



**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Interfaith Service**

Yerba Buena Gardens Esplanade

Monday, January 19, 2015

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

Good afternoon, I'm Michael Pappas, Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council. I join our Chair Maggi Henderson in welcoming you to this auspicious celebration, the Birthday of Civil Rights Leader the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This year's observance is of particular significance as it marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March on Selma and the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

We would be remiss if we did not extend a huge shout out of thanks to our friends at the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and MJM Management Group, for their incredible generosity in making this precious public space, in the back-drop of the magnificent MLK Memorial, available for this event.

Let's also have a resounding round of applause for the Tabernacle Community Development Corporation, whose generous support helped to underwrite expenses for today's Interfaith Service.

It is appropriate that we should come together today for prayer and thanksgiving, in an interfaith celebration as, not only was Dr. King a Pastor of immeasurable faith, but every social justice and civil rights movement marked in our nation's history has been led by leaders of faith. In particular, here in San Francisco, in the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, before there was the San Francisco Interfaith Council, faith leaders from every tradition came together, through the Conference on Religion, Race and Social Concerns to proclaim, with a unified and prophetic voice, the Almighty's call for freedom and equality for all people.

That prophetic voice has come not only from religious leaders, but by those whose faith has inspired them to answer the call to public service. We, in this City of Saint Francis, are blessed to be represented in Congress by just such a luminary of incredible faith. Please join me in welcoming the Democratic Leader of the United States House of Representatives the Honorable Nancy Pelosi!

With us today are dedicated and hard working public servants elected to represent us and advocate on our behalf:

- State Senator Mark Leno
- Newly elected State Assemblyman David Chiu

At last, we wish to extend special thanks to newly elected President of the Board of Supervisor London Breed and Supervisors Malia Cohen and Scott Wiener for joining us today. And at this time we invite President Breed, to offer a welcome on Behalf of the City and County of San Francisco.