go to: <https://forms.gle/AKxLEwKgianL3w7E6>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Diversity & Equity at ODE@smcgov.org. You can also visit the **Spirituality Initiative** website which has a "For Faith Leaders" section where you can get more information on the webinars regarding Covid-19: <https://www.smchealth.org/spirituality-initiative>.

We also invite you to join our Spirituality Initiative meeting which is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 12:30 – 2pm. If you would like to join our email list, please send your email to Melinda Ricossa (mricossa@smcgov.org) and she will include you in our monthly announcements.

We (San Mateo County Faith Leaders) sign this letter as a show of support for the vaccine, and efforts to bring health and well-being to our communities.

Rev. Henry Toryo Adams
San Mateo Buddhist Temple,
San Mateo, CA
Resident Minister

Rev. Jim Mitulski
Island United Church UCC of
Foster City CA
Pastor

Rabbi Corey Helfand
Peninsula Sinai Congregation,
Foster City, CA
Rabbi

Msgr. John Talesfore
Saint Matthew Catholic Church,
San Mateo, CA
Priest

Dilip Amin, Ph. D.
Sanatan Hindu Temple, San
Bruno, CA
Manager

Rev. Frank Vanderzwan
Menlo Church, Menlo Park, CA
Reverend

Rev Katie Goetz
Woodside Road United
Methodist Church
Redwood City, CA
Reverend

Jerry L. McBride
San Mateo Quaker Worship
Group, San Mateo, CA
Liaison

Arturo Arias
Eternal Life Church, Menlo
Park, CA
Pastor

Rev Iain Stanford
St. Peter's Episcopal Church,
Redwood City, CA
Reverend

Dr. John Crosby
Menlo Church, Menlo Park, CA
Dr.

Leafa T Taumoepeau
Tongan SF Interfaith, San
Mateo, CA
Coordinator

Rev Dr. Mary Graves
Trinity Presbyterian Church,
San Carlos, CA
Rev. Dr

Susan Van Riesen
Palo Alto Vineyard Church,
Palo Alto, CA
Pastor

Rev. Karen Thistlethwaite
Ladera Community Church,
Portola Valley, CA
Reverend

Rev. William Kruse
SMC Spirituality Initiative,
Belmont, CA
Reverend

Eugene Lee
Menlo Church, Menlo Park, CA
Executive Pastor

Rev. Terri Echelbarger
Many Journeys MCC, San
Mateo, CA
Pastor

Reverend Mary Frazier
Evangelistic Bread of Life
Outreach, East Palo Alto, CA
Reverend

Rev. Dr. L. Don Smith
Sturge Presbyterian Church,
San Mateo, CA
Pastor

Rev. Dr. Janet K. Bower
First Presbyterian Church of
Burlingame, CA
Pastoral Counselor/Parish
Chaplain

Rev. Amy Zucker
Morgenstern
Unitarian Universalist Church
of Palo Alto, CA
Reverend

Sister Joan Marie O'Donnell
Sisters of Mercy
Burlingame, CA
Sister

Rev. Dr. G. Penny Nixon
Peninsula Solidarity Cohort &
Congregational Church of San
Mateo, CA
Reverend

Rev Dr. Marlyn Bussey
St. James AME Zion Church,
San Mateo, CA
Rev. Dr.

Rev/ Jorge William Castro Abdala
Latinos Unidos en Cristo &
Igreja Brasileira Presbiteriana
San Mateo, CA
Burlingame
Reverend

Billy Lesmana
Bethel Church California
Millbrae, CA
Pastor

Rabbi Moshe Heyn
Coastside Jewish Community,
Half Moon Bay, CA
Rabbi

Sonny Siregar
Bethel Church California,
Millbrae, CA
Pastor

Rev. Dr. L. Don Smith
Sturge Presbyterian Church, San
Mateo, CA
Reverend

Salamasina Vuna
Hillsdale United Methodist Church
San Mateo, CA
Minister of Community,
Engagement/Bay District -
Peninsula.

**Rev. Dr. Oliver S. Mangubat,
D.Min**
United Methodist Church of Daly
City, CA
Reverend

Pastor Matt Stephan
Menlo Church, San Mateo, CA
Pastor

Reverend Melanie S. Donahoe
Episcopal Church of the Epiphany,
San Carlos, CA
Rector

Rev. Dr. Graham Baird
First Presbyterian Church of
Burlingame, CA
Lead Pastor

Le'apai Ryan
First Samoan Congregational
Christian Church of American
Samoa, Daly City, CA
Deacon

Manufou Liaiga-Anoa'i
First Samoan Congregational
Christian Church of American
Samoa, Daly City, CA
Deacon

**Rev. Michael P. Barham,
D.Min.**
Episcopal Churches of the Holy
Family & Good Shepherd,
Moon Bay & Belmont, CA
Vicar (Priest)

George Williams, SJ
Saint Agnes Catholic Church,
San Francisco, CA
Priest

Sonny Siregar
Bethel Church California,
Millbrae, CA
Pastor

Rev. Bearett Wolverton
Grace Covenant Church
South San Francisco, CA
Reverend

Rev. Gerardo Garcia Palacios
Trinity Presbyterian Church
East Palo Alto, CA
Reverend

Lisa Carhart
Menlo Church, Menlo Park
Campus, Menlo Park, CA
Pastor

