



**For Immediate Release
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For More Information Contact:

Interfaith Leaders Cross the Political Divides with Congressional Candidates

At St. James United Methodist Church in Monroe, the three leading candidates for Congress in the 5th Congressional District met with over 150 leaders from Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith. Interfaith leaders from Ouachita, East Carroll and Madison Parishes met with Congressman Vance McAllister, Dr. Ralph Abraham and Mayor Jamie Mayo. To the shock of many present the three candidates, two Republican's and one Democrat agreed on several issues that were raised by Interfaith Leaders. All three agreed to work with Interfaith to expand Medicaid in Louisiana, work with the Consumer Protection Finance Bureau to regulate payday lending and work for federal funding for the model workforce develop initiative, NOVA, (New Vision Achievement Workforce Development Institute of Northeast Louisiana.

Rev. David Hartsfield-Dyles of the Martin Temple CME church said, "While some of the candidates have concerns with parts of the Affordable Care Act, they agree that Louisiana should take advantage of Medicaid Expansion offered under the ACA. Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith has over 65 institutions that work together across the political spectrum to work for the common good of this region in Louisiana. Our event last night proved that organized leaders and institutions can help politicians cross the political divides."

The 16-year coalition of churches, mosques, synagogues, and local non-profits is non-partisan and is working to fight the hyper-partisanship that has created gridlock in Washington and Baton Rouge. Northern and Central Louisiana Interfaith is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation's oldest and largest network of Broad Based Community Organizations. Interfaith also is a part of Together Louisiana, that works with IAF related projects across the state. Together Louisiana represents over 150 institutions in 10 Civil Parishes.

Eva Dyann Wilson, an Interfaith leader said, "We have met with the candidates several times and have agreed on issues that we can work together on. We believe that more of this type of non-partisan work should guide our political discourse."

Interfaith leaders also met with Candidates for School Board, various judicial seats and Monroe City Marshall. Interfaith will conduct a non-partisan Get Out the Vote effort leading up to the November elections.



Portion of Crowd at Accountability Session



Congressman McAllister Addressing Interfaith Crowd (Dr. Abraham left, Mayor Mayo right)