



HOUNSLOW FRIENDS OF FAITH

Newsletter ~ June /July 2021

HFOF Future Events

Stories of Hope 7 – 8.30pm Wednesday 14th July on Zoom

As a way of marking **London's Festival of Ideas**, Near Neighbours is inviting Hounslow Friends of Faith to 'Stories of Hope' a facilitated on-line session to explore:

- The challenges faced locally under the pandemic.
- Any particular benefits / positives that may have come out of the pandemic.
- How local people see the immediate future of their neighbourhoods.
- Ideas of how the people taking part could support one another/work together to improve things.

This session is called 'Stories of Hope' to emphasise the positive and empowering voices that can emerge from these difficult times.

London's Festival of Ideas: www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/london-festival-of-ideas-your-vision-for-strong-communities

Near Neighbours is a charity which brings people together in communities that are religiously and ethnically diverse, so that they can get to know each other better, build relationships of trust, and collaborate together on initiatives that improve the local community in which they live. www.near-neighbours.org.uk

7pm Wednesday 21st July HFOF's virtual Annual General Meeting

The AGM will start at 7pm with the charity's business which includes reports and the election of trustees and officers, followed at 7.30pm by a guest speaker from the Zoroastrian community: Malcolm Deboo.

Annual Walk of Peace and Friendship due to the pandemic it has not been possible to organise an annual walk for two years now but it is hoped to launch a virtual youtube pilgrimage visiting several local places of worship during National Interfaith Week which is 14th – 21st November.

HFOF Subscriptions

A gentle reminder that, according to our constitution, membership of HFOF ceases if an individual's or organisation's subscription is not paid by 1st August in any calendar year. As the AGM is virtual this year it is not possible to pay with cash in person on that occasion. Monies can be paid in several ways:

- via PayPal on HFOF website: www.hounslowfriendsoffaith.org
- into HFOF's Natwest Bank A/C 20072554 Sort Code: 60-11-18 – please put your name as a reference so that it can be recorded you have paid
- or by cash or cheque to Mrs Barbara Witzenfeld, 31 Poulett Gardens, Twickenham, TW1 4QS

£10 for Individual membership: £20 for Organisational membership

'Month of Community' and 'Thank You Day'

The Eden Project, which each year promotes The Big Lunch, is leading on organising a 'Month of Community', from the beginning of June to the beginning of July. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/blog/month-of-community> It includes:

- Volunteers Week 1-7 June
- The Big Lunch 5-6 June
- Neighbourhood Watch Week 5-11 June
- Carers Week 7-13 June
- Loneliness Awareness Week 14-18 June
- Refugee Week 14-20 June
- Small Charity Week 14-19 June
- The Great Get Together 18-20 June
- Thank You Day 4 July

The last of these, 'Thank You Day', is a UK-wide initiative inviting people to get together to say thank you to one another, to family members, key workers, good neighbours and volunteers. <https://thankyouday.org.uk/> It has a particular link to the pandemic and how people have responded. It is managed by the Together Initiative. <https://together.org.uk/>

A World Environment Interfaith Forum was held on Saturday 5th June at 11am



The forum was organised by the World Zoroastrian Organization in association with the Zoroastrian Eco Group with the aim of "*Finding a Collaborative Interfaith Project*". After a welcome from Mr Darayus Motivala, a WZO Committee member, Ervad Jimmy Madon led the meeting through the agenda. There were over twenty people present on zoom.

Brief presentations about the role of the environment in different religions were given by Monica Maghani a Baha'i; Venerable Kalugamuwe a Buddhist; Rev. Barbara Mcintivey a Christian; Minesh Bhatt a Hindu; Debbie Brenner a Liberal Reform Jew; Imam Rabeeb Mirza a Muslim from the Ahmadiyya community; Charanjit Ajit Singh a Sikh and Shahin Bekhradnia a Zoroastrian and one of the organisers of the meeting. All religions seek to promote respect for the environment and every living being and wish to heal creation through education and responsible, moral life styles. Deputy Mayor Cllr Hina Mir gave some words of encouragement to those present and pledged support from the Council. Rich Clarke, an Environment Champion in Feltham, also offered his help and support. Quite a number of possible projects were suggested and these will be circulated and voted on and the one most favoured chosen for action by anyone interested led by a core group. All were thanked for attending this interesting and inspiring forum held to mark World Environment Day.

Excerpt from poem *Earthrise* by Amanda Gorman

*Just as we chose to go to the moon
We know it's never too soon
To choose hope.
We choose to do more than cope
With climate change
We choose to end it—
We refuse to lose.
Together we do this and more
Not because it's very easy or nice
But because it is necessary,
Because with every dawn we carry
the weight of the fate of this celestial body orbiting a star.
And as heavy as that weight sounded, it doesn't hold us down,
But it keeps us grounded, steady, ready,
Because an environmental movement of this size
Is simply another form of an earthrise.*

Entire poem: <https://naaee.org/eepro/blog/earthrise-poem-amanda-gorman>



Rabbi Dr Miri Lawrence, from Ealing Liberal Synagogue, is looking for people who would be willing to be interviewed on zoom to talk about experiences of religious practice during Covid-19. This is part of a research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, looking at the how the pandemic has changed our

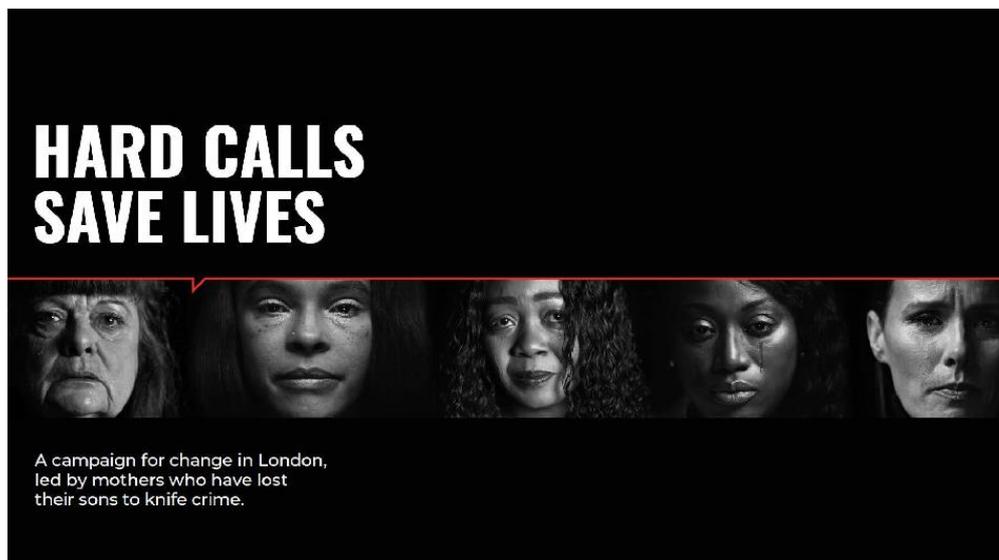
relationship to home. The project is a partnership between the Universities of Liverpool, Birkbeck, and Queen Mary, The Museum of Home, National Museums Liverpool and the Royal Geographical society. You can find more about the project at our website:

www.stayhomestories.co.uk

Her specific research for this project will examine religion at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the increased significance of domestic space and practice at this time. Interviews with participants of different faiths will explore the meaning of religion in this context, its role within domestic routines and the celebration of festivals during lockdown. She will also explore the impact of the postponement of life-cycle practices such as weddings and circumcisions as well as ceremonies, including funeral services, which families may only access through live streaming. The project will also explore interfaith dialogue in the context of Covid-19, investigating how social distancing has led to new forms of (dis)connection between people of different faiths, and the wider representation of religion at home during the pandemic. Faith leaders will be interviewed to examine how they are exploring and sharing new ways to worship and offer support to those affected by bereavement, illness, and isolation.

This research will investigate the creative ways domestic faith is practised and shared, the changing relationship between communal and private worship, and the re-imagining of distinctions between private and public space. It will also explore changes in participation and engagement, for example, the role of digital technology in bringing institutional worship into the home, and in both connecting and disconnecting members of faith communities. Please contact her if you are interested in being involved in any aspect of the research on:

m.p.lawrence@qmul.ac.uk



It can be daunting to pass on information about knife crime. You might be unsure What information is useful or what happens to it. Crimestoppers are not the police. They are an independent charity who provide a safe place for people to speak up about a crime. Anything you report to Crimestoppers is 100% anonymous.

Crimestoppers has an anonymity guarantee, which has never been broken. When you make a call, a specially trained call agent will support you, without judgement. They won't ask how you've obtained the information. It may feel like a hard call, but your call could stop someone else's son or daughter being killed. Call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** or search online: '**Hard Calls Saves Lives**'.

Request from Nishkam School, Isleworth, West London



Head teacher Oliver Craqq writes: *We are looking to live stream performances from our 'faith space' so if there are any musical faith groups we could get in touch with, that would be fantastic. We have already had a performance of 16th century church music from Ealing Abbey choir and hymns from a Sikh group as part of this series.* If you know of a suitable group please contact the school via: info@hounslowfriendsoffaiath.org



Best wishes to all who will be observing days of special significance:

June

- 10th **Christian (Orthodox): Ascension Day** (40th day after Easter) This day commemorates the last earthly appearance of the Risen Christ, who, according to Christian belief, ascended into heaven in the presence of many witnesses.
- 16th **Sikh: The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev**, the fifth Guru was executed on the orders of the Moghul Emperor, Jehangir, for refusing to pay a fine arising from a charge of treason. Guru Arjan made the first compilation of the Sikh Scriptures, called the *Adi Granth*, and supervised the completion of what is now the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

21st **Humanist: World Humanist Day** is celebrated annually around the world on the June solstice. **Midsummer Day**.

July

1st **Zoroastrian (Iranian): Jashn-e Tirgan** is an ancient summer festival, celebrated some three months after the spring NoRuz. Tirgan is devoted to the divinity Tir and is associated with the dog-star Sirius, the coming of the rains in Iran and the fertility they bring. On this day it is customary to visit the Fire Temple to give thanks to Ahura Mazda, and to participate in a *jashan* or thanksgiving ceremony.

7 – 16th **Zoroastrian: (Kadmi) Fravardigan**. In the Fravardigan festival the immortal souls, together with their *fravashis* (the guardian spirits of departed ancestors, half man/half bird), come to reside in the place of worship. Many Zoroastrians take time off to pray, recite the five *Gathas* and cleanse their houses.

9th **Baha'i: Anniversary of the martyrdom of the Bab** – 1850. The *Bab* was executed by firing squad in Tabriz, Persia, at noon on this day. The Bab's death is commemorated at noon with readings and prayers from the Baha'i Scriptures.

11th **Hindu: Ratha Yatra** 'Chariot journey'. This is observed most notably at Puri in the Indian state of Orissa, where processions of thousands of devotees pull huge waggons (*rathas*) supporting images of Krishna. He is known under the name of 'Jagannath', (Lord of the Universe), from which the English term 'juggernaut' comes. Krishna is attended on his journey by his brother and sister.

17th **Zoroastrian: (Kadmi) Navroze / No Ruz New Year's Day** on the Shenshai Calendar. By the twentieth century the Parsis of India had become the largest group in the world practising Zoroastrianism, and in the twenty first century over 95% of Zoroastrians in the UK are Parsis. Like their Indian counterparts, they celebrate two new years

18th **Jewish: Tisha B'Av** A full day fast mourning the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem and other tragedies in Jewish history. The Book of Lamentations is read.

18th – 22nd **Muslim: Hajj/Pilgrimage to Mecca**. Dul-Hijjah (first 10 days of the Hajj) All Muslims who can afford to do so, and are not prevented through ill-health, are required to make this pilgrimage once in their lifetime.

19th **Muslim: Eid-Al-Adha** (Festival of Sacrifice) This major festival (al-Eid al-Kabir) commemorates Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail.

July

22nd **Zoroastrian: (Kadmi) Khordad Sal** is the Birthday of Zarathushtra and falls on the sixth day after NoRuz. *Khordad* means perfection and the festival of Khordad Sal symbolically celebrates the birthday of Prophet Zarathushtra.

23rd **Hindu: Guru Purnima** is a popular Hindu festival celebrated to honour the relationship between teachers and disciples. On this day, people worship their teachers, gurus and mentors. They give gratitude to their Gurus for guiding them through their childhood and formative years, and for carrying them to the light of knowledge. It is also known as **Vyasa Purnima** and is observed as the birth anniversary of Veda Vyasa, a great sage and author of Hindu epic, Mahabharata. This festival is also celebrated as Gyaan Purnima owing to its association with knowledge and teachings.

24th – 25th **Buddhist: Asalha Puja/ Dhamma Day** – ‘*The turning of the wheel of teaching*’. A Theravada celebration of the First Proclamation by Gautama to five ascetics in the Deer Park near Benares. In it he taught the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.

28th **Muslim (Shia): The Festival of the Pool/ Eid ul Ghadeer**. This is a festival observed by Shi'a Muslims, for whom it is an extremely important day. It commemorates an event shortly before the death of the Prophet and his announcement concerning Ali, which they understand to be his clear appointment to be successor to the prophet as the spiritual and temporal leader of Islam.

August

6th – 15th **Zoroastrian: Fravardigan / Muktdad** (Shahenshahi-Parsi) In the Fravardigan festival the immortal souls, together with their *fravashis* (the guardian spirits of departed ancestors, half man/half bird), come to reside in the place of worship. Many Zoroastrians take time off to pray, recite the five *Gathas* and cleanse their houses. Daily samples of sacred food are tasted by them during the daily ceremonies.

10th **Muslim: Islamic New Year 1443 / Al-Hijra / Ra's ul 'Am** (Muharram 1)
This day commemorates the Hijra or migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Medina in 622 CE, which led to the establishment of the Muslim community there. The day is not universally celebrated amongst Sunni Muslims but is notable as Muslim years are dated from this time and are marked AH (After the Hijrah). In 2021 CE the Muslim year 1443 AH begins.

Please send details of any religious festivals, special events or items of interest which you wish to be included in the next newsletter to Rev Barbara McIntivey info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org by 25th July. **Please note:** If you are receiving this newsletter as the named person from an organisation please circulate it within your group and do let me know if there is someone else to whom it should be sent as well as/or instead of you.

