Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Faith communities, groups to come together Nov. 6 to begin an “action plan” to reduce poverty in Tucson

Religious and lay leaders, along with many community organizations will gather Sunday to address poverty with the goal of creating an action plan to reduce poverty in Tucson and the surrounding communities.

The gathering takes place Sunday, Nov. 6 at the San Miguel Cristo Rey High School gymnasium, 6601 S. San Fernando Road, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The high school is adjacent to Saint Monica Catholic Church.

“We all are aware of the serious issue of poverty in our Tucson community. There is a critical need to not only address the immediate emergency needs of the poor but also to address ways of helping people become self-sufficient,” Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, leader of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tucson, wrote in a letter inviting faith leaders to the gathering.

“During our time together, we will reflect on the common mission within our various faith traditions, that of caring for the poor. We will seek to gain an understanding of poverty and listen to success stories from folks who are working to break their cycle of poverty.”

Bishop Kicanas is one of 13 leaders from different religions that serve on the Interfaith Poverty Solutions planning committee.

Since the invitation letters were mailed, nearly 90 religious leaders from Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations, interested individuals from those congregations, and organization representatives have agreed to attend the Nov. 6 meeting.

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There are representatives from the Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, Muslim, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, Latter Day Saints, the United Church of Christ and other groups. Those making presentations include:

- Rev. Robert Hendrickson, St. Philip in the Hills Episcopal Church
- Rabbi Tom Louchheim, Congregation Or Chadash
- Imam Sheik Watheq Alobaidi, Muslim Community Center
- Bishop Stephen Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Rev. Grady Scott, Grace Temple Missionary Baptist Church
- Rt. Rev. Kirk S. Smith, Episcopal Bishop of Arizona

Bonnie Bazata, manager of the Pima County Ending Poverty Now program, and Giulio Grecchi and Tom Jefferson, from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, also will be making presentations.

Participants will consider the use of one program, *Bridges Out of Poverty – Getting Ahead*, a program of systemic change to help people in poverty become self-sufficient.

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