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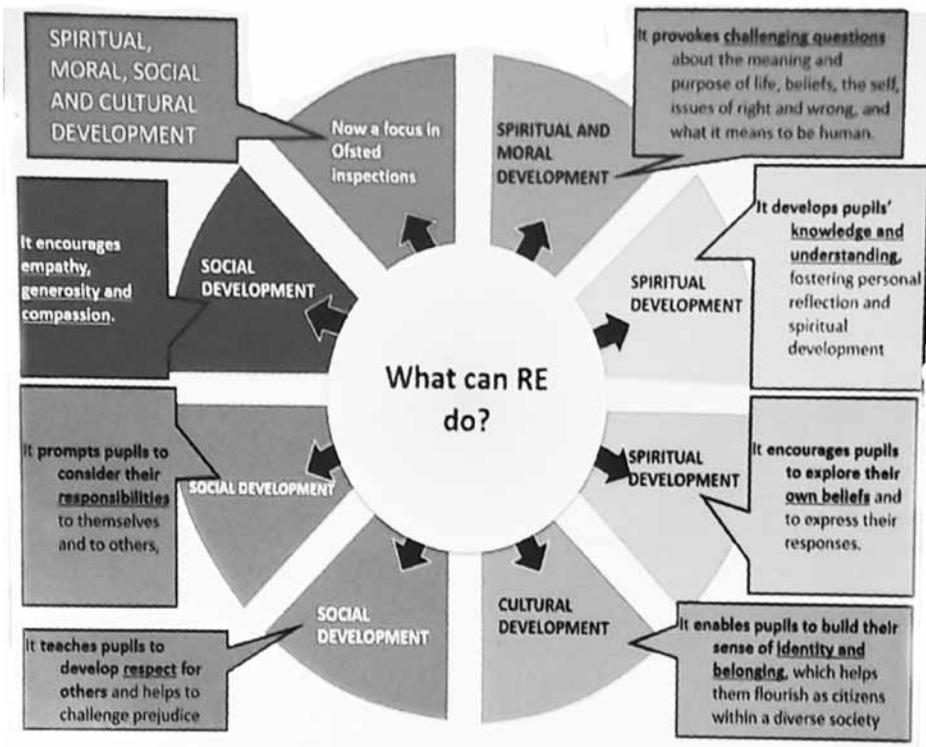
Newsletter - September 2018

Leeds RE Agreed Syllabus *by Gurmukh Singh Deagon*

ON 18TH JULY Concord heard a superbly lucid and illuminating talk on religious education by Alastair Ross, a freelance consultant who advises the standing advisory councils on RE (SACREs) in Leeds, Kirklees and Calderdale, and has written their syllabuses. From 2019 some 400 schools across West Yorkshire will be using the same syllabus.

The chart below shows how RE understanding can improve the whole life experience of school children, leading them to become generally better people with respect for others who have a different faith and who look and dress differently.

Religious education must be provided for all pupils from 5 to 18, though
Continued overleaf



RE Syllabus - continued from page 1

parents do have a legal right to withdraw their children. There is no national curriculum for RE, only a local agreed syllabus in each local authority area. Academies and free schools may vary the curriculum, and faith schools can also devise their own syllabus.

The new Leeds RE syllabus guides teachers on how to teach core beliefs and concepts, sources of authority including written traditions, how individuals and communities express belief, commitment and emotion, and addresses questions of meaning, purpose and value. It encourages students to investigate how religious and other world views influence morality, identity and diversity, including moral decisions.

Over the course of their schooling students will learn about six major religious traditions. In primary schools the focus is on Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Buddhism and Hinduism come in at KS3. Schools must, however, recognise other religions besides the 'Big Six', and other (non-religious) perspectives must also be included in studies.

At Key Stage 4 the legal requirement for RE can be met in a variety of ways, including a GCSE or ELC course. Sufficient time must be given to study a

GCSE course with academic integrity and depth. Sixth form students too should be given RE for statutory and educational reasons. The syllabus provides suggestions for developing generic skills, and ideas for delivery within General Studies.

Alastair showed many examples of schemes of work, lesson plans and other documentary support that he is developing to assist teachers, many of whom are not specialists and lack confidence in teaching RE. He works with schools, providing in-service support and training.



His well-illustrated and admirably concise talk was followed by a very interesting question-and-answer session.

Further information about the syllabus is available from Alastair Ross, whose website is www.penninelearning.com, or from the Leeds authority at [www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Leeds RE syllabus.pdf](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Leeds%20RE%20syllabus.pdf)

Below: In June Cynthia Dickinson attended a reception at the Civic Hall on behalf of Concord and collected for us a certificate for Concord as one of the small voluntary groups working in Leeds.



“Peace is a Process – The Impact of the 1918 Armistice and how Leeds is commemorating its centenary”

ON 16TH MAY Concord held its AGM at the Leeds Museum Discovery Centre. Those who arrived early were able to partake of a tour of the storage facility, and have a glimpse of some of the items not presently on display across museums in Leeds. The AGM began promptly at 7.30pm, briskly taking care of the agenda items, with minor changes to the Principal Officers and Executive Committee as follows:

Chair: John Summerwill

Joint Secretaries: Cynthia Dickinson (Minutes) & David Randolph Horn (Correspondence)

John Fountain and Barbara Coplans have left the Executive and Cllr John Nottingham has joined it as a Unitarian representative.

Lucy Moore, the World War One Projects Curator for Leeds City Council, took us through a detailed and interesting PowerPoint Presentation on "Peace is a Process - the impact of the 1918 Armistice and how Leeds is commemorating this in 2018". She detailed how in other areas of the world the First World War is not necessarily seen as it is portrayed in British history books.

We heard about Private George Edwin Ellison, the last British soldier killed in the war, who was from Leeds, his last address being in Richmond Hill. He died at 9.30 on the morning of November 11th, 1918. There are discussions going on in the City as to whether his sacrifice should be commemorated in some way. We also heard how the munitions workers left the factories around Leeds and paraded through the streets of Leeds, with the procession down the Headrow being over half a mile long. However, the armistice signalled the end of the munitions factories, with the majority of



their workforces being laid off overnight; one example is that of the Barnbow factory in Crossgates, which at its height employed over 12,000. By the end of November 1918 it had just 200 employees. The armistice signalled a significant change in what had become the norm for most of the women left behind whilst their men went off to war; there was an expectation that life would go back to normal, to the way it was before. As we now know, the aftermath of the war was a time of great change in society as a whole.

As the AGM coincided with the first day of the Muslim month of Ramadan, Lucy had a final treat in store for those of us present: we were able to view a piece of the covering from the Kaa'ba dating to 1917. Ustadh Adam Aslam then opened the month of Ramadan by reciting the traditional prayers.

Jay Anderson

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Summer Solstice at the Spiral

A DOZEN PEOPLE gathered on 19th June at All Hallows Church to be welcomed by Revd Dr David Randolph-Horn. Cynthia Dickinson gave a brief introduction to the planned summer solstice ritual before Jay Anderson led the group to the stone spiral where more people were waiting. The space had been set out with a central altar bearing symbols of the Sun, while the stones at the four quarters were decorated to represent Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Some visitors chose to stand in the spiral and participate, others preferred to stay outside and observe.

The ritual followed the general Pagan pattern, with the symbolic cleansing of participants with salt-water and incense, then Jay, as Priestess, created the sacred space with a large sword. Next the four quarters—Air in the East, Fire in the South, Water in the West and Earth in the North—were greeted with “Hail and Welcome”. The spirit of the place, the ancestors and the Sun were similarly welcomed with appropriate words and the lighting of candles.

Jay handed out tealights to all participants, explaining that these symbolised the power of the Sun with its significance to each of us. The first was lit from the central solar candle then the flame was passed around the group until we had a circle of light. As we held our small candle, meditating on its flame as a divine spark, Jay read the Orphic Hymn “To the Sun”.

The flames were extinguished and the tealights were placed around the spiral to be taken home later as a token. Then it was time for cake and wine, with thanks to the Earth and the Sun before passing

the plate and the chalice with the words, “May you never hunger” and “May you never thirst”.

Finally it was time to say “Hail and Farewell” to the Sun, the ancestors, the spirit of the place and the four quarters. The celebration of the Summer Solstice was ended.

As participants and observers were leaving they were given a small packet of sunflower seeds to plant as a reminder of the event and the experience.

We walked past the memorial stone where Jay offered a libation before returning to All Hallows for tea, coffee and conversation.

For me this was an excellent evening, mainly because of Jay’s thoughtful and appropriate preparation which gave a real taste of Pagan ritual without ‘dumbing down’ to accommodate other

faiths. She managed to make the procedure easily understandable while retaining its unique style of worship. And although we got off to a potentially poor start, with dull sky and drizzle as we walked to the spiral, the weather held fair for the evening. There was, however, a cheeky breeze which made candle-lighting rather difficult, and other minor mishaps that were greeted with ‘mirth and reverence’. Worshipping (or working, as most Pagans would say) in the open air means that you may need to carry on with a sense of humour alongside solemnity.

After the event David commented that the ritual was full of connections—with the season, with the elements, with nature and with each other.

Cynthia Dickinson



Leeds Pride

SUNDAY 5TH AUGUST was a brilliant sunny day and I joined with a bright and colourful crowd of people expressing pride in or support for the wonderful diversity of humanity.

There were 30 or so people in the Faiths at Pride section with a beautiful banner indicating that God Loves Everyone. I was more than happy to be carrying the Walk of Friendship rainbow flag as I took part in my first Leeds Pride Parade.

Most of the faith group were Christian, the majority of those being from the liberal branch of the Anglican church and Unitarians. Not only did the Unitarians have their own flags but the minister wore a rainbow dog-collar. And there was at least one Roman Catholic, a Masorti Jew and a Pagan.

The crowds lining the streets were fantastic, waving and cheering

Below: People at the solstice ritual

as if we were Olympic Gold Medal winners! Our little group was very near the back of the procession, the floats, bands, majorettes and large corporate groups had been going for well over an hour before we set off. But still we were greeted with waves and cheers, whistles and high-fives!

It really was a fantastic day and a wonderful experience. Maybe we'll get a bit more faith support next year.

Cynthia Dickinson



Interfaith Theology

Hans Küng, a Roman Catholic professor of theology, outlines an ethical manifesto for believers in all traditions.

BUT do the adherents of the various religions know equally well precisely what they have in common ethically? Not at all. So what unites all the great religions would have to be worked out carefully in detail on the basis of the sources—a significant and enjoyable task for the scholars of the different religions! But even at the present stage of the investigation some significant common views may be brought out briefly. It is not a matter of working out the differences and contradictions, the features of the great world religions which are exclusive and cannot be reconciled, but of working out what holds them together in spite of everything—with a view to the principle of responsibility. My question is: what can religions contribute to the furthering of an ethic, despite their very different systems of dogmas and symbols? ... (p. 55)

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS

(a) Human well-being

Certainly, religions were and still are tempted to gather round themselves in order to preserve the power of their institutions, constitutions and hierarchies. And yet where they so wish, they can still credibly convey to the world, with a different moral power from that of many international organizations, that they are concerned with human well-being. For all the great religions authoritatively offer a basic religious orientation—support, help and hope in the face of the mechanism of all human institutions, in the face of the self-interest of the various individuals

and groups, and in the face of the excess of information provided by the media

(b) Maxims of basic humanity

Certainly religions were and always are tempted to fix themselves on and encapsulate themselves in special traditions, mysterious dogmas and ritual precepts. And yet where they wish, they can establish the validity of fundamental maxims of basic humanity with quite a different authority and power of conviction from that of politicians, lawyers and philosophers. For all the great religions in fact call for particular 'non-negotiable standards', basic ethical norms and maxims for guiding action, which are grounded in an Unconditioned, an Absolute, and therefore are also to hold unconditionally for hundreds of millions of people

(c) A reasonable middle way

Certainly, religions were and still are tempted legalistically to harp on some rigorist extreme positions, in both individual and social ethics, in both sexual and business and state ethics. And yet where they want to, they can win over hundreds of millions of people on this earth for a reasonable middle way between libertinism and legalism. For all the great religions in fact encourage models for action which indicate a middle way

(d) The golden rule

Certainly, religions were and still are tempted to lose themselves in an endless tangle of commandments and precepts, canons and paragraphs. And yet where they so will, they can explain with quite a different authority from that of any philosophy why the application of their norms does not apply from case to case, but categorically. Religions can provide a supreme norm for conscience, that categorical imperative which is immensely important for today's society, an imperative which obligates in quite a different depth and fundamental way. For all the great religions require observance of something like a 'golden rule' - a

norm which is not just hypothetical and conditioned but is categorical, apodeictic and unconditioned - utterly practicable in the face of the extremely complex situation in which the individual or groups must often act... .

(e) Moral motivations

Certainly, religions were and still are tempted to command people in an authoritarian way, to call for blind obedience and to violate the conscience. And yet where they so will they can offer convincing moral motivations. For in the face of so much frustration, lethargy and apathy, especially in today's younger generation, they can offer convincing motives for action on the basis of age-old tradition in a contemporary form: not only eternal ideas, abstract principles and

general norms, like philosophy, but also the living embodiment of a new attitude to life and a new lifestyle

(f) A horizon of meaning and identification of a goal

Certainly, religions were and still are tempted to have a double morality, namely to preach ethical demands only to others and not first apply them self-critically to themselves. But if they so will, even today—or again today—in the face of emptiness and meaninglessness for hundreds of millions of people they can credibly demonstrate with a unique power of conviction a horizon of meaning on this earth—and also a final goal. (pp. 56-60)

Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (London: SCM Press, 1990).

Holocaust Memorial Day
Sunday 27th January 2019
Torn from Home

THROUGHOUT October and November 2018 Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) will be running free workshops in all 12 regions and nations across the UK for people who are interested in organising an activity for Holocaust Memorial Day.

Whether you are an individual or part of a group, and whether you have organised an HMD activity before or not, our free workshops for activity organisers will provide the practical help and advice needed to help run a meaningful activity of your own. We would be delighted to welcome you to one of our workshops this autumn.

Our workshops offer a valuable opportunity to find out more about the theme for HMD 2019: *Torn from Home*. You will be able to meet members of the HMDT team, hear powerful life stories of Holocaust and genocide survivors, participate in thought-provoking activities and discussions, and network with other activity organisers. We will also provide information about our free resources and previous activity ideas to help inspire you. Visit the HMD Trust website for more information: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>



**HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1**

**Leeds Council of
Christians and Jews**
Annual Lecture
8.00pm on Wed 17th October
in the Council Chamber of the
Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley Street,
Leeds LS1 1UR
in the presence of the Lord Mayor
and the Lady Mayoress,
Special guest: Sir Malcolm Rifkind
on ***The Future is Not What it
Used To Be***
All members and non-members are
welcome ; no charge for admission.

Women Peace-ing Together



by Cynthia
Dickinson

WE WERE extremely lucky to have been invited by Armley Mills Museum for a guided tour of their Queens of Industry exhibition, starting with a very welcome cup of tea and cake! This was followed by a film which showed how working class 'queens' had been elected to represent some of Britain's greatest industries, from coal to cotton. Several Yorkshire women—from different aspects of the textile industry or from coal-mining, railway and engineering—told their stories from the first half of the twentieth century. We also saw how young women of today were making their way in what is generally regarded as "men's work".



The display, *From Loom to Limelight*, of memorabilia, photographs and information boards is located around the looms in the weaving shed. I was surprised to learn that fabric for specialist uniforms is still woven there. The exhibition will be on until September 2019 and is well worth a visit.

Farewell

Concord has lost two members—both local preachers—from Wesley Road Chapel in Armley.

Brian Thompson, who has suffered much ill health in recent years, has moved away from Armley, where he has lived all his life, to Knutsford to be nearer his daughter and her family. We wish him well in his new home.

Susan Cordwell died after a number of years of debilitating illness. Our condolences go to her husband Peter.

At our first session following the summer holiday we had a visit from Agnis, the textile artist commissioned to work with community groups at creating banners that will hang in Leeds City Museum in November, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Armistice. She had brought a banner template inspired by an Armistice flag belonging to Madge Howdell, who, as a teenager, carried the flag in Leeds on 11 November 1918. Before her death in 1994 she expressed her wish that it should be carried again to mark the centenary of the Armistice. We discussed ideas for a group design featuring doves, leaves and white poppies.

Some ladies have already started work on their individual peace symbols to cover the museum floor and we have almost finished our 'name-bunting'.

The Armistice curator, Lucy Moore, will be coming along to our October session, partly to see how the banner is progressing but also to discuss the idea of our other items—name-bunting, peace table cloth and rug—being part of the overall display.

If you (and friends) would like to make a decorative symbol of peace to be included in the display, you can contact the curator by e-mail to lucy.moore@leeds.gov.uk or me by phone/text 074192 12051 or e-mail concordwomen@phonecoop.coop for further information.

Cynthia Dickinson

LIGHT FOR LEEDS

COME ALONG to this free InterFaith Week event in the Visitor Centre of Kirkstall Abbey, LS5 3EH on Sunday 18th November between 12noon and 4pm.

Meet representatives from different faiths celebrating what they have in common. We start with Zuhr (afternoon prayers) and an official welcome, then you can visit the stalls, take part in the quiz and sample the food.

During the afternoon you can hear the St Peter's Singers in the Abbey nave; take a meditative walk with the Brahma Kumaris; hear some Jewish music in the Visitor Centre; join in traditional carol-singing; listen to the sitar.

There is also an opportunity to visit the Faith in Peace and War display of specially commissioned portraits by Suman Kaur.

And finally, we will take a quiet dusk walk by candlelight to the Chapter House for Maghrib (sunset prayers).

Below: Concord members at From Loom to Limelight (see previous page)

Leeds City Peacelink Group

ANY GROUP or organisation with a peace ethos is welcome to attend the Peacelink meetings, held every two or three months in the Civic Hall

In July there was an update on the World Peace Flame in Garforth where two primary schools are helping to organise the WPF Annual Peace Walk for November 8th. It was also reported that York Minster will be having a WPF on display as part of their reflections on peace for the centenary of the WW1 Armistice.

Other groups represented included Brahma Kumaris, Churches Together, CND, Concord, Fairtrade, Labour and Co-operative Groups and Leeds Coalition Against War.

Plans were made to commemorate Nagasaki Day and Cllr Blackburn will be exploring the possibility of laying a white wreath at the official Remembrance Day ceremony in Leeds.

The next meeting is on Thursday October 11 at 7pm in Leeds Civic Hall. For further information contact <Cllr.David.Blackburn@leeds.gov.uk>



Remembering Nagasaki

ORGANISED by Leeds CND for the Leeds City Council Peacelink Group, this annual event took place on August 9th in Park Square. By 10.30am a large group of about 50 people had gathered in front of the Mayors for Peace memorial in Park Square. Many were wearing white peace poppies in remembrance of all those affected in the atomic bombings and all innocent civilian victims of warfare.

The Leeds People's Choir sang peace songs, then at 11.02am, following two minutes silence, a wreath was laid by the Deputy Leader of Leeds City Council. The Nagasaki and Hiroshima Peace Declarations from the Mayors of those cities, were read out. There was a musical contribution and a short reading before proceedings closed with more peace songs from the choir.

There is only one river. There is only one sea.
And it flows through you, and it flows through me.
There is only one people. We are one and the same.
We are all one spirit. We are all one name.

Peter Yarrow

Congratulations to Iby Knill

ON SUNDAY September 16th, for Heritage Open day, a 35cm statuette of Iby Knill was unveiled at The Tetley on Hunslet Road. In this special year that focuses on women, Iby, a Holocaust Survivor and author, has been recognised as one of the "extraordinary women of the UK." She has asked for the statuette to be on temporary display at St Matthew's church and it will have its final home at the Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre at Huddersfield University.



Religion or Belief Hub

AT THE June meeting there were presentations and discussions on four main items:

- A Women in Faith event is planned for December with a steering group being formed to support and organise it. The aim is to be inclusive and representational regarding faiths, attracting local and national attendees. As well as speakers there will be interactive content and conversation space.
- A Faith and Youth conference is being planned for February 2019. Issues to be included were suggested, followed by a discussion on who the target audience should be.
- Following the Leeds City Council report on Taking Religion or Belief Seriously it has been recognised that there is a need to improve religious literacy among council employees. The Council is looking for help as to what information and training is available from Faith Communities to provide a more personal approach that includes face to face interaction.
- Some work has been done with Leeds Museums and Galleries to build connections between their collection of Jewish items and the Jewish community. The pilot project has already proved effective and Leeds Museums and Galleries would like engage with other faith communities.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday October 9 at 5.30pm in the Cohen Room, Leeds Town Hall. For further information contact leedsfaith@Leeds.gov.uk

Leeds Faiths Forum will be marking Interfaith Week with a Scriptural Reasoning session on Wednesday 14th November. The title will be 'Faiths in Colour: Sexuality and Scripture'.

It will take place in the East Room at Leeds Civic Hall from 7.30pm to 9pm. All are welcome.

InterFaith Network National Conference

THIS YEAR'S InterFaith Network national conference took place in July in the Pedigree Suite at Derby County football stadium, focussing on interfaith and young people. It was a very informative and enjoyable event with excellent presentations by enthusiastic and committed youngsters

Sanaa Makkan was encouraged by her mother to join Bolton InterFaith Youth Ambassadors at the age of nine. These youngsters organise their own weekly meetings to chat and plan; they raise funds for crises, organise faith trails and speak at school assemblies. Although it took Sanaa a while to find her voice, now at 16 she is a remarkable Youth Ambassador.

Antony Hamilton told us that when his RE teacher couldn't answer his questions he put him in touch with DIFFY - Devon InterFaith Forum for Youth. There Antony took part in a whole variety of activities that enabled young people to spend time together, enjoy each other's company and generally get to know each other. It also involved more structured interfaith events such as meeting faith leaders and visiting places of worship but mainly it was about developing friendships.

Pahrin Begum described her upbringing in a Muslim community, attending a Muslim school, as "living in a Muslim bubble". She had her eyes opened at 6th form college when she took part in a youth exchange programme to South Africa. Meeting people from different faiths and cultures inspired her to study religions at university and now she works for Blackburn Council as the IF development officer.

The thing that stood out—besides the abilities of the young people giving the presentations—was the support and funding they had available.

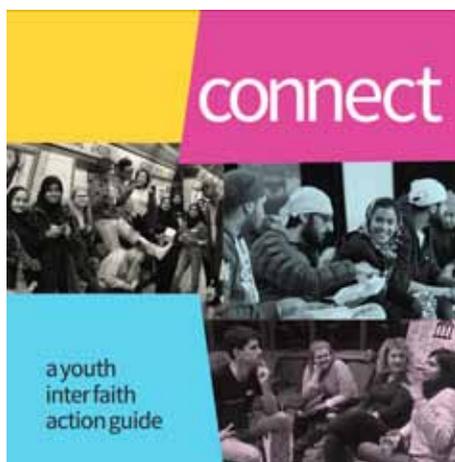
I was also struck by the fact that each of these youngsters emphasised the importance of meeting people of other

faiths, especially in socially fun ways. This had a much greater impact and was far more meaningful than simply learning about different religions in school.

An updated interfaith action guide—Connect—compiled by young people for young people was formally launched by 'our own' Jaskiran, co-facilitator of the advisory group.

Other presentations I particularly enjoyed were given by slightly older people, Frances Hume and Revd Canon Dr James Walters. Frances is the development officer for InterFaith Scotland where the young people are involved in lots of social activities and had recently organised a national youth conference at St Andrew's on the theme of Radicalisation and Reconciliation. Canon Walters talked about the London School of Economics Faith Centre where young people have a safe space to explore their own faith in dialogue with others and not shy away from the 'hard stuff'.

Cynthia Dickinson



<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect>

Calendar of Festivals

Winter 2018-2019

Bahá'í, Jewish and Pagan festivals usually begin on the evening before the given date.

OCTOBER 2018

1 Shemini Atzeret	Jewish
2 Simchat Torah	Jewish
7-13 Week of Prayer for World Peace	Interfaith
9-16 Navaratri	Hindu
19 Dasara	Hindu
20 Birth of the Báb	Baha'í
Installation of Guru Granth	Sikh
31 Hallowe'en	Pagan

NOVEMBER 2018

1 All Saints Day	Christian
Samhain	Pagan
2 All Souls Day	Catholic Christian
7 Diwali	Sikh, Jain, Hindu
8 New Year	Jain, Hindu
11 Armistice Day / Remembrance Sunday	National
11-17 Interfaith Week	Interfaith
12 Birth of Baha'u'llah	Baha'í
21 Mawlid an Nabi	Islam
23 Guru Nanak birthday	Sikh
26 Day of the Covenant	Baha'í
28 Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha	Baha'í
30 St. Andrew's Day	Christian

DECEMBER 2018

2-24 Advent	Christian
3-10 Hanukkah`	Jewish
8 Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)	Buddhist
21 Solstice, Yule	Pagan
24 Christmas Eve	Christian
25- 5 Jan Christmas	Christian
25 Christmas Day	Christian

JANUARY 2019

5 Guru Gobindh Singh birthday	Sikh
6 Epiphany	Christian
7 Feast of Nativity	Orthodox Christian
13 Maghi	Sikh
18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	Christian
18 Founder's Day	Brahma Kumari
20 World Religion Day	Baha'í
Tu BiShavat	Jewish
21-23 Mahayana New Year	Buddhist
27 Holocaust Memorial Day	National

FEBRUARY 2019

2 Candlemas	Christian
Imbolc	Pagan
5 Chinese New Year	
8 or 15 Nirvana Day	Buddhism
26 – 1 March Intercalary Days	Baha'í

MARCH 2019

1 St. David of Wales	Christian
Women's World Day of Prayer	Christian/Interfaith
2-20 Nineteen Day Fast	Baha'í
5 Shrove Tuesday	Christian
6 Ash Wednesday Lent begins	Christian
17 St. Patrick's Day	Christian
20 Equinox Ostara	Pagan
21 Holi	Hindu
Naw-Rúz (New Year)	Baha'í
Hola Mohalla	Sikh
Magha Puja Day	Buddhist
Purim	Jewish

APRIL 2019

3 Laylat al Miraj	Islam
9 Mahavir Jayanti	Jain
14 Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)	Sikh
Palm Sunday	Christian
18 Maundy Thursday	Christian
19-21 Theravadin New Year	Buddhist
19 Good Friday	Christian
20-27 Pesach	Jewish
21-29 Ridvan	Bahai
21 Easter	Christian
Lailat al Bara'ah	Islam
23 St. George's Day	Christian
28 Pascha Easter	Orthodox Christian

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