



Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

www.concord-leeds.org.uk

and LEEDS CITY COUNCIL PEACELINK GROUP



The Annual Inter-Faith Peace Service

Wednesday 14th October 2020 by Zoom



Welcome to the Annual Inter-Faith Peace Service, which has been organised by Concord in conjunction with Peacelink.

We are very grateful to Councillor Eileen Taylor, Lord Mayor, and her Consort, Mr Audley Taylor, for their support.

Thank you for your attendance.

We hope you will show your appreciation by giving a donation to the Lord's Mayor's Charity Appeal. *Support After Rape and Sexual Violence*

Leeds provides support to individuals and campaigns locally and nationally to raise awareness and understanding of, and ultimately to eliminate, sexual violence and abuse in all its forms. You can donate online to the Lord Mayor's Charity at www.justgiving.com/lmca, or send a cheque payable to 'The Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal' to:

The Lord Mayor's Office, 1st Floor West, Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR



Order of Service

Music will be played and images projected by Leeds Brahma Kumaris before the service begins.

- *Welcome by John Summerwill, Co-Chair of Concord*

A very warm welcome to you all to this Annual Peace Service, organised by Concord in partnership with Leeds Peacelink.

We welcome especially and for the second time the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Eileen Taylor, her Consort Mr Taylor, and the Leeds Children's Mayor, Wania Ahmed. All of them will be taking part in the service.

I'll say a little more about the Lord Mayor before she speaks to us.

The Children's Mayor, Wania, is a pupil at Harehills Primary School, one of 48 schools that submitted entrants. Nearly 9000 children voted, and Wania won with a manifesto to promote children's mental health. She is within a few days of finishing her term of office, so we're very glad the timing has allowed her to join us again.

Running this service by Zoom is a new experience for us, so please forgive us if there are any glitches. I want to ask you now please to turn off your mic and your camera. There are symbols for these at the bottom left hand side of your screen which will show up if you hover the mouse pointer in that direction. When either is off, there'll be red line through it. That will avoid any background noises interfering with the service. If you have a speaking role, remember to turn them both back just before your turn comes.

If you have set your Zoom up to split screen you should all the words of the service on the left side of your screen and the participants on the right or above. If you can't see them, look at the green bar at the top of the screen and click 'View options' then 'Side-by-side mode'.

You can also find this script and fuller instructions for Zoom on our website at concord-leeds.org.uk

We always begin our Concord meetings with a short period of reflective silence, and that is what we will do now.

SILENCE

- *John Summerwill introduces the Lord Mayor, Cllr Eileen Taylor*

Councillor Eileen Taylor is justifiably proud to be the first black Lord Mayor of Leeds. Her father came to England from Jamaica as part of the Windrush generation. He came to Leeds in the 1960s and she joined him in the early 1970s when she was a teenager. She studied at Park Lane College before working for the NHS in Learning Disabilities and Mental Health, and she has been the Labour councillor for Chapel Allerton since 2008. Because of the Covid pandemic the Council decided not to have a mayoral election this year, so Councillor Taylor is continuing in office for another year. She has done a great deal as a local politician to promote community development, and we welcome her now to come and say a few words to us.

- *Brief address by the Lord Mayor,*

Thank you for inviting me to join your Peace Service tonight. It is hard to believe that last years' event was held in the magnificent surroundings of the Civic Hall and yet tonight we are holding our virtual event on Zoom. It's unbelievable to think how much has changed in a year. And although we may be communicating virtually tonight the message of peace, unity and love remains the same.

Leeds has a long history of supporting the peace making process, we are a member of the Mayors for Peace organisation which has over 5000 members worldwide and as a City of sanctuary we have continued to welcome asylum seekers and refugees fleeing conflict and oppression.

We are a proud diverse multicultural city with almost 800,000 people calling it home. No matter what your ethnicity, age, gender, faith or sexual orientation is – we welcome all.

It is a pleasure to see that all the different religions in the city will be represented at the candle lighting for peace tonight and I encourage all of our citizens to take a proactive approach in demonstrating their cultures and traditions to others. It is through these demonstrations that we can learn from each other, understand each other's values and heritage and live together in unity and peace.

As Jo Cox said, "we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us". Thank you. Please enjoy the rest of tonight's event and stay safe.

I invite you now to join with me in saying the prayer of thanksgiving that follows. Please join in at home by saying the words that are in bold print.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*(Join in the words in **bold print at home, if you like.**)*

We give you thanks, Holy Creator, for the wondrous diversity of your creation;
rainforest and desert,
snowstorm and sunshine,
ant and whale.

We give you thanks for the wondrous diversity of your people;
for the beauty of our many colours, sizes, and shapes,
for the richness of our languages,
for the different ways you have revealed your truth to us.

Teach us to value all your creation.

We give you thanks, Majestic One, for the freedom to worship you;
for music which awakens us to your beauty,
for scripture which teaches us how to live,
for prayer which assures us of your presence,
for community which strengthens our faith.

May we worship you with our whole selves.

We give you thanks, Source of blessing, for the gift of each other:
for the love and encouragement we offer one another,
for the chance to learn from one another,
for the ways we challenge each other to move beyond our narrow vision.

May we treasure one another.

We give you thanks, You who call us, for the opportunity to serve:
for your commandment to love our neighbour,
for the ways you call us to share your truth,
for hands and minds and hearts and talents,
for the capacity to make a difference,
for friends and neighbours who work beside us.

May we serve you faithfully.

We give you thanks, Source of all that is possible, for promises not yet come to fruition:
for the dream of peace,
for the vision of a world where no one goes hungry.
for gifts yet to be developed,
for the capacity to learn and grow and change.

**Help us move toward your future with hope.
We give you thanks, Source of life, for all your wondrous gifts.
Awaken us to deeper gratitude every day of our lives.**

Revd Dr Deborah Clark

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor, for what you have said. I'm sure we all feel as you do. We are grateful to you for all the work you have done and are still doing for this city, and particularly for making time to come here tonight and support this event. Many thanks.

- *Street Team presentation*

CHAIR: Shortly we will be lighting candles, as always from The World Peace Flame. Here's Sue Owen to tell us about it.

- *Sue Owen briefly explains The World Peace Flame* ®



Thank you Concord for organising this very special service, even at these difficult times, bless you.

Welcome everybody and thank you for being here and taking time for Peace.

We are always delighted to be part of this wonderful Peace Service with the WPF, and its simple message....one flame uniting people worldwide, in Peace.

As most of you know we have England's 1st WPF here in Garforth, and its ethos has been warmly embraced by our community, and in particular our Schools.

Our Primary Schools were part of the Garforth Peace Art Project, starting last academic year, and produced over 550 beautiful statements and intentions for peace, which were admired at an exhibition in the town in February.....and during lockdown those pieces have been displayed on our fences/walls/gates/windows at our home and have inspired many more and received much acclaim and positive comments.

We are continuing our school assemblies, albeit Virtually, and on UN International Day of Peace launched a new peace project with the WPF A Virtual Walk around the World For Peace, to 2 of our primary schools, we would like to ask you all take part in this for peace, by visiting www.worldpeaceflame.co.uk it is a wonderful opportunity to unite the world, at least virtually in Peace.

We honour each and every one of you, and your beliefs, with the simple universal message of Peace.....We can all be the Peace we wish to see in the World and I believe now, more than ever, we all have the perfect opportunity to Be simply that.

CHAIR: Many thanks, Sue, for what you have said and for the tireless efforts you make to promote peace in this city, particularly in the great work you do with schools.

We come now to the lighting of the candles. The candles themselves are all in one place of the Brahma Kumaris' Centre in Weetwood, sitting on the Peace Cloth that was embroidered a few years ago by our Women's Peacing Together group.

The candle-lighters will say, This candle is lit for peace and justice on behalf of the ---- community of Leeds, and it will be lit for them.

- The lighting of candles by representatives of the Faith Communities in Leeds:

Bahá'í	Isla Akbari
Brahma Kumari	Cherry Steinberg
Buddhist	Dennis Hallam
Christian	Grace Fishwick
Hindu	Niranjan Vakharia
Jewish	Hannah Bloom
Muslim	Zhainab Suleman
Pagan	Jay Anderson
Sikh	Sanita Kaur

- The Lord Mayor's Consort lights a candle on behalf of all of the people of Leeds
- Moment of quietness, with lights turned down

CHAIR: Cynthia Dickinson will now read a Faith Leaders' Affirmation (from the 2013 anthology for the Week of Prayer for World Peace)

CYNTHIA:

We affirm that the peace of the world must be prayed for by the faiths of the world.

We acknowledge that love and compassion are the foundations on which each of our faith traditions is built.

We pledge to set an example by working together to foster a spirit of friendship, understanding and peace between all our communities and to encourage members of our communities to do likewise.

CHAIR: A representative from each of the faith communities will now read some words from their own faith tradition.

- Readings by representatives of Faith Communities:

Bahá'í - 'Jumeira Akbari

O Thou kind Lord! O Thou Who art generous and merciful! We are servants of Thy threshold and are gathered beneath the sheltering shadow of Thy divine unity. The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all, and the clouds of Thy bounty shower upon all. Thy gifts encompass all, Thy loving providence sustains all, Thy protection overshadows all, and the glances of Thy favor are cast upon all. O Lord! Grant Thine infinite bestowals, and let the light of Thy guidance shine. Illumine the eyes, gladden the hearts with abiding joy. Confer a new spirit upon all people and bestow upon them eternal life. Unlock the gates of true understanding and let the light of faith shine resplendent. Gather all people beneath the shadow of Thy bounty and cause them to unite in harmony, so that they may become as the rays of one sun, as the waves of one ocean, and as the fruit of one tree. May they drink from the same fountain. May they be refreshed by the same breeze. May they receive illumination from the same source of light. Thou art the Giver, the Merciful, the Omnipotent. 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Brahma Kumari - Susan Balmforth

Using the power of my thoughts, I temporarily step away from my day ... from the influence of the noise and increasing chaos of the world outside ... I step away from the many roles I play ... from the many identities ... labels and categories that I give myself and others ... I reposition my thoughts and bring my awareness into the present moment ...

I create space between what is outside of me and where I the soul ... the life-force energy of the body reside. The pull to physical action and the consciousness of doing gradually decreases ... As I allow myself to move deeper and deeper within ... I experience the lightness ... freedom ... and beauty of my inner world ... a place of complete silence ... deep peace ... and original purity ... This is my sacred place ... my inner sanctuary ... where I the life-force energy ... the soul reside.

In this place, I experience my form of light ... my true nature of peace and purity ... so peaceful ... so calm ... so still inside.

In this consciousness, I experience waves of light and love gently pulling me into an Ocean of Gods Perfect Peace and Purity ... His Perfect Love and Benevolence ... these waves from the Ocean of Peace wash over me ... refreshing and cleansing me removing all the debris.....

In this experience, I am able to share God's love God's Light and God's peace with all my brothers and sisters, with nature and the world at large.

Buddhist - Dennis Hallam

In his foreword to the book "Peace is Every Step" by Thich Nhat Hanh; Zen Master, and peace campaigner, HH the Dalai Lama writes that world peace will be achieved only through the transformation of individuals. Peace must be developed in the individual with love, compassion and altruism as key components. The individual then creates an ethos of harmony which spreads to family and friends and outward into communities and the world.

TNH says:

"Without being peace, we cannot do anything for peace. If we cannot smile, we cannot help other people smile. If we are not peaceful, then we cannot contribute to the peace.

I hope we can offer a new dimension to the peace movement. The peace movement often is filled with anger and hatred and does not fulfil the role we expect of it. A fresh way of being peace, of making peace is needed.

That is why it is so important for us to practise mindfulness; to acquire the capacity to look, to see and to understand. It would be wonderful to bring to the peace movement a non-dualistic way of looking at things. That alone would diminish hatred and aggression. Peace work means, first of all, being peace. We rely on each other."

Christian - David Randolph-Horn

Matthew 5:1-10

5 Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ² and he began to teach them:

True Happiness

³ "Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

⁴ "Happy are those who mourn;
God will comfort them!

⁵ "Happy are those who are humble;
they will receive what God has promised!

⁶ "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires;
God will satisfy them fully!

⁷ "Happy are those who are merciful to others;
God will be merciful to them!

⁸ "Happy are the pure in heart;
they will see God!

⁹ "Happy are those who work for peace;
God will call them his children!

¹⁰ "Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

Hindu – Niranjan Vakharia

Lord Shree Krishna who is 8th incarnation of Vishnu - Narayan creator of the universe comes to our world whenever faith is taken over by ideology of demons and mankind is suffering selvedge religion and faith.

Shree Krishna always insists to go on the path of peace and when all efforts fail than last option is war, but history proves all war is at a great cost, not only financial but many life and social cost. Recent history has proved the same once again.

We salute and remember those Heroes who sacrificed their life and left us with freedom and to live a happy and prosperous life.

Om Saha nāvavatu

Om=supreme god; saha=together; nau=both/ all; avatu=may he protect

saha nau bhunaktu

saha=together; nau=both/ all; bhunaktu= be nourished/ energized

Saha vīryam karavāvahai

saha=together; vīryam=energy; karavāvahai=work (kara=hand; avahai=bring into use)

Tejasvi nāvadhītamastu

tejasvi = having great energy; nau = both ; adhi = intellect/ study; tama = higher degree; astu=so be it

Mā vidviṣāvahai

Mā=not be; vidvis=animosity; avahai=bring/ have

Om Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ

shantiḥ= peace

Jewish - Hilary Curwen

Psalm 133--

from The Artscroll Tehillim(Book of Psalms) p.291

A Song of Ascents by David. Behold, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers, moreover, in unity. Like the precious oil upon the head running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down over his garments. Like the dew of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion, for there God has commanded the blessing, May there be life forever!

Muslim – Wania Ahmed

The Quran states :

Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations, that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other. If the other inclines towards peace, thou incline towards peace also and trust in God,....who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address others, say “PEACE.”

Prophet Muhammed said:

“To feed the hungry and to greet with peace those you know and those you do not know.

“You will not have true faith until you love each other...., So Spread peace between yourselves”

He would often supplicate:

“Oh God, You are peace. From you comes peace,

To you returns peace. Revive us with a salutation of peace, And lead us to your abode of peace. Blessed are you, O Majestic and Generous inspired of peace “

The scholar, Mohammed Al Jazri of Damascus, upon reading such teachings would supplicate:

“O Allah, unite our hearts

and set aright our mutual affairs,

guide us in the path of peace .Liberate us from darkness.”

Pagan - Holly Mosley

“A Prayer for the World from a Pagan” by Laurel Donnellan

I offer this prayer to you with love and with gratitude to my teachers from all faiths and none: Mother, Father, God, Great Spirit, We need help to love each other in new ways, NOW. Help us. Help us to share and collaborate compassionately as a global community. Help us to open our hearts and minds. Help us to share our science, best practices, people, money and supplies in a way to slow down and eliminate this virus, heal the suffering, support the grieving and prevent future suffering. Help us lift up the hands, hearts and minds of all the people on the front lines of this crisis including health care workers, first responders, essential workers, innovators, rule makers, rule enforcers and rule followers. Help us have the courage and patience to guide the rule-breakers back to the center so we can all work together to restore health and happiness in peace as soon as possible. Help us to heal each other. Help us to feed each other. Help us to shelter each other. Help us to employ each other. Help us to love each other. AND, help us to remember these lessons once this crisis passes so we can build a more compassionate world together for future generations. Amen

Sikh – Gurmukh Singh Deagon

This is an extract from Guru Granth Sahib Ji, on Ang (Page 724)

Stanza By the Fifth Guru Arjan Dev Ji

Tilang, Fifth Mehl, Third House:

Merciful, the Lord Master is Merciful.

My Lord Master is Merciful.

He gives His gifts to all beings. ||Pause||

Why do you waver, O mortal being? The Creator Lord Himself shall protect you.

He who created you, will also give you nourishment. ||1||

The One who created the world, takes care of it.

In each and every heart and mind, the Lord is the True Cherisher. ||2||

His creative potency and His value cannot be known; He is the Great and carefree Lord.

O human being, meditate on the Lord, as long as there is breath in your body. ||3||

O God, You are all-powerful, inexpressible and imperceptible; my soul and body are Your capital.

By Your Mercy, may I find peace; this is Nanak’s lasting prayer. ||4||3||

CHAIR: We are fortunate to have a contribution now by a family Sikh musicians who recorded it earlier specially for this service. The musicians are Kalvinder Kaur, Sanita Kaur and Himmat Singh. Their music teacher Giani Gurbax Singh. The shabad, by Guru Amardas ji, is an extract from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Shalok, Third Mehl:

The world is going up in flames - shower it with Your Mercy, and save it!

Save it, and deliver it, by whatever method it takes.

The True Guru has shown the way to peace, contemplating the True Word of the Shabad.

Nanak knows no other than the Lord, the Forgiving Lord. ||1||

The True Guru has shown the way to peace, contemplating the True Word of the Shabad.

Nanak knows no other than the Lord, the Forgiving Lord. ||1||

- A Prayer in Time of Covid

CHAIR: Jay is now going to read a prayer for our time written by John Wesley Oldham of Winnipeg

JAY:

We pray to God who some call Mystery, that

When in the midst of uncertainty

- may we know faith

When in the midst of anxiety

- may we know serenity

When in the midst of fear

- may we know trust

When in the midst of bewilderment

- may we know assurance

When in the midst of confusion

- may we know confidence

When in the midst of pandemic

- may we know peace

When in the midst of whatever

- may we know love.

CHAIR: Our service is nearly at an end. This is an opportunity for me now to say a big thank you to a lot of people who have made this service possible:

- My thanks to my friends on the Concord Executive for planning the event and inviting the participants;
- to Councillor Blackburn of Peacelink for supporting our work. He does great work for peace in Leeds, and so does Sue Owen, with the World Peace Flame;
- to the Lord Mayor, the Lord's Consort and the Children's Mayor for their contribution here tonight;
- to Jay Anderson by hosting it on Zoom and doing much of the technical stuff;
- to the Brahma Kumaris., Manish, Susan, Valerie and David, for setting up the candles and providing music and images;
- to the members of Leeds Street Team for their thoughts.
- to all the people who have lit candles and all the readers;
- to the Sikh musicians for their contribution;
- and, of course, to all of you for coming and sharing the event tonight.

Normally at the end of a Peace Service we would have a group photo of all the participants. We obviously can't do that on Zoom. However, if everybody who has taken part or listened in would turn on their camera at the very end we might be able to make a collage.

I remind you that your contributions to the Lord Mayor's Charity would be appreciated. The details are here:

Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds provides support to individuals and campaigns locally and nationally to raise awareness and understanding of, and ultimately to eliminate, sexual violence and abuse in all its forms. You can donate online to the Lord Mayor's Charity at www.justgiving.com/lmca, or send a cheque payable to 'The Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal' to:

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So finally some words of challenge and blessing:

Let us go forth into the world in peace;
Let us be of good courage,
Holding fast that which is good;
Rendering to no one evil for evil;
Strengthening the faint-hearted;
Supporting the weak;
Helping the afflicted;
Honouring all people;
Loving and serving our Creator,
And may we and all people be blessed, now and for ever.

From Revised Prayer Book 1928, adapted

Our service is ended.

Go in peace. Now please turn on your camera and give us all a wave, speaking words of peace in whatever language you choose:

shalom, salaam, om shanti, peace be with you.

Concord - Leeds Interfaith Fellowship

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