



HOUNSLOW FRIENDS OF FAITH

Newsletter ~ August/September 2020

Keeping you up to date with Interfaith and Community News

Past and Future HFOF Events and Activities

On **Wednesday 1st July** HFOF members and supporters were invited to a virtual zoom meeting together with Kelly O'Neill, the Director of Public Health Hounslow, and other Council staff. It was a helpful meeting with information given and it included a discussion about how to engage with vulnerable groups now and in the future. Advice was shared about how the gradual re-opening of places of worship can be managed to lessen any risk of infection. Those present were encouraged to promote Testing and Tracing wherever possible through their community networks. Local media will be used to spread this information which will also be translated into different languages and sign language. The faith groups were thanked for all the help and support they have given the community of Hounslow during the pandemic.

Virtual HFOF meeting on 22nd July 6 – 7.30pm

Thirty five people from different faiths joined this zoom meeting which was facilitated by Mukesh Malhotra and chaired by Charanjit AjitSingh. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hounslow, Paul Kennerley, gave some opening words of welcome and encouragement. It was appreciated that he was joining in from New Zealand which meant he had an early start to his day. The deputy mayor of Hounslow, Councillor Raghwinder Siddhu, also joined this meeting.



The guest speaker was Barney Leith OBE who has been a member of the Bahá'í faith for many years, he is active in interfaith agencies worldwide. He emphasised that Bahá'ís have a global vision. The Bahá'í faith was founded in 19th century Iran by Bahá'u'lláh, whose title means *the Glory of God*. Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the latest in a series of divinely inspired educators, including, Krishna, Buddha, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, who have been entrusted by God to guide the spiritual, moral and social life of humanity. The Bahá'í community of the UK consists of approximately 7,000 individuals coming from all backgrounds. There is no hierarchy or clergy and administration is carried out by spiritual assemblies locally and nationally consisting of nine annually elected members. Women and men are held as equal. The aim of the Bahá'í faith is to establish unity and concord. Bahá'ís have a

twofold purpose: firstly to attend to their own personal spiritual and intellectual growth through prayer, devotion and studying together and secondly to transform society. A quote from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh:

The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife.

After a question and answer session about the Bahá'í faith Debbie Brenner, an HFOF trustee, thanked the speaker for his interesting and informative talk.

Interfaith Week 8 – 15th November

Unfortunately the planned celebration to mark Hounslow Friends of Faith Group's Twentieth Anniversary cannot take place due to covid-19. However the committee has decided to invite members and supporters to join a zoom meeting **7pm on Thursday 12th November** when the 20th anniversary will be marked by the launch of a history of HFOF and hopefully an HFOF 2021 calendar. Please send any special memories and highlights of the past twenty years of HFOF to the secretary by the end of September. The Interfaith Knitting Group are preparing a special knitted banner for this occasion which will show the symbols of all major faiths.

KEEP HOUNSLOW SAFE

London Borough of Hounslow

NHS
Test and Trace

**COVID SYMPTOMS?
GET TESTED NOW.**

nhs/coronavirus OR CALL 119

Protect your friends and family

Covid-19 Resilience Grants for BAME communities

The Anti-Tribalism Movement (ATM) is a UK charity committed to tackling tribal discrimination and promoting fair and equitable societies. They are administering funding on behalf of Comic Relief with grants between £5,000-£15,000 to organisations working for and led by any BAME community in the UK. They particularly encourage applications from organisations working for and led by people from Horn of Africa communities, who are supporting their communities through the impact of COVID-19.

Applications must be submitted electronically to grants@theatm.org before 5pm on Wednesday 12th August 2020. All applications will be assessed by an assessment panel whose decisions will be final. ATM will be in touch with all successful applicants by email or phone before Friday 4 September 2020.

For the application form and guidance notes click here https://theatm.org/what_we_do/atm-covid-19-resilience-grant/

Black Lives Matter



Black Lives Matter

Inviting all West London BLM Organisers to Unite

Meet your neighbours, exchange ideas and create social change!



Shepherd's Bush Green
9th August Sunday
12.45 – 5.30

12:45: Community Circle
1:45: Chanting and Music
2:15: Taking the Knee
2:45: Silence for Grenfell
3:00: Sharing and Music
Closing Community Circle

Remember social distancing
please respect social distancing guidelines and bring a mask.

Follow Us
@blmwestlondon



not to be flyposted

BLM West London connects local BLM Communities and Groups Together supporting organisers and individuals to overcome racism and nurturing new Local Communities to grow. The first West London gathering is in Shepherds Bush (see poster) the next could be in your area.

<https://www.instagram.com/blmwestlondon/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuS23lZplfKqRZtXHMVTwEw>

Some Suggested Achievable Goals for our Environment:

- Plant a garden that will be a home for bees and butterflies
- Do not leave unnecessary lights on
- Reduce single use plastics
- Use a food grade stainless steel or glass water bottle
- Choose natural fibre clothing
- Recycle
- Buy unbleached paper products
- Use natural cleaning products
- Buy foods in glass jars whenever possible and recycle
- Support local farmers at farmers markets

Thamesbank Credit Union

- Secure savings and fair loans offered
- Telephone service for all enquiries 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday (except Wednesday from 12 noon) 0208 756 3865
- You can transfer funds from your credit union account onto an Engage debit card and can use this to withdraw funds
- Savings products for regular savers, special occasions and juniors.
- The range of services and products is available thanks to our partnership with another non-profit-making cooperative, [Credit Union Solutions](#), who administer all member services and accounts on our behalf.

To find out more: <https://thamesbank.org>

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

August

6 – 9th 75th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Words at Sadako's Sasaki's memorial read: *This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world.*

- 75th Commemorative Remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
<https://youtu.be/yTigpUvzB78>
- Listen to a hauntingly beautiful song to honour Sadako Sasaki and her story of making a thousand cranes. <https://uri.org/uri-story/20180725-ideas-and-inspirations-international-day-peace-post-8>

6 – 15th Zoroastrian: FRAVARDIGAN/MUKTAD (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.

12th Hindu: JANMASHTAMI / KRISHNA JAYANTI

Birthday of Krishna. Many *Hindus* fast till midnight, the time of Krishna's birth. Those unable to fast will have some fruit and milk. In the temples Krishna is welcomed with singing, dancing and sweets. In some homes and temples an image of the new-born Krishna is put in a cradle. Krishna is a very popular avatar or incarnation of Vishnu and this festival is celebrated widely.

September

1st **Sikh:** INSTALLATION OF THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB IN THE HARMANDIR SAHIB, the Golden Temple, Amritsar 1604 CE
The Sikhs' fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, installed the volume of scripture, the Adi Granth, on this date. It consisted of the hymns of the first five Gurus plus those of other 'saint-poets'. Hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur were later added to form the present Guru Granth Sahib.

3rd **Zoroastrian:** FRAVARDIN MAH PARAB (Shahenshahi; Parsi)
At Fravardin Zoroastrians visit the Zoroastrian Cemetery in Brookwood, Surrey to participate in a *jashan* ceremony in memory of the departed *fravashis* (guardian spirits and souls of the community). Sacred food is prepared as an offering to the departed during the *jashan* and is later shared by the participants.

19th – 20th **Jewish:** ROSH HASHANNAH
This festival begins ten days of self examination. The ram's horn (*shofar*) blown in the synagogue recalls Abraham's sacrifice of a ram instead of his son, Isaac. Apples dipped in honey are eaten in the hope of a 'sweet' new year.

28th **Jewish:** YOM KIPPUR
The last of the ten days of repentance is the holiest day of the Jewish year. It is expressed through a total fast 25 hours long. Jews spend the eve and most of the day in prayer, asking for forgiveness for past wrongs and resolving to improve in the future. The Book of Jonah is read.

Sept/Oct **Christian:** HARVEST FESTIVAL (date varies)
Displays of various foods are made in churches and Sunday schools and services are held to give thanks for the goodness of God's gifts in nature.

October

1st **Zoroastrian (Iranian):** JASHN-E MEHERGAN (or MIHR JASHAN)
The festival of Mehergan is dedicated to the divinity Meher or Mithra, who is associated with the sun and with justice. Thanks are offered at the fire temple and the community shares in a meal that includes dry fruits and nuts, along with a drink, dancing and merrymaking.

1st **Buddhist:** PAVARANA DAY
The last day of the Rains Retreat (the *Vassa*) is known as *Pavarana* Day or 'Leaving the *Vassa*'. *Pavarana* means 'to invite' and on this day monks who have completed the Retreat invite their fellows to admonish them for any failings. It is also known as 'Sangha Day'.

2nd **Hindu:** GANDHI JAYANTI
Gandhi Jayanti is an Indian national holiday that celebrates the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. His birthday is celebrated with services, prayers, painting and essay contests, using topics that glorify peace and non-violence.

3rd – 9th **Jewish:** SUKKOT
This harvest festival recalls the 40 years the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. A temporary hut or booth – called a *sukkah* – is used for eating meals and for visits and socialising. The roof, which has to be open in part to the elements, is covered with branches and decorated with fruit.

October

11th Jewish: SIMCHAT TORAH

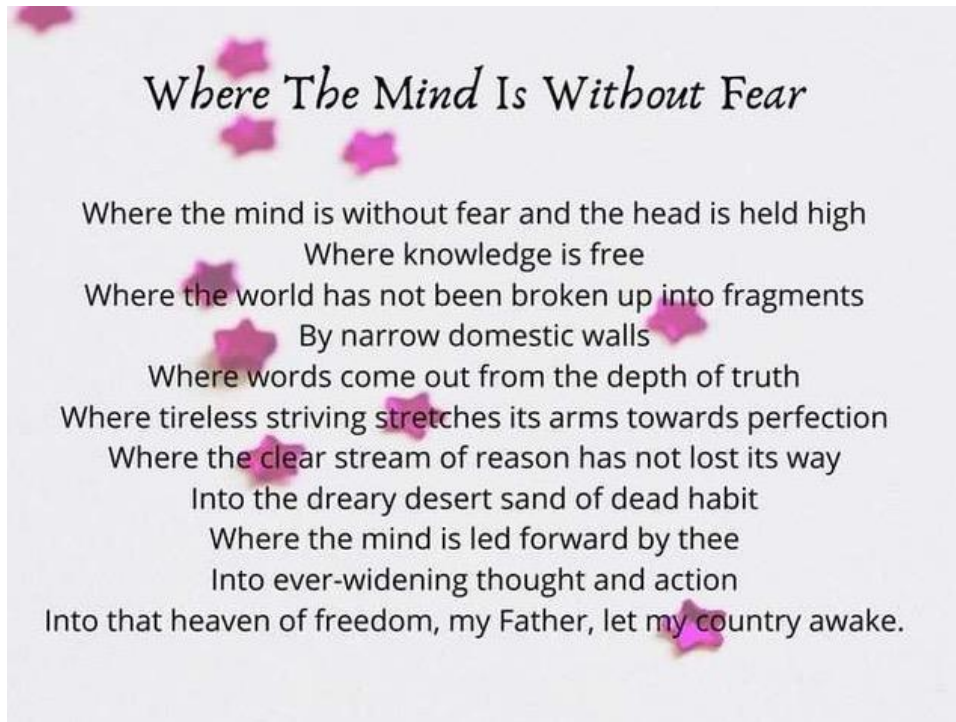
The annual reading of the *Torah* is completed on this day. The reading moves from the last words of Deuteronomy to the first ones of Genesis. All the *Torah* scrolls are paraded around the synagogue, while children dance and sing, as do many of the adults.

11 – 18th INTER FAITH WEEK OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

Prayers from the literature of several different world religions are published each year in a special leaflet. They are composed and used by many different religious communities.

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A poem written by Rabindranath Tagore, Bard of Bengal, Nobel Prize Laureate who died in India on August 7th 1941.



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 September.

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.