



## ***“Thanksgiving 2020: A Time for Healing”***

**Tuesday, November 24, 2020  
Virtual**

Remarks by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

Good morning. I’m Michael Pappas and on behalf of the San Francisco Interfaith Council I want to wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Thanksgiving.

On the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, for the past 23 of the Council’s 31-year history, 400 of our City’s religious and civic leaders have traditionally gathered together for fellowship and prayer at the SFIC’s annual signature event, the Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast. These memorable encounters have not only showcased the important philanthropic and social justice work undertaken by the SFIC but, more broadly, that of the 800 communities of faith and religious institutions in our City. They have been profound moments of unity and solidarity at historical moments in history and occasions to express the liberating power of San Francisco values...this morning is no exception.

Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SFIC and its constituent congregations, judicatories, academic and healthcare institutions and faith-based social service agencies have been critical partners with our colleagues in City Government and non-governmental organizations in responding to this unprecedented crisis. We have disseminated critical communication in real-time to assist San Francisco faith leaders in making consequential decisions to protect the health and welfare of those entrusted to their spiritual care. We’ve assisted those leaders in getting clarification of complex messaging and hosted 30 weekly COVID-19 response briefings, presented by the highest level of professionals to further provide our faith leaders with the resources needed to cultivate community in the midst of isolation and minister to the most vulnerable and marginalized souls in our City. All of these efforts have been undertaken in the context of a nation plagued by pandemic, unemployment and economic devastation, mental health challenges and intense racial and ideological division.

If ever there was a time when we as a nation needed to come together for healing, prayer and hope it is this Thanksgiving. As we gather together, around this virtual table, sisters and brothers of diverse races, colors and creeds, let us be fed spiritually, and through continued vigilance, patience and acts of kindness toward one another, let us be proactive participants in the healing of soul, body and division.