



**Network
of Religious
Communities**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**PITTSBURGH CLERGY WITH SOCIAL RENAISSANCE SUCCESS
KEYNOTE AT NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES ANNUAL MEETING**

(Buffalo, NY) Rabbi Ronald B.B. Symons and Rev. John C. Welch, leadership members of the Pittsburgh-based Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PINN), will deliver the keynote address at the Network of Religious Communities (NRC) annual meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 780 N. Michigan Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14203.

“Pittsburgh has a similar profile to ours here in Buffalo, so we share many of the same socioeconomic challenges. We have asked Rabbi Symons and Rev. Welch to share some of the strategies for communal cooperation and active protest they are using there to effect positive change in the areas of wage equity, gun violence and public education,” Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein, NRC board president said.

Rabbi Symons is recognized as an “innovative Torah teacher,” and has been Director of Lifelong Learning at Pittsburgh’s Temple Sinai since 2008. He is also director of the Tikkun Olam Center for Jewish Social Justice, which organizes congregational efforts to serve those in need within the Greater Pittsburgh community.

Rev. Welch holds a B.S. degree in chemical engineering and economics from Carnegie-Mellon University, and earned his Master of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Currently working at Duquesne University on his Ph.D. dissertation on healthcare ethics, he is a member of the advisory board of the Metro-Urban Institute of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, chairman of the board of directors of the Gamaliel Foundation of Chicago, and has served as chief chaplain for the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Police since 2008.

Rev. Welch served as pastor of the Bidwell United Presbyterian Church from 1999-2006, and is currently Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

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PINN (www.piin.org) is a complex of multi-faith congregations and organizations in Southwestern Pennsylvania committed to drawing people together to act on local and regional issues of justice and fairness through community building, direct action and negotiation with decision makers.

The Network of Religious Communities is an interreligious, ecumenical organization of denominations, congregations and religious organization located in Western New York. Its core mission is to facilitate communication, cooperation and collaboration among and within the faith communities of its membership – and to promote peace, justice and the common good.

“PINN has many lessons to share with us about how their religious communities work together for social justice in Pittsburgh, and how we can improve the quality of life here in Buffalo. All are welcome to join us to hear these two dynamic speakers, break bread together, renew old friendships and start new ones,” Rabbi Lazarus-Klein said.

The NRC annual meeting includes a choice of vegetarian or traditional or vegetarian meal. The donation is \$25 per person. To make reservations call 716-883-4793, Ext 201 or email nrc@religiousnet.org