



HOUNSLOW FRIENDS OF FAITH

Newsletter ~ October / November 2020

Interfaith Week 8 – 15th November

Interfaith Week begins on 8th November with Remembrance Sunday

The Three Aims of the Week are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

During Interfaith Week **Hounslow Friends of Faith** are holding a zoom meeting at **7pm on Thursday 12th November** when the group's 20th anniversary will be celebrated and marked by the launch of a history of HFOF and a calendar for 2021. The Interfaith Knitting Group has prepared a special knitted banner which will show the symbols of all major faiths. The directory of Places of Worship on HFOF's website is being updated during this anniversary year.

The World Congress of Faiths Interfaith Week Youngusband Lecture is online on **Thursday 12th November 4 – 5.30pm** on the **theme “One Mystery, Two Stories – Science and Religion in Dialogue”**. The early start time is due to the fact that there are contributions from people in time zones several hours ahead of the UK. Instead of just one speaker, there will be three:

- Prof. Nidhal Guessoum (Muslim), Algerian astrophysicist and professor at the American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
- Swami Medhananda (Hindu), Assistant Professor and Head of Department of Philosophy, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, West Bengal, India
- Dr David Gosling (Christian), Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge

The speakers will each reflect their own personal interests in the 'Science and Religion debate', as well as addressing general issues. This year's event promises to be not only a new venture for WCF but also an exciting journey into dialogue between traditions and into the amazing world of scientific achievements.

You can register here: www.tinyurl.com/wcf-yhl . There will be no charge for attending but a donation towards the work of WCF would be welcome.

Richmond Inter Faith Forum extends an invitation to a special online event on **Tuesday 24th November at 7:30pm** titled ***"Unity in Crisis - How can our diverse communities work together in these difficult times?"*** It aims to bring together people from diverse backgrounds from Richmond, Kingston, Hounslow and neighbouring boroughs to hear from Dr Marissa Quie, an expert in migration, peace and conflict studies at Cambridge University, about what residents of diverse London boroughs - can learn from experience elsewhere in the world to help communities work better together in these difficult times.

Dr Quie's talk will be followed by an opportunity to meet and talk with other participants in small (virtual) groups, before coming together to hear Dr Quie's responses to questions people have raised.

Places are limited, so it's important to register as soon as you can. [Click here to register your place](#)

Various Items which may be of Interest

UK Freedom of Religion and Belief Forum

A new UK Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) Forum has been established one year after the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, urged the Government to step up its global leadership on protecting religious minorities. In his review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians, published last year, Bishop Mounstephen argued that the Government should aim to become *"the global leader in championing freedom of religion and belief"*.

The Government accepted the report and announced that the Bishop, alongside religious-freedom charities and faith communities, would convene a new UK FoRB Forum *"to ensure that the UK plays a leading role in global efforts to advance religious freedom or belief around the world"*.

The Forum will be responsible for raising awareness of religion-based restrictions, intolerance, and discrimination around the world; inform UK policy-making on FoRB and make recommendations for action; be in liaison with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on FoRB and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on FoRB; and ultimately hold the Government to account for the implementation of Bishop Mounstephen's review.

The Bishop, who will chair the Forum, quoted William Wilberforce who said in one of his first speeches to the House of Commons on the slave trade: *'You may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say you did not know.'* The Bishop went on to say: *My hope is that the UK Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum will enable us all to look steadily at this egregious problem of our time, not to let it be overlooked, and together to face it down."*

Stephen Tunstall of the Good Faith Partnership, who has been gathering representation, said: *"We're beginning to see a greater commitment at a political level to protecting freedom of religion or belief, thanks in part to years of advocacy and campaigning by groups in the UK. The UK Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum builds on this momentum "With evidence that restrictions on freedom of religion or belief are increasing around the world, the UK FoRB Forum will lead to greater collaboration among civil-society groups concerned about protecting this*

fundamental freedom. I am deeply hopeful that the UK FoRB Forum will ultimately result in fewer people around the world being persecuted for their religion or belief.” The forum will be convened up to eight times in the first year before the Government hosts the International Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in London next year.

Spiritual ecology and climate justice podcasts

The St Ethelburga’s Centre has launched a new series of podcasts, in collaboration with The Future Is Beautiful, which “reaches for the place where spiritual ecology and climate justice meet. It explores the integration of spirituality with grounded action through the lives and leadership of people of colour.”

The first episode is with black-latinx transdisciplinary artist, educator, and designer Brontë Velez and the second is with Rabiah Abdullah, traditional herbalist, activist and community healer. <https://stethelburgas.org/watch-listen-read/>

Faith and Belief Forum

In July a report entitled ‘*Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief*’ was published which explores the role of faith and nonreligious belief in cohesive societies. It charts social cohesion policy in the UK as it relates to faith and belief, and examines the practical impact of the faith and belief sector on communities through a series of case studies. This report was externally commissioned by the Faith and Belief Forum (FBF) and the British Academy, and authored by Dr Madeleine Pennington, Head of Research at Theos. The report makes a contribution to the Academy’s Cohesive Societies programme which asks how societies sustain cohesiveness in the face of rapid political, social, economic and technological change. It “explores the different ways in which faith and belief interacts with societal cohesion” and has a particular emphasis on how faith organisations interact with communities.”

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/cohesive-societies-faith-and-belief/>

Thamesbank Credit Union Recruiting Board Members

Thamesbank Credit Union is recruiting new board members. This year there are a number of vacancies on the Board for Non-Executive Directors. All appointments to the Board will be approved by members at the next AGM.

You are eligible if you live or work in the areas of: Ealing, Hounslow, Richmond, Kingston, Wandsworth and Spelthorne and if you have skills and experience in any of the following areas:

- Credit union knowledge and/or working knowledge
- Community work and/or charity work including social enterprises
- Setting up and/or managing your own business
- Strategic and/or operational expertise in a financial services organisation
- Specialisms in the area of accountancy, legal, finance, governance, human resources, IT and risk management, credit risk, regulatory compliance or unsecured lending in a financial services context
- Marketing experience
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Business development
- Strategy development

Please note that you will need to be or become a member of Thamesbank Credit Union to apply. Meetings are monthly in South Isleworth.
For more information and to apply, please email: admin@thamesbank.org.
To apply, please email with the subject line "NED ThamesBank" with a **cover note** about how and why you would like to become a Director and a **CV** with your background & experience.

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

October

- 17th – 25th** **Hindu:** NAVARATI – Navarati means 'nine nights' during which the Goddess Durga in her different incarnations is celebrated.
- 18th** **Baha'i:** ANNIVERSARY of the BIRTH of the BAB
- 19th** **Baha'i:** ANNIVERSARY of the BIRTH of Baha'u'llah
- 20th** **Sikh:** CONFERRING OF GURUSHIP ON THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB in 1708
- 29th** **Muslim:** THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S BIRTHDAY (Sunni)
3rd November (Shia)
- 30th** **Buddhist:** ANAPANASATI DAY The last day on which the Kathina may be held. On the final day of the three months long Rains Retreat, a Kathina robe is made of patches of cloth. It is presented to a particularly deserving or virtuous monk, in a ceremony conducted by four of his colleagues.
- 31st** **Pagan:** HALLOWEEN Traditional activities include trick-or-treating, bonfires, costume parties and carving jack-o-lanterns.

November

- 1st** **Christian:** ALL SAINTS' DAY Saints and Martyrs remembered.
- 2nd** **Christian:** All SOULS' DAY All departed faithful Christians remembered.
- 8th** REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY The Sunday nearest to Armistice Day, devoted to remembering the dead of the two World wars and subsequent conflicts.
- 8 – 15th** INTERFAITH WEEK seeks to strengthen good inter-faith relations, increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities, and increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.
- 14th – 18th** **Hindu/Jain:** DIVALI / DIWALI / DEEPAVALI Hindu New Year Festival

November

- 14th** **Sikh:** DIVALI / BANDI CHHOR DIVAS Sikhs also celebrate Divali since Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, was released from Gwalior prison on this day.
- 24th** **Sikh:** MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR (1675)
- 29th** **Christian:** The start of the Christian year, four Sundays before Christmas (Western Churches).
- 30th** **Sikh:** BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK (1469 CE)

December

- 8th** **Buddhist:** BODHI DAY remembering Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.
- 10th** National HUMAN RIGHTS DAY In 1948 The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.'

Please send details of any religious festivals, special events or items of interest which you wish to be included in the next newsletter to HFOF secretary Rev Barbara McIntivey info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org by 25th November.

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.

If you do not wish to receive any further communications from Hounslow Friends of Faith then please let the secretary know and your details will be removed from the mailing list.