

So welcome. My name is Mary Deal, and I'm the current Interfaith Council president. And I just have really felt strongly we need to get our history together. And I'm so glad. And even those that maybe couldn't show up, they have sent, you know, Delegates.

Well, they've sent delegates or Progress. They've also sent me papers digitally. And so a lot of them that you see out there on the side, those are printed from what they have given. So kind of kind of fun. Some directories, of different years, and, Michael Lobo is a huge help.

Oh, great. And so I'm just so grateful that you're here. I'd like to begin with a prayer, and then we're gonna do loud lightning round introductions really quick because we're gonna talk a lot more, but just so everybody knows who each other are and what house of worship you represent were represented. Okay. Our dear god, we are so grateful to come together and to find joy in this wonderful, Franklin Interfaith Council.

We pray for guidance and for, stories to come to our minds, to remember the things that we have done together and served. And we thank you for the refreshments and, we see this, humbly, amen. Amen. Okay. So lightning round.

I already oh, well. Okay. I'm Mary Deal, and I am a lay member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints and been on the council for about eight years. Connie Schulman, lay person, member of Temple Heights High and, support system for the lovely Richard. Hope that it is is pioneer and So it was probably Carol the whole time.

He's our minister thirty years. Yeah. Mark Minikelli. I'm here with FUSF representing FUSF as well. I'm Vicky's friend.

And, I'm I'm not part of the council. We'll see what happens in the future. Sweet. I think we'll we're here probably representing FUSF until that has intentions to return to any of these meetings. I don't know.

We'll see. I would say also that I I asked Mark and he said yes nicely, but also he's sort of our quasi historian at the church department, so So I thought you might be interested in this. I don't know about that. I I have a short story. I have some I have some files in my possession that I'm supposed to be sorting through.

So we'll I guess I'll accept that. That's great. Hey. I'm Cliff Winters. Please tell Bev that we love her.

Okay. Cliff Winters, New England Chapel. I've only been here for about a year. I guess it's close to a year now. That's So I'm I'm the new Yeah.

And that's alright. I don't, however, have a name tag. I missed the end of the name tag thing. You gotta leave. I guess Yeah.

I I rarely make a call. Partner? Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

We'll use those when you're done. Okay? That's it. Yep. Okay.

I am Sue Borshard. I am a member of this church, and I, am currently the secretary of interfaith council, and I've been on it since I retired, I think, in February. I'm not sure. I'm Richard Schulman from Temple Eitzchaim. I'm one of the founders and signers for the Franklin Interfaith Council.

And, we're thrilled to be able to talk about how we started and what happened and the growth and the changes over the years. It's really been a source of pride not only for the community, but for the temple and for my family. So it's really been quite a quite a ride. I'm Tom Halpert. I'm the rabbi emeritus at Templett's Haim.

I'm where I was in the the 2012 to 2024. And, my my special claim to fame is that I live down the street from Sue. And vice versa. You only counsel for your whole The whole time. For '24.

I'm a past president. I'm Paris Cargill, and I have been associated with the interfaith since many, many years ago. As maybe you can see by what I'm going to report on when I the story. But, I'm happy to be here. Thank you, Florence.

Is Bobby one of your sons? Yes. My classmate. Your classmate? Really?

Oh, I saw him just yesterday. Oh, great. I have the time. Look at some later. Yes.

I'm Cynthia Croto. I'm a member of the Methodist Church, and I've been on council now for two and a half months. One. And our pastor Jacob cannot be with us this afternoon. I'm Rabbi Rachel Putterman, and I'm at Temple Eitzkind.

And I'm new too. I started last August. I don't know if Cliff and I started around the same time. Same. Yeah.

Yeah. I thought I was the newbie then. I got you. But she doesn't preach the Thanksgiving service. No.

He's still in line for that. I thought it was too. You would. Lynn, do you mind introducing yourself to us? Okay.

I'm Lynn Fickover, And if you look at the, articles of con of, incorporation, you'll find my name there. Yoo hoo. I started out as a member of the, ecumenical housing council back in '86, '80 '7, somewhere around there. And when that closed, was part of the the ecumenical council. And of course, that morphed into the integrated council.

Perfect. Thank you so much. You called me. Thank you so much. Alright.

You called me. So now any dates that you have that you can stick on that timeline, go for it, and also grab something to eat. Alright. Thank you, everybody. There's no I didn't hear Bob.

So if we can take our seats again, we are going to go through the timeline, and we're gonna No. That's start from the earliest that we can remember. So the predecessor organization, which I believe was the ecumenical housing committee, how council Back further. Even back further. Okay.

I'm so excited to hear all that you have to tell us. So we're gonna start with Clarice, and then we're gonna go to Lynn, and then we're gonna go to Richard, and then Tom. Just kind of in the order of the

timeline. And don't mind me. I'm probably gonna be in the back writing some things down because it'll just help me.

I guess are you gonna note? Good party. Perfect. Quick question. Yes.

What what is your what's your destination for today? What do you hope to have accomplished by the end of the day? I hope we have gathered well, let me let me show you. Up till today, this was our history. Oh, wow.

Okay. This has already accomplished what I hoped it would accomplish. It has brought stories and events so that we can compile a history, put it on our website, have it for reference, and so we can see what amazing things, frankly, have been done. And it really for me, anyway, I'm it's an honor to be part of this organization. So, and, actually, I did let me just say one thing.

So, Tom Bed Stubner. So I did finally find out when our church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints joined. It was in where is this? Anyway, in 02/2004. But, Tom Bedd, student or bishop Tom, he did not he was didn't wanna do it.

Right? Like, he had his own job, his own vocation, plus he was leading a congregation voluntarily. And and he was asked to be on it, and he's like, ugh. And he he went to his first meeting. He said, I was I was converted from my first meeting.

I loved these people, and I loved the good work that they do. And he just he couldn't say enough. So, that's how I feel. Like, the first time I came, I was a little hesitant. Oh my goodness.

But this has been such a joy for me, and I feel like that's the response I've gotten from so many. So, anyway, that I need further to Claire. Does this need to be closer? That's probably good enough. Oh, okay.

That one could be a little bit more centered on you three if you I think that little black thing. You can see here. However you wanna understand that. Okay. I don't have any dates written down.

I couldn't remember all the dates. I moved here with my family, in 1954. So I've been here in Franklin a long while. And, ever since I came to Franklin, I've been a member of the Methodist church. And it's gone through its ups and downs just like any other church or any other person.

But anyway, let me just start where I jotted down some notes. Actually, when I came, the population was between 507,500. So it was small. And, churches were not as many as the right, of course, today. When I first came, the dean of the chapel, actually, the Unitarian Church was on the Dean campus and they used to have their graduations there.

And they were not a member of a group when they were there. We had, we didn't have a large group. In fact, we didn't have an organized group. The Federated and the Methodist Church where you have a history here, I think, written at this church. Yes.

Yes. I don't know how far you go back. Lynn? Seventeen thirty eight for one and 1868 for the other. Yeah.

Yeah. But no prolonged history of things that happened. Oh. Events. Well, I was on the the housing council.

So Well, Sam Johnson was on with that, and he was in But he is all the inhabitant. No. We're botan. We We're, original signers of the letter that started the whole thing. Right.

Right. They were very active, both of them. I remember. Yes. Yes.

I don't think I can start at the beginning of the episodes that I remember, but I can start saying that at one time, there was an oil shortage in the area, and we used to join the Federated and Methodist together for the oil shortage. So we had joint services in the wintertime, two or three weeks, maybe more. I don't remember the length of time. Mhmm. But that was a good time.

And summertime, we also would have some Methodist some joint services. And that was when Tom Howard was pastor here, and Ted Taylor was pastor at the Methodist Church. They were both very, very active pastors. One year during that time, maybe a little later, we had a two week summer school. You know, they had used to have summer programs for children.

Vacation Bible School. Yes. Vacation Bible School. Well, that's what they called it then too. Vacation Bible School.

Yes. And, I don't know how many summers we did it. I can just remember one because I was in charge. And we had a hundred people. Wow.

Including the Catholic church. Wow. Yes. Yes. We invited them particularly that summer.

So I think it was a little bit later when there were more people in the group this group interface with this now. One year, we had a company from California, theater company. I had read about it in a magazine, a theater magazine that John the Bishop Kennedy, a Methodist Bishop in California was sponsoring this theater group And I thought it would be nice for the group to sponsor it here because they were sponsoring it all over the country in different places. Again, it was only the two pastors that I remember, the Federated and the Methodist. And we had the, theater production here in the Federated Church because, of course, you have such good facilities.

And it was perfect for the play. And we did cry the beloved country that year with refreshments afterwards. So I don't know what year that would be. Do you remember when the book came out? Book came out in '48.

But it was a very good book. It was about the South Africa and the apartheid movement and all that. And it was very interesting, and everybody loved it. And we had a full house, meaning the balcony as well as the church was built and we had refreshments afterwards. They were here two nights and sponsored the play both nights and had refreshments afterwards.

And, a lot of people, I I I don't think it was the interfaith at that time. Or the edge, I should say, intact human because that's what we called ourselves when we organized a little more than the two of us. The two churches, that is. But, they did an excellent job, and we had to provide meals for them and housing for them that night. So, of course, there were people in the community who offered their services and did that for the church group.

And it was very wonderful and very well received. The next year we did it again, which is interesting. The choice of plays was a little different. It was, I got it written down. My memory is, well, when I get excited, it's gone.

Anyway, the second play oh, the Screwtape Letters by Sinclair Lewis, and that was more on social issues. I'm not sure it was as well received because it wasn't was a little more difficult to read, and understand. But everybody did comment on how well it was, well it was done. But those were the two years that we did it. And that was quite a lot because, of course, we had to pay the I think I think we paid the transportation.

I'm sure they must we must have. So we, I think we had to charge for both nights. And, the food pantry was mentioned, but I can remember one year, that the Franklin Church at the Methodist Church was in charge of it, and they were located before the, I think it was before the town hall had their meals there. I guess their programs there too. Because they were downstairs in the basement and at the Methodist Church when we had food, we we borrowed a store shopping cart, and we wheel it down the ramp and take it over to the senior center, whatever we had collected.

Not senior center. Town hall. Town hall basement. Yeah. Yeah.

So we we were involved in that as well. Wasn't town hall located directly across the street from the Methodist Church then? No. It was right across. Right next to Yes.

Right next to Yeah. Where the Pisonoes is? No. Where the where the historical museum is. Right?

Where the museum is now. Oh, okay. It was right there. Got it. And and, they used to have the senior meals there too before they had the senior center for the meals and their programming.

The town hall was very much used for that. In fact, once I remember the Methodist Church was being renovated or something indoors, and we borrowed their town hall building for the Sunday services that time, which was very nice. Town hall is really good. So the historical society used to be the town hall. Mhmm.

Thank you. Before that, I'm not sure. Yeah. It was the town hall and then it was the senior center. Or was it the other way around?

I don't know. Anyway, it's been both the town hall. It was a senior center before the new senior center was built. That's what it was. Okay.

Yeah. Yeah. Because then they moved to a very nice place at the senior center. Yes. Okay.

Oh, and my daughter informed me that she was she joined the group. In 1971, the high school seniors, no, the whole high school school children were invited to audition for Jesus Christ, the superstar, the play. And, it had just been on, not tape. Yeah. Yeah.

The record. Yeah. The record in 1970. I had it. Okay.

Yeah. So does my daughter. In 1970, it was came out on the record. She told me that, and they had a very good representation for the audition, had lots of people. And, then it was held again at the Federated Church because of the facilities for the play, which was wonderful.

And those kids, well, I know in the Methodist Church they had been doing folk masses, so they were used to performing in front of people. And it was a wonderful, wonderful. And they had, an accompanist with the piano and the organ for the music. So Can I ask what's a folk mass? A folk mass is when they were doing the folk songs.

Oh, cool. Yeah. You play guitar Yes. Where it can be close. Yeah.

I didn't know either. Thank you for that. It does still happen. It wasn't that Oh, it was like a it was one of the songs. It was so important.

It was one of the first it it was in our world. It's like it was like reading, the summer camp music into the church. But it stayed for us, but for them you're saying Well, if the the folk mass, quote unquote, disappeared, but various a lot of the music did end up in Yeah. It still does end up as part of the Christian worship. During those years, even the Catholic church have a folk mass.

Mhmm. We don't one of their That's right. Sunday morning services was a was a folk mass. Yeah. During those years.

Interesting. It was very nice. I remember. The church where I grew up, the folk mass could never be in the main worship space. It always had to be in the base.

Oh. It's jotted one of the real side chapels or something. It wasn't allowed in the Interesting. Yeah. It is interesting.

Okay. Anyway, their their performance of Jesus Christ Superstar was excellent and were very well received. Very well received. And the kids, of course, loved it. Oh, I should have told you when I first moved here, the Episcopal Church was on School Street across from Dean's Gym.

But it's right across, Garfield Street. Mhmm. And a very building it was? Very small. Yeah.

Yeah. Dean bought that building eventually. Yeah. They were using it to Yeah. Yeah.

Was was the physical chair. Yes. That's right. Yeah. My husband taught at Dean.

So that's how that's why we came here. Why we stopped here. Okay. Oh, and the universalist church. I think I think that though.

Did And I tell you that that was on the front campus of the Dean Kim. You said Yeah. I thought I did. Perfect. Yeah.

And I remember one day, Memorial Day, marching in a Memorial Day parade, and the interchate church council marched in that parade, and I was one of them. And Jeff Roy, who was a state rep, also marched in that parade. That's how I met him. That's so cool. So that that was kind of fun.

I don't know if any of the councils have marched. Oh, yes. Yes. They have. Oh, yes.

Okay. Oh, yes. Now we just help with the Prayers. Prayers at the different At the common. Cemeteries.

Yeah. And then at the common then Yes. Speak. I think that's, those are really fast things, but they're part of your history. So thank you.

I think that a flavor of it, but I really enjoyed the meetings. Eventually, we got to eat that. They one of the, assisted living places. I think it was no. I I won't even say because I I totally forgotten.

I tried to search my mind for that name of it. But, when they had when you had your meetings, we would go to that place and eat in their dining room. And it was very nice. I do remember that. Food is always good to remember.

Food is always good to remember. So Thank you so much. Yes. It's fun to remember. Yeah.

Good. It is so wonderful. Thank you for sharing. Wonderful. Lynn?

Okay. I'm going to try to pick cherry pick some things and things because I could talk until it was bedtime. Since you already had your nap. To give you a little bit of perspective What could you say what church you're with? Franklin Federated.

Oh, oh, okay. Gotcha. I would I would be that smart ass with just just anyone. I was I was a child of Franklin. My mother moved here when she, taught, investigative, science at Thoroughbred Grove Junior High School, and my father was the shop teacher at Thoroughbred Grove High School at Junior High School.

So at that time, I was the basically, the only Protestant child in the Catholic family. So I've been ecumenical at least for you all my life. I went to school for four years at Four Corners down at, what what the what it now it's at Jerk's store now. What is it? Walgreens.

Walgreens. Oh, yeah. Okay. I went there, to Horace Mann. A sign.

Is there a sign there? There's a, like, a welcome to Franklin sign. Yeah. But it looks like a school sign. Oh.

Is that why? It's because it used to be a school? It it makes sense to me. Four years, I went to four corners school. Yeah.

Okay. And then for two years, I went to Horace Mann School, which is now Pisonis and that Yeah. That was the school. And, actually, that used to be the high school. Mhmm.

One of my neighbors in Mansfield had gone to high school there. Wow. And then I graduate I was graduated from, Franklin High School, which was at Davis Thayer, and my father was the first freshman class at Davis Thayer. Mhmm. And I was a senior year of the year they voted to build a new high school.

Mhmm. And I couldn't wait to get out of town. Here you are. And I Touche. And I moved back in 2018.

So, anyway, so I was I grew up in an ecumenical family, shall we say, in a church, the Franklin Federated Church, which had just joined the Baptist and the Congregationalists together. The Franklin Federated Church actually was formed the year before I was born. Mhmm. So I've got a long rather interesting history. Couple of things that I remember about Franklin growing up, that are of interest to, this group.

When I was well, for most of my childhood has been at least through my, my college years, the Federated Church, Methodist Church, and the Universalist Church used to have summer services, which are worship services together. One one month one church would supply the minister, another church would supply the building, and the other church would be free. And so for three months, they had joint services. So, this cooperation goes back a long way. Do you remember what year?

Yeah. Do you remember when What year is that? Well, all through my high school and college. And, so I remember but I'm thinking one particular time when, then this would have been nineteen sixty ish, somewhere in there. All three ministers said took the took part of their vacation at Star Island, family conference Center.

And I used to go there. So every Sunday, one of the ministers would talk about Star Island in my August. All I wanted to do is get there. So anyway, my association with this group started when, the ministers in town wrote a letter because they were concerned about the high cost of housing. And I had just, graduated from law school, had opened my practice, and decided I wanted to be part of this.

So every Tuesday every Tuesday every other Tuesday, I would be late for court. And I would call and say, I'm leaving now. I'll be there in a half an hour. And what the housing committee did, I think, was interesting is we actually tried to do something about building affordable housing. I had one of the last courses I had taken at law school, was real estate.

And I, at that time, learned about the incentives that were there to build affordable housing. So I was I was having a chance to actually be part of trying to do it. Well, the housing party the housing market collapsed. So that was Is that early eighties? I'm gonna say 8089.

Somewhere in there. Eighty eight eighty nine. I thought you said you left Franklin and didn't come back till 2018. I'm sorry? I thought you said you left Franklin and didn't come back till 2018.

But I never left the church. Oh oh, so you just moved to a different a nearby town. Yes. I lived in Norton or Mansfield. I commuted every Sunday.

She didn't really leave. She just lived someplace else. Different town. Different town. Gotcha.

So that was what build cooperating on, build trying to build affordable housing was one of the things that this group tried to do early on. As I was looking at the map, and fortunately, during and checked it out, The, Gulf War, which we call Desert Storm. When this when this was ramping up, the ecumenical council, devised program that I believe it was on Monday nights. And we would have a speaker from the outside to try to orient us with what was going on from the not from our perspective, from but different perspectives. Then every we would have, a vigil and then we would have the speaker.

And one thing that struck me, has always struck me was a particular thing. We had a an Arab speaker that's time. And, Andrew Plessy, who was from the Franklin Federated Church, was hosting the speaker. And at the vigil, I believe it was father Yahtzee, gave a prayer, and he ended it in the name of the father,

the son, and the holy ghost. And so at our next council meeting, it was just before you guys came in, so we didn't have your perspective yet.

And mentioned that she was a little concerned about the fact that this would be a little bit alienating for our our guest speaker. And we got into it a very interesting discussion about who we could pray with. Mhmm. Because some of us could pray with anybody. And some of us had to pray in the name of the father and the holy ghost, and some people couldn't pray with alien with, atheists.

So that started a very interesting discussion. And then, temple, the temple formed, our church was very, very proud of our hosting them for until we were able able to build your own building door. So you met couple met here? Yes. And I have a closet for both.

I remember my interview, my first interview with the search committee, and there was a sign, temple at the end of life. Yeah. Is that the building over there? That can't be the temple. I was so confused.

It was the parking lot. Rich will tell you. And then I don't know when I after I got here that they took that sign down to us. We own the parking lot. It's a matter of fact as a matter of fact, when, my husband was chair of the search committee, The church did a profile.

And number one on the list of things that we were we were proud of was nurturing the temple. So, I'm gonna stop there because I could talk forever. When did, Carol join? When did when did Interfaith? She was preinterfaith.

She was she was a She was a doctor. Because you talked about the Methodist and the and the, congregation and the federated coming together. But when did Universalist is one of the first signs. Yeah. Yeah.

Oh, she was Carol decided to the Whit Bowman. Johnson. And Sam Johnson. Okay. Yeah.

Who's the fourth person? Sam, Whit, Carol? Nope. Just a three. Carol, Whit, and Sam.

Just a three. So when when Claris was talking about the Federated and the Methodist it's some point. And some universalist came in. Yeah. Yeah.

So the universalist, we've been here since '18 Fifty six. Yeah. So but we've waxed and reigned to his eyes. Yeah. I would assume that, you know, you talked about the church at the Dean College campus.

That was, like, our third church. We've had four or five in town. And you used to be where Saint Mary's is now? So so the first the first church was built on the Dean campus. It was actually completed.

It was, through a grant from Oliver Dean, and it was actually completed before, Dean Academy was completed. So some of the Dean Academy classes were first held in the Universalist Church there on the campus. And then we worshiped in the chapel there for a while because we were part of that. And then Yeah. Both that then that church burned down a couple of times, I think, before before we went to the chapel.

Yes. And then we also owned, what used to be Leland Academy over here on Pleasant Street. It's now Chi That was ours. Oh. The great headlines for that because we rented it to a different school because we moved out.

Our church has split it during the Vietnam War. People were didn't like the minister and half went saying pro or anti. But we leased it to an academy, a a group who ended up not paying their rent. So we had to take them to court. Yes.

And the headlines are church takes school to court. Oh. That was another one of ours, and then we moved back to So there's hope for people who move? Yes. The churches?

Yes. Absolutely. It's about the people. It's not about family. Yeah.

So And I can imagine the Unitarian remnant on this earlier council would have had something to say about how we pray. Right? Yes. Yeah. But the the message is to, federated church and we're in the, universe was, didn't have any problem with anybody they wanted.

They wanted to pray with. Although I I have to say that Carol was very happy when, the temple came along, and she didn't have to be just ecumenical. She was very happy to be Interfaith. Interfaith. Yeah.

And that is a perfect lead in to Richard. So, as as Lynn, has said, part of the origins of Temple Es Chaim, really started with a relationship that developed between, the temple and the pastor here with Rodman. So Whit was studying in, at Harvard, divinity school to try to understand, you'll excuse the expression, rabbis, eastern religions of which Judaism fell into. So, we had many conversations, And he was really, dedicated to the idea that Franklin had to grow out of its shell. And we were, as Lynn has said, the new kids on the block.

Were there Jews in Franklin before the temple? Probably. Oh, yes. I went to school with them. Oh, with them?

No. There were lots of them. They they were mostly Gorellics. But Yeah. You were I was I was just thinking back.

Gorellics. Gorellics. It's a lot of They milk people. Gorellic farms. Alright.

Thank you. But but they there was no organized synagogue. There was no place here, and we got talking. The temple had started. We met upstairs here once a month, for Shabbat Sabbath services.

We met downstairs for our board meetings when before it was redone beautifully here, when it still was very musty and we'll see. But we met in one of the classrooms. That's wonderful. And we had said, hey, are you interested in the ecumenical council? And I said, well, I'm not ecumenical with anybody here.

And he said, oh, oh, yeah. That that's true. And, he said, you know, it should be interfaith because, obviously, there are non Christian communities here. And that was the really the nub of how the Franklin Ecumenical Council transitioned into the Franklin Interfaith Council. What year was that?

Nineteen well, we started the conversations in '89 and we ratified in 1990, I think. Yes? That makes sense. Yeah. I wasn't part of that.

I can't imagine this without you. Your bylaws say 1991. Nineteen '90 '1. Okay. So it's let's say 1990 to 1991.

I'm sorry. No. That's great. I'm just we we went through some harrowing times with some of the organizations that are now really central to the interfaith council. Some of the the Unitarian Universalist issues arose with the Catholic church.

Some of the, Catholic issues started with another denomination. So there was sort of this sense What Catholics What did they part of this, you know, when they start joined? They joined from the beginning, but it took an act of God. And Jesus Christ in the Trinity. And the hope.

So Actually, actually, the story behind it is the minister was not going to join. The the priest was not going to join the bus. College branch which you are. Go ahead. Yeah.

Because he had problems with Unitarian Universalism. Mhmm. And so me being a Boston College graduate went over to have a talk with him with my oldest son, Jonathan, and we sort of sat down and met, and we talked about what interfaith really was. We talked about the idea that even back to cardinal pushing, the idea of interfaith was something that the cardinal was really in favor of, and his successor was also in favor of. And how how could it be that the largest denomination in town doesn't wanna be part of something that is really holistic?

To which he said, Richard, how how did he put it? Richard, the Jesuits were did a good job on you. And they joined. Originally originally, I think he was concerned about what's going to happen to the interfaith, Good Friday service that was always on his mind. The ecumenical.

And I said, frankly, you can call it ecumenical. You sure can call it interfaith. We're not gonna be part of it no matter what. This is and through those converse that one conversation, he actually assigned a priest to, be the representative of the Catholic Church. George Spagnolia.

Spagnolia. You remember George? I remember George. Spagnolia. With his wool socks and his, open sandals.

Jesus. Even that 12 Pelosi a row. He actually opened up the bookstore in Downtown Franklin. That was there for a while. Oh, right.

Oh, right. Yeah. That was him. Yeah. So that's how the, Franklin Ecumenical Council transitioned into the interfaith council, and one of our early charges was some oversight of the Franklin food pantry, which was unfortunately starting to really need a lot of support, as we know.

So that, housing, emphasis turned into a feeding emphasis. Okay. And we maintain that until they, the Franklin food pantry, which used to be the Franklin Interfaith food pantry split off onto itself, which was good for both organizations. Yeah. Is that Mhmm.

But who is that? Because the pantry, I'm on the board of the country. We talk with pride that we were formed by the interview, but then everybody made the right decision to to be its own, folks. So And

and Vicky, we we are the founders of the Interfaith Council. We're really thrilled, and I am personally thrilled to see how many people you can feed now as an independent wonderful nonprofit.

And it does us proud too, and for the newer members of the council, it should do you proud in a historic sense. And, that was certainly one of those holistic missions. We would call it tikkun olam, healing of the world, even on a small basis. You know, just the town of Franklin or one family in Franklin or even one person. So that is that is part of our ancestry.

Other things that we did is we continue those conversations about faith. And one of our big things was the first Franklin Interfaith Council Thanksgiving service. And may she rest in peace, Andrew Plessy was part of the fighting of what can we do, what can we say, where can we go, do we have to have it in a public place, Can we have it in a church? Can we have it wherever? And we had to I remember these meetings.

We sat and we every single prayer, every single song we went over, how can we make this more universal? How can we have it more inclusive? And there were some things that we could and some things that we couldn't. We did ask or I asked, I understand your prayers and in, in the name of, and I'm and I said that I understand that's what you want, but try to think about your entire congregation. And and work for a couple of years, except for, of course, the largest denomination couldn't couldn't stop themselves, which is okay.

I mean, we learned to talk with each other. We met monthly. We had one, member who was a clergy and two members who will lay. And we did meet From each? From each Wow.

Warehouse. Three people per house. And people were on waiting lists to join. Wow. Wow.

Or forward, we had two pastors. Oh. So the interfaith council has stepped in when there were swastikas in town. Yeah. The inter Remember the years Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Of the first ones? Are they on there? I think there's a document there.

And if it's not, I have it at home online. Okay. And when was it at the temple? Right? Well, that was later.

I'm sorry. Okay. Sorry. Go ahead. I forgot that one.

So there was there was swastikas painted in downtown newspaper. On street signs. On street signs. Mhmm. There were swastikas later, a few years later in the soccer field and on the snack shack.

And the bathrooms at one point too. That was that was that was more that was That was yes. That was a That was a temple thing that the rabbi, went and addressed that. But on the interfaith council, it was an Asian student who was assaulted at Dean College. And we marched on town halls against faith council.

Do you know when to stop? I I don't. I know. I know it's okay. To me, it's all like I'm right.

A hundred years ago. But, so there were there were these things that we can come together as as different religions praying virtually, we think, to the same God yet in so many different ways, but that

feeling that I am just myself. I am not alone in Franklin as a Jewish person. You are not alone, as a Jesus Christ of the last saint person, etcetera, etcetera. It has to be something that says that we are a little different than other towns.

Even though 90% of us are Catholic, No. You're not here. Is that really the not really the Frank says Catholic. Is that really the When we moved here, that was good. Okay.

It's 65% identified as Catholic Valentine. Wow. What? That's strange. Well, so so Well, that's probably because a lot of people now don't identify.

Just don't identify. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. But to farm. Mhmm. And that flipped completely flipped, but if you go down on the monuments, you can see the change in the names. Uh-huh.

Sure. On on the war monuments. Which is a good reminder that you might want to talk to professor Rob Lawson at the because he's a professor of history there. And, he really does has studied the history of Franklin and the and the churches in Franklin. Yes.

And the graveyard is in Franklin. Yeah. There's a bunch of you who stayed there in The, I I found something online that was The same year. Does 02/2011 sound like the right year for that Dean College effect? Could be.

What year did you say? Twenty eleven. I think there was one earlier than that. No. We should did you add the George Floyd?

That's under me. Okay. That's it. On the timeline. Yes, sir.

Thank you, sir. Anyway, and I'm going to cut what I really wanted to say down. I am personally, thrilled that the interfaith council has continued its work and that there is a safe place for us to differ. Anything from what we say at an interfaith service to the ongoing struggles in the world. And and it makes Franklin a a special place.

And I am very proud that our clergy leadership has always been involved. And I'm very proud of all the people who I have met clergy and lay like Lynn forever. It seems Forever. We always see each other. And carry that forth.

Make sure make sure that that that sense of community, though we pray differently, doesn't distract us from being kind to each other. Mhmm. Yes, missus Schollman. As inside, I would like to thank the New England Chapel for being here and showing your adorable face. Bye bye.

I I say that because in our association with people in Franklin, our connection, temple connection to Whitbodin, was through friends who belong to this church through the Newcomers Club. That was our first group, social social group. And, those people introduced us to wit and the use of the church and all of that lovely, lovely generosity on their part. And also, other members of the Franklin Federated Church who kind of did some some, church hopping ended up at the New England Chapel when you were in the industrial park. Mhmm.

And it's a sad phrase. That when we were at Horace Mann. Mhmm. When we were at Horace Mann. They were at Horace Mann.

That's right. That's right. But we never went to a service at Horace Mann. But those people, you probably know them, the Carlsons. Mhmm. Invited us to come to the church when you were in the industrial park.

We were like, oh, this is great. This is great. The driveway is not great, but everything happened. What's not great? The driveway.

Do you remember that? I do sorry. I did not remember the driveway because I was just so dazzled by having a roof and walls. You were. You had a beautiful space and you designed it so well.

And then when you started bowling, Yeah. Just you you just transformed that space. So make and we talk about space because we talk about space. Talk we do a lot of talking about spaces, the temple. So I'm so happy to see you.

Congratulations on your new space, and I hope you continue to fill it and, and join us. And I'm the one who leaves you messages because we did check the tour at your open house. And I'm the one who left you mess sticky note messages. Why don't you belong to the empty fifth house? Oh, it was you, Connie.

Yes. It's obviously eventually got through. Yeah. I think it was you. Yeah.

Yeah. And I appreciate that. By the way, Allen and Vicky are also on the ground. Excellent. Awesome.

Awesome. K. Bring us home, Tom. Thank you for sitting for all of this. So I among other things I bring you greetings from, Rabbi Rachel's in my predecessor, a couple of how to move from me.

Rabbi Barbara Simons, who was here, in the late eighties into the, I was like, late nineties and mid two thousands. She happened to be in town, and we had coffee, and she and I told her I was coming for this. She is somebody who would be glad to talk to you, by the way. Perfect. So I will get your connections.

But, she, we'll talk about how significant, being part of the Interfaith Council was and how much, for instance, of a mentor, Carol Rosine, was to her. So I wanted to share that. Let me think about a few things that got mentioned before, and I was I wanna say. One is we talked about marching in the Interfaith the Memorial Day services. So we did that until sometime in the, '20 in the late twenty tens.

And in fact, there was a banner. My global has it. There was a banner that we that we would hold and march behind in the interstate service. Rabbi Simons tells the story that she was pregnant and she was in the back. They were marking the internet service by the banner and, there was a it was right behind a car that was, you know, had fumes and she and she was had to keep moving to a different part of the reception.

But, no. We did that for a while until we stopped doing it. When I started, the meetings were being held at, assisted living facilities. We went to a couple of them. And then eventually, we decided to move it back into our houses of worship, and moved around the different ones.

And as I recall, we did at least one year where we talked about special holidays from our perspective or other or special texts from our perspective. So that was very, I thought that was very helpful. We've been the the membership has moved back and forth. When I started, there was a a priest from an independent Catholic group who, participated. I don't remember his name right off, but he was there.

He was we're very we're very we're groundwork these these ground ropes. And Like the Franciscans or something? No. Independent. Independent one.

Not it it was a liberal Catholic group that did not that I I think, you know, was was Okay. Not part of the church. Mhmm. Which I think in the Catholic church being there was always a little bit complicated, but they worked everything out. I think the chapel was in before I got there.

You all were members at one point of the Interfaith Council. Or at least, if not exactly members, maybe, know, sort of were hanging around, but there there was a period where the was that interest? I before my time. No. So I don't know.

I just remember hearing this. So a few things that happened during my tenure that I I just wanted to lift up. In 2013, marathon bombing happened. Mhmm. And I was had a a youth group down in New York.

This was Golan the on the day of the the bombing. And I got back. I got hold of Charlie Eastman here Mhmm. And said, we've gotta do something, and indeed. So within a few days, and I cannot unfortunately, I couldn't find on my calendar when it was, but within a few days, there was a service that was held here, at the Federated Church, an interfaith service for people that come together and deal with marathon buying.

So I thought that was a very helpful thing that this, group did. There are various Castro letters. You have information about those already. I don't have to go over those. I'll say a few more things in 2018 after the shootings of the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

I know that, we had a service almost immediately in our congregation, and, father Brian Manning and reverend Kathy McAdams came to to show their solidarity and helped that a few days later put together an interfaith service of the term was, comfort and consolation on 10/30/2018, that was held at at Saint John, and that was very meaningful. And then we held our next the first Friday night after it was, which is not service. We held here, you know, we had as as you all noticed, we had noted, we kept doing High Holy Day and other big services here for a long time. And, so it was held here. The the Federation Church was wonderful about that, and the attendance was amazing.

So people came out in Denver. It was very it was very, moving and important to to the community. In 2019 and '20, we, started to try running some services for students at the college, which, we did on a monthly basis, which we had a lot of fun with. The college students didn't show up with numbers. Oh, we had a lot.

We had a lot. Yes. In Wait. Sorry. Were those interface services?

Yeah. Oh. Wasn't it you and Jacob? Jacob, I, Eric, you did the music. I think Kathy I mean, but Kathy wasn't there yet.

Maybe she was. I don't remember. But there were several of us Mhmm. Who did this. Mhmm.

And where would where would you hold the visit? In the in the chapel? In the chapel. In the chapel. Beautiful, gorgeous in the college chapel.

We still couldn't get that. We tried this time. We tried that time. Yep. We totally tried.

We tried. Yep. Did the radio show come out of the interface? The radio show did not. The radio show just came out of so Kathy McAdams' predecessor, who sorry to say, I cannot remember her name.

She she was she she she was not she did not she never became rector, but she was there for a while. She and I had talked about a radio show and, that we might want to do together. And so Pete at the radio station after eventually called and said, you know, why don't we get some get that radio show back together. And, you know and and I said, I've been talk I've been talking to someone with Kathy when she was in about this. And so we came up with the idea of bringing Eric in and doing a priest and minister and a rabbi walk into a radio station.

Mhmm. And so So it's all tied. There's there's a dispute as to who came up with the name. But, anyway So whatever That is also radical. So I'm I'm taking it.

Anyway, so the right the right so we cannot do that as an interfaith hassle thing, It was just us. And then, of course, eventually, when Kathy decided Eric, of course, left and and and and was Stepped in there. And Jacob stepped in. And then when when Kathy left, and Doreen stepped in, he could no longer use the name, so we came up with the, Franklin. Big my address.

Is that it? Big form. Big form. Yes. Big form.

And we did that. Bill. I left and they decided they were done. There's there's enough difference. Even the difference between a U universalist and a Methodist, it is it's different.

But when you have two mainstream protestants like, yeah, what he said. Yeah. What she said. You know? Yeah.

He doesn't know. But so that so that show so we did that show for, you know, years, but that that really was just that was independent though the council, of course, supported it as it always did at at all these kinds of activities. The when the Shirley Owen was killed, there was candlelight vigil. And, again, not technically organized by the Interfaith Council. The father Manning very much wanted to make sure that people in the Interfaith Council would be part of it.

And even so, several of us spoke. There there was a service, that I believe we did put together from the Interfaith Council in, June of twenty two, for Ukraine. Yeah. We did. And that was there.

I put them up. Perfect. And that was on there. The, you know, the Thanksgiving services were always big that we I believe we're we're still doing Martin Luther King services. People were not coming in numbers, and we ended up deciding to to stop those.

We continued with faith forum with the I'm sorry, with the voices of faith every other year. So, I mean, those are a variety of specific things. But the the conversations, the connections, the, you know, just,

working through things, talking things out. The the the the major work that was done by Jacob Juncker in, for Love Franklin. Yeah.

The communities were, were, you know, starting to fall apart. And he, did something that, you know, came up with this idea. And, again, it wasn't technically the interfaith council. The interfaith council quickly adopted it, and it became a huge part of something that I think everyone who signed on felt proud of. What year was that, the love?

It was last night. Twenty two? It was very recent. Was it it's more recent than was it just with the shelter or was it before No. This was when the It was when the student It was when the student Yeah.

Oh, you got TQC. November. It was right before November 21. So we made a statement. Right.

We have that in our panel. Yeah. Yeah. It was That's what I'm sure. Came out of the high school that was Mhmm.

Verbally assaulted at the town council. Right. She was Oh, that was it. Yeah? Yes.

Yeah. I remember that. Yes. Yes. You know, Carol's been gone a long time now for us, but I I just I know having talked to her, I just wanna speak to you, Tom, and teacher of your faith leaders.

Carol just valued her, collegial relationships through this. She spoke so highly of you, Tom, Richard. I I haven't heard your name. We're we're good friends. But but Witt and Sam, like that collection of, power at at that time, if you will, and and view that commitment and to social justice and the offerings for the heat assistance and the fuel assistance.

When did that start? Fuel assistance. Fuel assistance had been going I started at twelve. Fuel assistance had been going on for some period of time. For I for a a good period of time before that.

It was it it was all you know, when I started, it was the Thanksgiving day Thanksgiving Day service fund of the system program. I thought it was just in our archives that, you know, the board would figure out which offerings they would reserve, and they always reserve two Yes. To give away to interfaith at our church, which is That was the other every basically, the interfaith the the fuel assistance was funded by the Thanksgiving Day service and the FUSF soft drinks. Yes. We do that.

But anyway, Carol spoke so highly of all of you, and that was a treasure to her to have those relationships and talent. She could talk theology and things with and then turn it into a call for action to our church. That's a powerful thing. She was one of the most unique and wonderful people we have ever met. She was our neighbor for a few years as well.

And, you know, along with which she was the move a mover and shaker. And I personally learned a lot from Carol, and that laugh, I can always hear her a little laugh and what a what a inspirational person. And just a just a real, bulwark against all of the negativity that goes on. And she was just wonderful, wonderful person. And, also, one other thing while we're talking about, connections with different, faith communities is I've been in several places, and frequently, the Catholic church doesn't participate, not so much out of ideological objections just because they're so darn busy.

Only the priests can do various things, and there are a lot of funerals. But, certainly, you know, when, you know, during my time with father Manny, he he couldn't always come to every meeting. He was very deeply, deeply involved, and it, I think it had a very positive effect on the Interfaith Council, the people Yeah. And those sets of connections. So one other you didn't mention this, but, in 02/2020, when we were all locked in our houses, some folks came up with the idea to support the pantry.

That's That's right. So you remember Mary. Yeah. But, we wrote to all the the leaders and said we wanted to have a subgroup to deal on food justice because it's through the roof and we can't get out of our houses. And everyone immediately sent a representative.

Yep. Yep. So and we, constructed this item. Yeah. My wife was the representative.

Yeah. That's right. But the goal was that you would go to a restaurant and you would buy food there on a certain night, and then they would donate a portion of their food pantry. Because the goal was to not have those restaurants go out of business Right. Or sell food Exactly.

And get money. And that was, to me, a Yeah. Really a wonderful way for both social justice and the interface to come together. We had how many many Zoom meetings about what we have. Oh, and speaking of of food issues, I should also mention the Interfaith Council supported the legislation to, provide, free school meals in Massachusetts, which passed.

And so that was a, you know, type of a I think we'd like to stand lunch. Mhmm. Yep. Regardless. Regardless of any I mean, it always been preschool meals, but it was need based.

And now it just became Universal. Universal. So that was a major factor. So, it's it's been very special to everyone who served on. It's very special to me as one of the great joys of my gravimons being a member of the Interfaith Council.

Thank you. Thank you so much. There's so many other things that probably has slipped all of our our collective memories. And thank you very much for putting it together so that we could share some of the old stuff, some of the newer stuff. It's very, very, again, very, very important that people feel comfortable in their community based on all sorts of things.

You know, was the interfaith council part of the settlement of the family from where was it? Yeah. Refugee. Refugee. Or if you're in town That's Mary's word.

And how is And and and also, we were involved oh, you know, while we're talking about that, all the work with the the the Family shelter. Family shelter. Right? Yeah. So It was probably the last year or so.

Right. If that which Jacob took was took the the laboring moron. If that doesn't speak to what kind of community Franklin can be, You know, it's it's unusual. It's unusual, unfortunately. I had a question going back to maybe 1970.

So I remember being in this church and helping reverend Howard's daughters do posters for something that we call the hunger walk. I don't know. The crop walk? The crop walk? We called it the hunger walk.

It was like a 20 mile 20 mile loop, and it started and ended in at the high school in Franklin, I think. No. It was Boston. No. No.

This was a Frank this was a Franklin based walk. I think Saint Mary's does it. I think it could have well, they do it around the convent. I think that walk. Oh.

That's something for the poor. But, it was a big deal here at the Federated Church. I know Federated Church took great ownership with reverend Howard, but I to me, it sounds like something that could have been contributed to by other or other religious organizations of I was just at in junior high school. I could I didn't know what was going on. I just came to do the posters and did the walk.

Right. But maybe there's something pre, interfaith that was going on back in 1970 around that. Do you remember anything like that for ecumenical No. Or something? I I remember I remember I remember that hunger walk.

I didn't do it, so I wasn't fired. It was to generate I think it was Guatemala that was the recipient of the funds that were raised at that time. I'd like to add something that Yes. Could you sort of talked about, the, putting together? I really love, organizing worship services.

So I always volunteer to do the Thanksgiving and the mat blue, the king thing. And one of the things that we, of course, we're going back way back when, was that we finally said, okay. If you were talking about your denomination or your your faith group, You talk in your own language. If you're praying or explaining what's going on, you do it in in your own tradition. But anything that the congregation was going to do together had to be, into denominational, shall we say.

I don't know what the word it interfaith, but, whatever. Mhmm. Mhmm. So, that's the way we Mhmm. Try to recognize each faith group as an independent entity and also our our community.

So in in the mission statement, if you will, that's what you talk a lot about is celebrating our diversity but also unifying. So thank you for making that distinction because we've had that question many times, and I know that it's kind of, like, come back to that. But I love the way you, like, worded it because I feel like that will be helpful for us moving forward too because I I think that's a common sentiment that we could all get behind. Thank you. This has been amazing.

I so I'm so grateful. Thank you for taking the time to be here and to share. And if there are anything if there's anything that creeps up in your mind in the next few days or weeks, please just you can call me. You can type it. Let me know.

We'll just add it to this amazing compilation we've already got. So thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mary.

Thank you. Yes. And all this together, Mary. This is a plus. You are welcome.