



# Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP

[www.concord-leeds.org.uk](http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk)

Reg. Charity No 516339

and LEEDS CITY COUNCIL  
PEACELINK GROUP



## The Annual Inter-Faith Peace Service

**Wednesday 23rd October 2019**  
**The Banquet Hall, Leeds Civic Hall**

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

**We are very grateful to Leeds City Council for the use of the Civic Hall and 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 putting a donation in the bucket at the door on your way out for 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.**



## 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, and silence.
- John Summerwill introduces the Lord Mayor, Cllr Eileen Taylor
- Brief address by the Lord Mayor, who leads the—

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*(audience please say the words in **bold print**)*

We are grateful to be in a universe in which stars are born and over time will die, giving forth the elements of everything.

**We are grateful to be on a planet orbiting a star just close enough that water can course over land in oceans, rivers, and streams.**

We are grateful to be in a climate where rainfall and sunlight both are delivered in just the right measures for plants to grow.

**We are grateful for food and shelter, for all the comforts of life, for medical care, cures for diseases, and support in times of weakness and need.**

We are grateful to be members of a species that against all odds has developed the means to understand who and what we are.

**We are grateful to be members of a society that grants us the freedom in which we may dream of the things that we might become.**

We are grateful to be among others whom we love and who love us and support us, helping us to find meaning and purpose in life.

**We are grateful for the faith traditions that have nurtured our spirituality and for the insights we have learned from other faith traditions than our own.**

**We are grateful to be in a country and society that is at peace but, first among all of our blessings, we are grateful to be.**

*Based on a prayer by Dan Blinn in The Humanist, Nov-Dec 2016*

- [Idris Aslam, Sami Mohammed, Saleem Mohammed, Horia Akram, Emaan Ali and Asad Ali, young people from Leeds Street Team, share their thoughts about famous peacemakers. Click here to read it online](#)

- Sue Owen briefly explains The World Peace Flame ®

## World Peace Flame

Thank you Concord, Lord Mayor, and each and every one of you for gathering together in peace and in respect of each other and our individual beliefs.

We are delighted to be here again with The World Peace Flame, and honour its simple message, one flame uniting people worldwide, to unite us all in peace this evening.

We have England's first and now second World Peace Flames here in Leeds, in Garforth and Scholes. In Garforth our community, particularly our schools, are embracing its message with ongoing projects and peace assemblies.

Our current project, in which children draw around their hands with a statement of what peace means to them and what they can do for peace, inspired by the WPPF, has been further uplifted by the amazing inspiration of the Head Teacher of Strawberry Fields School, for her pupils to take the project to other schools with us, offering out the hand of peace and friendship. So we have five young primary students who are members of the school Eco Council standing in front of up to 400 children a time, speaking of kindness, care of our environment and peace. They are truly amazing.



The aim is to create a PeaceArt Exhibition in Garforth created by our primary school children. Also our Garforth Schools will be part of the second Garforth Annual Peace Lantern Walk on Thursday 7th November from Strawberry Fields School to the Garforth Peace Flame for Armistice Day with peaceful reflection. Last year nearly 300 children and families joined the walk.

These simple acts help us to remember that we really can make a difference and that we can become the peace we wish to see in the world.

I believe gatherings such as this, where we can all honour and respect each other and each other's beliefs in peace add to the peace in the world, so thank you all.

I invite you all to take several WPF candles, and pass these on. Each candle has been lit from this precious flame of peace and every candle it lights becomes another WPF.

I also invite you to carry it with you—It does not need to be lit; it carries the energy regardless—and use it as a point of peaceful focus in any and every situation.

Thank you all for making a difference to peace.

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

Bahá'í	Amália Chimhanda
Brahma Kumari	Cherry Steinberg
Buddhist	David Midgley
Christian	Primrose Agbamu
Hindu	Shyamsunder Tah
Jewish	Hilary Curwen
Muslim	Idris Aslam
Pagan	Freya Newton
Sikh	Gurbinder Kaur Virdee



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

- All stand to say the following Act of Commitment, led by the Chair:  
(*please say the words in **bold print***)

## MILLENIUM ACT OF REFLECTION AND COMMITMENT

*At the start of the new millennium leaders and members of different faith communities came together in the Houses of Parliament for a special millennium act of reflection and commitment.*

**In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism,  
injustice and poverty,  
we offer this joint act of commitment  
as we look to our shared future.**

**We commit ourselves,  
as people of many faiths,  
to work together for the common good,  
uniting to build a better society  
grounded in values and ideals we share**

- community
- personal integrity
- a sense of right and wrong
- learning, wisdom and love of truth
- care and compassion
- justice and peace
- respect for one another, for the earth and its creatures.

**We commit ourselves in a spirit of friendship and co-operation  
to work together alongside all who share our values and ideals  
to help bring about a better world now  
and for generations to come.**

- Readings by representatives of Faith Communities:

### **Bahá'í - Raquel Silvestre**

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 - Jane Kay**

In God's garden there is a Tree ... A very beautiful and wonderful Tree ... A Tree of light, reflecting spiritual understanding. Each branch is a different faith and each branch is beautiful. When I look more closely,

I see that each branch bows low with the bounty of sparkling, special fruit — an offering. The fruit of each branch is unique and nourishes in its own particular way. No one branch is the same as another and yet they grow on the same Tree. This is the creation of the Supreme Being, the Master Gardener, the Seed of this Tree of Light. Each branch reflects an extract of the essence of the Seed and glorifies not only the Tree but the Seed itself. For a few moments, like a child in wonder, I rest in the brilliance of this Tree and with each gentle breath, I marvel at the diversity ... I let my heart fill with love and respect for each leaf, flower and fruit on the Tree, which-ever branch they grow on; I am full of awe and wonder at the hand of the Master of the Garden who makes this so.... The Supreme Being of Light.

### **Buddhist - David Midgley**

May all beings everywhere plagued by sufferings of body and mind obtain an ocean of happiness and joy by virtue of my actions.

For as long as they remain in existence, may their happiness never decline and may all of them uninterruptedly receive waves of joy from the Bodhisattvas.

May the blind see forms, may the deaf hear sounds, and may pregnant women give birth without any pain. May the naked find clothing, the hungry find food; may the thirsty find water and delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth, those weak with sorrow find joy; may the forlorn find hope, constant happiness and prosperity.

May all who are sick and ill quickly be freed from their illness, and may every disease in the world never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid, and those bound be freed; may the powerless find power, and may people think of benefitting each other.

May beings be free from all states of no leisure and be endowed with faith, wisdom and kindness; with food obtained in a proper manner and excellent conduct, may they be mindful throughout their lives.

May all beings be without want for wealth just like the treasury of space, and without it being the source of dispute or harm, may they always enjoy it as they wish. By the merits of my actions, may every single being abandon all forms of wrongdoing and perpetually engage in virtue.

May no living creature ever suffer commit wrong or ever fall ill. May no one be afraid or belittled, or their

minds ever be depressed.

For as long as space endures and for as long as living beings remain, until then may I too remain to dispel the misery of the world.

*From The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life by Acharya Shantideva (8th Cent)*

### **Christian - Revd Bob Shaw**

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

### **Hindu - Usha Bhardwaj**

Hinduism preaches and prays for the world peace. The main teaching is that one should not use one's strength to attack the weak but should use it for the protection of the weak and for upholding righteousness. The ultimate goal of Hinduism is to establish peace.

All Hindu prayers end with a special word :OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI meaning- peace peace peace.

O God thou giver of life

Remover of pain and sorrow

Bestower of happiness and creator of the universe

You art most luminous, pure and adorable

We meditate on thee

May you inspire and guide our intellect in the right direction

O God lead us from untruth to truth

Lead us from darkness to light  
 Lead us from death to immortality  
 Brothers should not fight with brothers, sisters should be kind  
 All should speak gently with each other and generate of Truth and cooperation  
 May there be peace in heaven  
 Peace in the atmosphere  
 Peace across the waters  
 May there be peace on the earth  
 May peace flow from herbs, plants and trees  
 May all the celestial beings radiate peace  
 May peace pervade all quarters  
 May that peace come to all of us  
 May all be free from disabilities  
 May all look for the goods in others  
 May none suffer from sadness or sorrow  
 May there be peace everywhere  
 OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI

### **Jewish - Hannah Bloom**

*A Prayer for the Gift of Peace, Joy and Rest (from the Sabbath Evening Service in the Prayer Book)*

Cause us, our father, to lie down in peace, and rise again to enjoy life. Spread over us the covering of Your peace, guide us with Your good counsel and save us for the sake of Your name. Be a shield about us, turning away every enemy, disease, violence, hunger and sorrow. Shelter us in the shadow of your wings, for you are a God who guards and protects us, a ruler of mercy and compassion. Guard us when we go out and when we come in, to enjoy life and peace both now and forever, and spread over us the shelter of Your peace. Blessed are You Lord, who spreads the shelter of peace over us, over His people Israel, and over all the world. And let us say Amen.

### **Muslim - Wania Ahmed (Leeds Children's Mayor 2019)**

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 inspirer 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, inspirer of peace.

### **Pagan - Vicky Newton**

Modern Druidry traces its recent roots to the 1700s to a man called Edward Williams, better known by his Druid name of Iolo Morgannwg. His Druid Order had spend 15 years being beaten up by armed Tory vigilantes just for meeting, just for being Druids. They announced that they would be holding a circle in Pontypridd, at the rocking stone, they would be holding a Druid ceremony. Information was passed to them that the local Yeomen, with swords and guns would also be there, and that if they held their ceremony, they would be killed. But they met, bare footed and bare headed to show they were defenceless, and the words of the Gorsedd prayer were said for the very first time.

Grant, oh God/Goddess/Spirit your protection,

And in protection, strength,

And in strength, understanding,

And in understanding, knowledge,

And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,

And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,

And in the love of it, the love of all existences,

And in the love of all existences, the love of God/Goddess/Spirit and of all goodness.

Yes, may there be peace throughout the whole world.

And let that peace be given to all life, all existences.

### **Sikh - Gurmukh Singh Deagon**

This Shabad is by Guru Arjan Dev Ji in Raag Sorath, Panna (Page) 611 of Guru Granth Shaib Ji.

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru: The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God.

You are our Guru.

Listen, friends: my soul is a sacrifice, a sacrifice to You;

O Lord, reveal to me the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan.

Listen, friends: I am a sacrifice to the dust of Your feet.

This mind is yours, O Siblings of Destiny.

- Musical interlude by The Wesley Singers (conductor: Barry Jordan, accompanist: Pat Jordan).

*The Prayer* (Carole Sager & David Foster)

We pray You'll be our eyes, and watch us where we go, and teach us to be wise in times when we don't know. Let this be our prayer when we lose our way. Lead us to a place, guide us with Your grace to be a place where we'll be safe. We pray we'll find your light and hold it in our hearts. As darkness falls each night remind us where You are. Let this be our prayer when shadows fill our day. Lead us to a place, guide us with Your grace, give us faith so we'll be safe. Lead us, Lord, lead us in Your righteousness; make Your way plain for us to see.

*Down By The Riverside* (John Rutter)

I'm goin' to lay down my heavy load, down by the riverside. I ain't gonna study war no more. I'm goin' to lay down my sword and shield. I'm goin' to put on my trav'lin' shoes. I'm goin' to put on my long white robe. Glory, glory hallelujah. I'm goin' to put on my starry crown.

- All stand to read 'Prayer for World Peace, led by the Chair  
(Please join in saying the words in **bold print**.)

## PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

We ask for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right.

**May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred.**

We ask for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead humankind to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

**Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and power to fulfil the destiny for which we and all people were created.**

- Chair's final comments

*Continued overleaf*

- **A FRANCISCAN BENEDICTION**, read by Brother Benedict  
*(Please join in saying the words in **bold** print.)*

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,  
**so that God may live deep within our hearts.**

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,  
**so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war,  
**so that we may reach out our hand to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.**

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world,  
**so that we can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen.**

- The Wesley Singers sing *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* (John Rutter)

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

- The Chair invites everyone to talk to a stranger.  
Greetings to one another:

**Shalom, salaam, shanti, peace be with you.**

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*Would all speakers, readers, candle-lighters, musicians and organisers please stay in the room until a photograph has been taken.*

*Please contribute to the Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal on your way out.*

*Special thanks to Manish Patel, Susan Balmforth and Valerie Bowker of the Brahma Kumaris for sound control, background music and images and the setting up of the candles.*

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**Concord - Leeds Interfaith Fellowship**

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