



**Interfaith Unity Celebration for
Governor Gavin C. Newsom**

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sacramento

Friday, January 6, 2023

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

As the psalmist proclaimed, “How good and pleasant it is for sisters and brothers to dwell together in unity.” Thank you, Bishop Traquair, Reverend Rasmussen and the St. Paul’s Episcopal Church family for so generously hosting this historic interfaith Unity Celebration on the occasion of the 2nd inauguration of Gavin C. Newsom as Governor of the great State of California. My name is Michael Pappas, Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, and on behalf of today’s participants and faith leaders from throughout our great State, allow me to welcome you to this Interfaith Unity Celebration for our Governor.

Since time immemorial, communities of faith have traditionally prayed for their civic leaders and their families. Today is no exception. Governor Newsom, First Partner Jennifer and your beautiful children, for those of us who have journeyed with you over the course of your civic life, we have come to know you as a family dedicated to Public service, and you

Governor, as a leader whose faith expresses itself through action. Harnessing your compassion for the homeless, the immigrant, the marginalized on the spectrum of income inequality and housing affordability, and to entire sectors of those whose civil and human rights are constantly put in jeopardy, you have consistently and courageously stepped forward as an advocate whose word and pen have made a profound difference and enriched the lives of countless others.

Today, at your invitation, on this profound day of January 6th, faith leaders representing the rich diversity of our State's religious traditions gather in the name and spirit of unity, not only to pray for you, but also to commit ourselves to support you on these core and seminal issues. We offer this worship to you as a gift, realizing the gravity of the challenges you continue to address on our behalf. As you recommit to a second term of leadership as our Governor, may you be blessed with discernment, strength, patience and perseverance, and may the hallmarks of your tenure as our Governor be those of justice, inclusion, peace, unity and collaboration.

With this blessing, allow me to read our foundational interfaith statement:

"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 with which we identify. If we are invited to speak on a subject from the perspective of our 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."

