

Interfaith Calendar of Festivals

Spring 2012

FEBRUARY

2	Candlemas	Christian
	Imbolc	Pagan
3	Maha Shavartri	Hindu
4	Mawlid an Nabi	Muslim
8	Tu BiShvat	Jewish
15	Nirvana Day	Buddhist
19	Transfiguration	Christian
21	Shrove Tuesday	Christian
22	Ash Wednesday - Lent begins	Christian

MARCH

1	Saint David's Day	Christian
2-20	Nineteen Day Fast	Bahá'í
4	Orthodox Sunday	Orthodox Christian
8	Purim	Jewish
	Magha Puja Day	Buddhist
	Holi	Hindu
9	Hola Mohalla	Sikh
17	St Patrick's Day	Christian
20	Equinox Ostara	Pagan
21	Naw Ruz (New Year)	Bahá'í
	New Year	Hindu
23-April 1	Ramayana	Hindu
25	Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christian

APRIL

1	Palm Sunday	Christian
	Ramanavami	Hindu
5	Maundy Thursday	Christian
6-9	Theravadin New Year	Buddhist
6	Good Friday	Christian
	Hanuman Jayanti	Hindu
7-14	Pesach (Passover)	Jewish
8	Easter	Christian
	Palm Sunday	Orthodox Christian
13	Holy Friday	Orthodox Christian
14	Baisakhi, New Year	Sikh
15	Easter/Pascha	Orthodox Christian
19	Yom HaShoah	Jewish

21	First Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
23	St. George's Day	Christian
27	Yom Ha'Atzmaut	Jewish
29	Ninth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í

MAY 2012

1	Beltane	Pagan
2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í
6	Visakha Puja/Buddha Day	Buddhist
10	Lag B'Omer	Jewish
17	Ascension Day -	Christian
23	Declaration of the Bab	Bahá'í
24	All Ascension of Jesus	Orthodox Christian
27	Pentecost	Christian
27-28	Shavuot	Jewish
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í

Take a Step for Fairtrade

Fairtrade Fortnight Feb 27to March 11

Leeds is a Fairtrade City and has about 70 places of worship with Fairtrade status – Christian (Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Quaker) and Jewish Does that include yours?

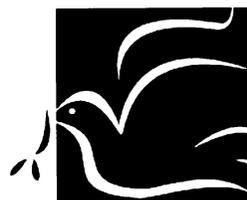
In Fairtrade Fortnight you can make the world a fairer place by Taking A Step

Small Step – swap your usual tea/coffee for Fairtrade

Big Step – encourage everyone in your place of worship to buy Fairtrade products.

Take a Leap – Organise an event for Fairtrade Fortnight. Work towards Fairtrade status for your place of worship.

See www.fairtrade.org.uk/step for ideas.



Concord

LEEDS INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP
www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Newsletter - January 2012

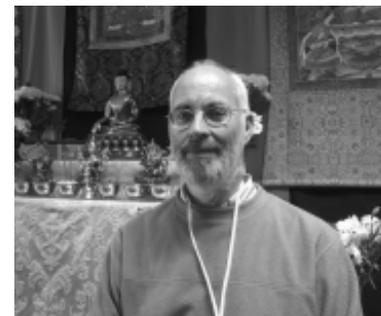
Peace Service

THERE was a good turnout to see and hear representatives of nine faiths light candles from the World Peace Flame and share readings including thoughts of peace from their faith traditions at the annual Peace Service in Leeds Civic Hall on November 2nd. As usual, there were readings for all to join in together. Cllr David Blackburn, Vice Chair of the Peacelink Group, lit a candle and spoke on behalf of Leeds City Council and all Leeds residents.

Before the service, and after a short period of reflection by candlelight, piano and guitar music was provided by two Brahma Kumaris, including a song written specially for the event.

Rites of Passage in the Buddhist Tradition

IN September an afternoon meeting of Concord was held at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre's new premises in St Paul's Street in Leeds, when David Midgley explained Buddhist rites of passage and answered questions.



Food, Feasts and Fasting in Bahá'í Tradition

THERE was a good turn out for an afternoon talk by Shahin Fatheazam on the Bahá'í attitude to food, with Christian, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh faiths—as well as Bahá'í—represented.

The Bahá'í faith was founded at the end of the 19th century, one of the latest in a series of religions when knowledge of food technology and medicine were well advanced, so there are no forbidden foods. Bahá'ís eat according to geographical locality and seasons with due regard for animals and the environment.

Feasting is a social activity, which encourages hospitality and a sense of community. Bahá'ís have nine Holy Days—two to commemorate central figures and seven that involve feasting.

Fasting is a common element in most religions, a time to reflect and bring themselves to account. Bahá'ís observe an annual period of fasting—19 days from March 2nd to 20th—followed by a celebration of the first day of Spring.



After an interesting question and answer session we were treated to a 'feast' of Persian confectionery and fresh fruit.

Treasures Revealed in Leeds

Sat April 28th to Mon May 7th

DON'T miss this opportunity to open your place of worship to the public and have it advertised throughout Leeds and beyond. Many people, while not being particularly religious, are nevertheless interested in visiting places of worship, to have a look inside and talk to worshippers.

You can open for a couple of hours, a day, or longer—whatever suits your congregation and faith leaders.

You can put on an event or exhibition, have a self-led trail, provide refreshments or simply have someone there to chat with visitors. It is entirely up to you.

To be included in the brochure, contact Jamie bethandjamie@ntlworld.com

Sign Language at Concord Meetings

CONCORD now has a volunteer, Richard, to do Sign Language at meetings. If there are any deaf people in your place of worship or faith community who are interested in coming along but need BSL interpretation, this can be provided.

Richard will be at the public lecture by Professor Gavin D'Costa on February 22nd in Leeds University (see programme). To ensure that Richard is available for our other events, please email or ring the Concord secretary well in advance.



unworthy. I therefore deem it a signal honour (and relief) to never have been on the wrong side of the negotiating table from Ethel. And maybe (just maybe) HKB"H - (*The Holy One, Blessed be He*) felt the need to be absolutely scrupulous in his dealings with Ethel. After all, He is in this for the long haul.....

Ethel was never backward in coming forward. Everyone was crystal clear about where they stood with her. But that did not mean that there were not some deeper, less visible currents which could take you by surprise.

I am now able to mention something which could never be mentioned until now. And here too was a really weird bit of synchronicity.

It was just a couple of weeks ago that one of the fluorescent tubes in the shul (*synagogue*) died, signalling the need to replace them all before the Yamim HaNora'im. By any objective measure, that batch of tubes lasted way longer than would have been expected.

And because they lasted so long, it is easy to forget the story behind them. These were our first foray into the relatively newish technology of daylight tubes, which provided a much more functional light than the old traditional pinkish tinged tubes. And part of this change was brought about by the fact that those with weaker eyesight, Ethel amongst them, were having difficulty reading the siddur (*prayer book*) during services.

What was not generally known (because Ethel would not allow it to be known) was that it

was Ethel who financed the new lighting for the shul. She wanted no thanks. She wanted no acknowledgement. She just wanted the environment to be better. And from that, she appeared to have derived great pleasure.

But how ironic that as the first of her lights flickered out, so did Ethel's life flicker out.

The Ethel of this last period of her life was not truly the Ethel that we were accustomed to knowing and loving. There must be, at some level, a sense of relief that she has been released from a situation she could not have found fulfilling or life affirming. This in no way, however, eases our mourning at her loss. A significant bit of the fabric of our community has been torn apart, and we will be forever poorer for her leaving.

Jewish tradition teaches "*Zecher Tzadik livracha*" (*May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing*). Ethel Baker truly blessed us with her life and now blesses us with her memory. May we live our lives so as to be worthy of the blessing which she has bestowed upon us.

Jewish stall at the Interfaith Week Exhibition



Ethel Baker –

Eidel bat Shmuel v'Chana

Eulogy given by Rabbi Ian Morris at her funeral on Leeds 12th October 2011 (Died 9 October = 11 Tishri 5772)

FUNERALS never feel “right”. They are always—at best—times of sadness and wistful memory. But they are not always tragic or horrific. And sometimes they are just not as wrong as others...

None of us here are blood relatives of Ethel. But that is not to say that we are not her “family”. For THAT we were. Despite the fact that this is not where she grew up (although I believe it IS where she was born...) Leeds was absolutely her home. And there can be no doubt in anybody's mind that Sinai Synagogue was her family.

It is true beyond doubt that we did not share her genes, but it is equally true that we are here today because we are truly mourners for her, irrespective of her and our genetic makeup. We know that in her gruff, confrontational Glaswegian way, she loved us. And we are here today not merely because we “tolerated” Ethel. We are here today because we were all able to see past the somewhat fierce surface to the real Ethel. And we loved her.

Not that any of us would have dared to say that to her....

I have pointed out on numerous occasions (and most recently last Saturday morning in my Yom Kippur sermon) that the whole imagery underlying the Yamim HaNora'im (*Days of Awe*) greeting of l'shana tova tikateivu v'teichateimu (*May you be written and inscribed for a good year*) is a reference to being written in the Sefer HaChaim (*Book of Life*) for the year to come so that you



would merit living to see next Rosh HaShana (*New Year*).

The tradition, therefore, deemed it to be a significant honour to die as Ethel died; to be allotted the full quota of days up to the end of the Days of Penitence without having to start a new year which would be cut short. The matter of “cutting short” was the key here, because “cutting short” was evidence of sin and divine retribution.

According to the tradition, then, Ethel was worthy to be allotted the “full whack”; no cutting short (she was short enough?) and no accrual of divine punishment. She left this world with an unblemished record.

It is possible, I suppose, to view this differently. It could be that HKB“H - (*The Holy One, Blessed be He*) was just a bit scared of Ethel. He wouldn't have been the first. On more than one occasion, Ethel mentioned to me her history as a shop steward.

There is no doubt in my mind that she would have been a formidable union representative; fierce in defence of fairness and decency, and fearsome in challenging that which was unfair and

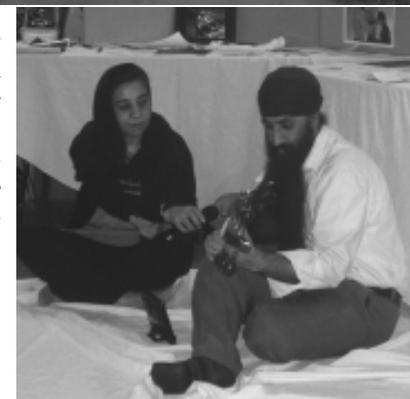
Interfaith Week in Leeds City Museum

AN enormous thank you to everyone who helped make such a wonderful Worship and Service exhibition on Thursday November 24th.

The event was opened by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, who then took time to watch a demonstration of Hindu dancing and look around at displays set up by nine faiths—Bahá'í, Brahma Kumari, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh.

Concord, Leeds Faiths Forum, City of Sanctuary, Leeds University Theology & Religious Studies and Community Transport also had displays—all of which can be seen on a slide show on Concord's website www.concord-leeds.org.uk

In the afternoon representatives of the different faiths gave short presentations on their way of worship and throughout the day there were opportunities to try on a sari or turban, henna painting and folding paper cranes.



From the Inter Faith Network UK

IFN-UK will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in July this year at its National Conference and AGM in London. If you would like to represent Concord at the meeting on Thursday July 12th, please contact Concord's secretary.

Year of Service

In 2012 a special project called *A Year of Service* will be taking place in England.

All faith communities have within their ethical teaching the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering.

In each month of 2012 faith communities will be hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. There will also be workplace volunteering opportunities. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen—of whose reign service has been a key theme.

The Year, which recognises and celebrates the role of faith in inspiring charitable and social action work, is supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and has been developed with the assistance of a multi-faith Reference Group and a Steering Group.

A Year of Service is an opportunity to highlight the excellent volunteering work which faith communities carry out in their local communities. It is also an opportunity for local faith communities to find out about the work of other faith communities in their neighbourhood, and explore avenues of practical collaboration on local projects, as well as getting to know people of other faiths and beliefs involved with charitable work.

Equalities Assembly Faith Hub

At the Equalities Assembly conference in November the Faith Hub representative, Jay Simpson, reported on progress being made in revising the *Religion or Belief Guide* for Leeds City Council staff and councillors. The next Faith Hub meeting on Thursday February 2nd will have an update on the Guide, including how you can continue to input.

The Hub will also consider how Leeds City Council can develop a consistent approach to acknowledging key religious festivals in the city. One suggestion has been to have appropriate banners displayed in front of Leeds Civic Hall. Again, your ideas and opinions would be welcome.

Other topics for the meeting include an update on links made with Leeds University's Department of Theology and Religious Studies; plans for Interfaith Week 2012 and Inter Faith Network UK's suggestion of "Year of Service".

The meeting will be held in the Civic Hall starting at 6pm. This is an opportunity for faiths in Leeds to have a voice with the City Council, ideally all faiths should be represented to have their say.

Pagan Voluntary Activity

APRIL 21st is Earth Day - a day when Pagans make a special effort to organise or take part in environmentally-friendly activities.

This year it will be part of the Year of Service activities, an inter-faith effort. We would like you to join us.

It is most likely to be litter-picking - in either Beeston or Hyde Park.

For more information contact Jay (Concord's Pagan representative) by e-mail theravensrest@gmail.com

Inter-Active

THE aim of the Inter-Active is to bring people from different communities together to break down barriers, dispel myths and stereotypes and build positive relationships through sport. Although the focus is on young people, our project is open to all ages.

Inter-Active has successfully used sport as a tool for engaging with young people from within the many communities of Leeds, including some of the most disadvantaged areas. The past three years have highlighted how powerful sport is at breaking down barriers within our different communities, and we now aim to enhance our learning, build further partnerships and develop wider opportunities to engage young people through sport.

Dialogue training is a central feature of the project. A group of ten to twelve teenagers from different communities work with facilitators to explore and develop their understanding of each other's faiths and cultures. They then become the Young Leaders of our project. These Young Leaders have used these skills to help run our events, such as family cricket days at the Caribbean Cricket Club.

The project is featured in the publications of both the ECB (England &

Wales Cricket Board) and the Community Development Foundation.

Inter-Active has support from the Leeds University "Live difference" project which is helping us to monitor and evaluate our work. The young leaders have won a national youth award for their work, recognising the value of both their sport-related and dialogue work.

Inter-Active aims to establish and develop new opportunities and links with more communities and a wider range of sports within the Leeds city region. A particular emphasis will be on involving more women and girls with our project.

Please view the links below;
www.youtube.com/watch?v=x93yqDjYPe8
Our partnership work with YCB
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdUIP6yG8wU
Young Leaders Development - In One City Film

Event

We have a fantastic event lined up for March 2012. This will be a multi faith, multi sports day, themed around the 2012 Olympics. The event will be held at and supported by the Leeds Metropolitan University, as well as many other organisations and agencies.

Inter-Active Project Manager,
Mahboob Nazir

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Leeds City Council Citizens' Panel — Have your say!

LEEDS is always changing, and it's important that Leeds City Council, the NHS and other organisations that provide the services you use understand what that means to you. The city is setting up a new citizens' panel, a chance for thousands of Leeds residents aged 18 or over to have their say on local issues. On the panel, you'll be sent regular surveys, or occasionally be invited to meet other panel members to talk about local issues. They will cover what it's like where

you live, what you think of council services or the NHS, Police and Fire service.

We all make better decisions when we work together. So, if you can spare a couple of hours over a year, the organisers would love to hear from you. To discover more or express interest, visit www.leeds.gov.uk/citizenspanel, email citizenspanel@leeds.gov.uk or leave a message on 0113 247 4610.