



# Surrey Faith Links Newsletter

December 2013



## Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you to all those who contributed to this issue as the last couple of weeks have been action packed with interfaith events! This is the last issue of the year until April 2014.

Jesus (peace be upon him) is the embodiment of God for Christians and an important person for many faiths; I would like to take this opportunity to wish all those celebrating Christmas, a happy and joyous one and leave you with an interesting read (below) by Mike Ghouse.

The birthday of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is also approaching in January so Mawlid un Nabi (pbuh) Mubarak in advance to all those celebrating his birth.

*Kauser Akhtar*

Faith Links Adviser, (Contact info on back page)

### Interfaith Christmas: Making God Boundless By Mike Ghouse

“...No matter what faith you belong, the Interfaith Christmas can offer everything you had always wanted and more: to live in peace with fellow beings without feeling apprehension, discomfort or the fear of the other.

Christmas is about celebrating the birth of a man who taught us how to build a cohesive society, which he called the kingdom of heaven. Whether we are Christians, or even believe in God, it simply means building a society that is free from arrogance, hate, malice, prejudice and insecurities, firmly built with love and forgiveness, the panacea to the conflicts we face today. Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus who emphasized on those values that are dear to each one of us, regardless of our belief.

One of the most frequently used words during Christmas season is peace. Indeed, it is a reflection of the innermost desire within each one of us, whether we are Christians or not. Christmas is an annual milestone that intensifies the desire to have peace for oneself and for others...” Read full article:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-ghouse/interfaith-christmas-making-god-boundless\\_b\\_2347856.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-ghouse/interfaith-christmas-making-god-boundless_b_2347856.html)



**INTERFAITH CHRISTMAS**

### Inside this issue:

Women & Faith Interfaith Event	2
Women in Islam event	2
Interfaith Quiz	3
Interfaith Service	3
Inspire & Educate!	3
Who are you sharing Christmas with?	3
Can 3FF Help You?	4
Confidence and Self Esteem Course	4
Community Connector Vacancy	4
Sports Survey for Disabled	5
Faith Action News	5
Helpful Resources	5
Could you foster a child?	6
Funding Opportunities	7
Upcoming Events	8

### Main Faith Festivals in December 2013

- ◆ 1st - Advent Sunday ✝
- ◆ 8th - Feast of the Immaculate Conception ✝
- ◆ 8th - Bodhi day ☸
- ◆ 13th - Birthday of Prophet Muhammad ☾☽
- ◆ 24th - Christmas Eve ✝
- ◆ 25th - Christmas Day ✝

### Women and Faith: who is the oppressor? Religion or Men?



At the beginning of National Interfaith week and the week when the Church of England voted on legislation to allow women bishops, Woking People of Faith gathered to consider the subject of Women in Faith. The deliberately provocative title 'Who is the oppressor, Religion or Men?' was explored by three excellent speakers from three different faith perspectives. Mrs Lisa Levine, a solicitor and member of the North West Surrey Synagogue, offered perspectives on women in the Jewish faith. Mrs Hilary Cotton, consultant and vice chair of the national

organisation Women and The Church, explored historical developments which have influenced attitudes to women in the Christian faith. Mrs Kauser Akhtar, Surrey Faith Links Adviser, articulated the differences between culture and Islam – and invited her audience to experience wearing a head covering for an hour.

Sixty people from different faith groups (and none) participated in the presentations, question time and lively discussion which continued over delicious tea and cake. An excellent children's entertainer looked after the children while adults listened to the speakers. Woking People of Faith works to build friendships between people of different faiths and cultures in order to facilitate understanding and challenge barriers which arise from assumptions and misinformation.

Those who attended commented that 'This was a wonderful, stimulating session which I hope will impact on women's roles in the future – I learned a great deal.' and 'It was thought-provoking and good to see/hear different responses across these three major faiths – an opportunity to contrast and compare which left plenty to think about and discuss with others. Please organise more events like these!'



The event was held on Sunday 17th November 2013 at the Parkview Community Centre, Sheerwater, and was attended by 60 adults from at least 6 different faith groups, and some who do not profess faith.

### WOMEN IN ISLAM



Banstead 5 organised a talk on Tuesday 19th November titled: Women in Islam in line with Interfaith Week 2013 at the United Reformed Church in Banstead.

There has been a lot of debating recently on media around Muslim women, the Hijab and the face veil. Kauser Akhtar (Faith Links Adviser) was invited to talk about some sensitive issues and dispel myths. It was a well attended event, the audience were very attentive and asked general questions about Islam, which are often misunderstood.

### INTERFAITH QUIZ

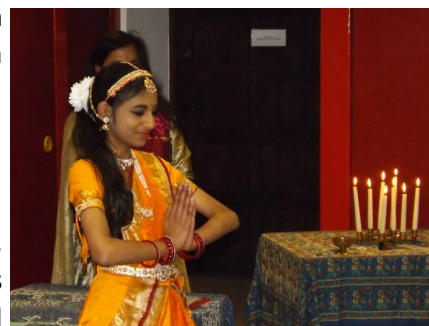
St Dunstan's in Woking hosted and organised an interfaith quiz for young people from Shah Jahan Mosque, the United Reformed Church and St Dunstan's as on-going relationship building between young people from different faiths. It was a fun evening, which commenced with a very active ice-breaker called 'the sun shines on...' followed by a quiz, snacks, chit chat, a fun interactive game concluded with a closing prayer!

The quiz night provided a social platform for the youth to interact and get to know each other. A bowling/laser quest is being planned for the New Year!

### INTERFAITH SERVICE

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum organised it's annual Interfaith Service for Interfaith Week 2013. It was a very successful event, with a good turn-out from many Faiths and generations.

Last year's Godalming Mayor, Councillor Liz Wheatley, and her husband came in their personal capacity as they enjoyed themselves last year. There were speakers from the Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Sikh and Bahá'í communities, each of them addressing this year's theme "Living Well Together" to good effect. Also a devotional dance from Nishi Bhatt.



Guildford & Godalming Mayors both included an Interfaith prayer in their welcome and closing comments respectively, and the meeting closed with an Interfaith Litany read by various members of GGIFF. This was followed with a very animated tea-party.

### INSPIRE AND EDUCATE!

Are you a confident speaker who is passionate about your faith? If so, Surrey Faith Links needs you! Speakers are needed for interfaith assemblies at schools, colleges and events about their faiths and beliefs. If you would like to be added to the speakers list and notified of events please contact Kauser Akhtar, Faith Links Adviser. E: [Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk)

### Who are you sharing Christmas with?

Christmas is a busy time of year, celebrating and spending time with family and friends. However, we know that this time of year can be difficult for some in our communities. They may be lonely – separated from family and friends, or vulnerable for other reasons. We know that many of these people are supported by you at this time and we have compiled a directory of support that is available in your local communities over the Christmas period. It can be found on: [www.cofeguildford.org.uk/go/cet](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/go/cet)

Are you, other churches, faith groups or community groups in your local area holding a Christmas lunch; or running social activities over the Christmas period for those in your community who are lonely or vulnerable?

We would be grateful if you would share your plans with us. Please get in touch with Jo Cookes, Partnership Development Co-ordinator at the Diocese – [jo.cookes@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:jo.cookes@cofeguildford.org.uk) or 01483 770330 with brief details of what is taking place.



## Can 3FF help you?

Staff and interns at 3FF are looking for opportunities to volunteer their time and skills in the local community, both as a team or individually. If you have projects or events over the coming months or year that you need extra help with, let us know! We're happy to get stuck in with hands on activities, volunteer our skills or help out in other ways, and hope to build up a bank of social action and volunteering activities to get involved in over the next year. Contact Hannah to find out more: [Hannah@3ff.org.uk](mailto:Hannah@3ff.org.uk)

### Articles that caught 3FF's eye:

Call to Improve RE Standards: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-24625978>

How not to talk about beliefs of others: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-raushenbush/oprah-and-dawkins-atheist-b-4170320.html>

Is diversity good or bad for community cohesion: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24761954>

Banning veils would be like outlawing miniskirts, says Baroness Warsi:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10421608/Banning-veil-would-be-like-outlawing-miniskirts-says-Baroness-Warsi.html>



## FREE Confidence and Self Esteem Course\*

This course will be run by the WEA in the New Year, please feel free to contact them to be put on the list for more information. Recruitment will take place in December.

\*Unless otherwise stated, all courses are free and open to anyone with a mental health problem aged 18+ living in Surrey. You must register prior to attending a course.



For more information please contact:: Debbie Watton, Team Leader

Tel: 01372731971 | Mob:07825 054018 | Fax: 01372 748785

The Diocese of Guildford seek to recruit

## Community Connector

For the Diocesan Communities Engagement Team

Salary: £15,600 +15% benefits package

Part-time (21 hours)

To be based in the areas of: Leatherhead and Dorking. Signposting to appropriate support is particularly important when providing services for the vulnerable and needy members of our communities who often have greater needs because of: isolation, lack of transport, poor health, financial difficulties etc.

This new Community Connector post will develop relationships, providing a link between projects and other initiatives which connect and work in partnership with: churches of all denominations, other Faiths, voluntary organisations, local authorities and the public sector. Through mapping services in Mole Valley, you will identify gaps in resources and link with commissioners of services providing a valuable source of information, local knowledge and opportunities for collaboration and partnership working.

The appointment will be initially for 1 year; then will be subject to ongoing funding.

The closing date for applications will be: Wednesday 4th December

Interviews will be held on: Monday 9th December 2013

For an application pack please contact Gerardine Brown

Email: [recruitment.diocese@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:recruitment.diocese@cofeguildford.org.uk), Tel: 01483 790302



### **Weir Archer Academy Sports Inclusive Sport Provision and Participation Survey**

As you may be aware, David Weir, CBE and his coach Jenny Archer launched the Weir Archer Academy (Registered Charity Number 1154013) earlier this year to provide opportunities for disabled people of all abilities to enjoy the benefits of participating in sport.

In order to ensure that we are creating a programme of delivery which appropriately meets the needs of disabled people, and apply for the relevant funding, we are conducting a short online survey to investigate the current sporting habits, barriers to participation and sporting interests of disabled people. The survey should take no longer than 5-10 minutes to complete.

Here is the link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Inclusive\\_Sport\\_Provision](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Inclusive_Sport_Provision)

### **FAITH ACTION NEWS**

#### **Creative English: Community Based Learning by Faith Communities**

On 13th November, FaithAction announced it had won the opportunity to deliver Creative English, a new programme as part of the Department of Communities and Local Government's £6 million investment in teaching English to the most isolated groups in England. <http://www.faithaction.net/index.php?p=1451>



#### **Regional Sounding Boards: Birmingham Next Month**

FaithAction will be holding regional Sounding Boards in order to find out what issues you are currently facing, where your priorities lie, and how we at FaithAction can support you and represent your experiences on a national level. The first of these Sounding Boards will be held on the 3rd of December at the Nishkam Centre in Birmingham. If you're interested in attending, sign up via

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faithaction-sounding-board-tickets-9294272419>

### **Christmas outreach/foodbanks and homeless support**

The Communities Engagement Team have put the following information together, details of local:

- ⇒ Foodbanks
- ⇒ Homeless support
- ⇒ Christmas/Christmas Day outreach being organised by local churches and community groups, many of which would welcome volunteers to lend a hand!

This information well as links to other helpful resources, can now be found via this link:

<http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/diocesan-life/community-connectors/>

If you know of any similar activities who would like to be included / or details which are incorrect please do get in touch.

For more information please contact:

Emma Beswick, Tel: 01483 790 324, E: [Emma.Beswick@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Emma.Beswick@cofeguildford.org.uk)

### COULD YOU FOSTER A CHILD?

Mel and Dave from Surrey have been fostering for six years. They are both teachers who have also worked in youth organisations. Dave is also a retired police officer.

“We fostered John\* a year ago. It’s as though he has always been there, and is part of ordinary family life with its ups and downs. With fostering, you need to think about making a little more room for flexibility, and recognising another perspective.

Some young people stay for just a short while and it’s simply a transition phase, yet for others; you may actually be saving their lives, their sanity, or both. When it’s ‘right’ it just is; with natural hugs, jokes, laughs, new experiences for everyone, heart to hearts, hair cut debates, or a chance to get out every toy in the loft.

As foster carers, we can’t make the world a perfect place for them, but we can provide a safe, non judgemental home where they can learn to deal with life, challenges, and face the future safely, armed with new skills and a different view of family life. At the same time it gives the family a new dimension and enriched life experience.

John

“Hi I’m John, I’m 16 years old, and I’ve been in and out of foster care since I was about seven. I’ve lived in at least four to five different placements - some better than others, for different amounts of time. The placement I’m in now, is where I feel most settled. I feel that a good placement has people that care, and show this by listening to my thoughts and feelings. I also feel that I can be myself and feel completely relaxed.

Before this placement, I used to be quite a couch potato. This was because I wasn’t happy where I was staying and the carers weren’t really caring. I felt quite depressed for a long time, and as I didn’t feel comfortable being around them, I would stay in my room most of the time. This has changed now, as I’m always involved with my current carers, we get along, and I’m not that lazy any more. I meet up with my friends more – and it feels like I’ve been here forever.

\*name has been changed. Could you become a foster carer?

For more information on fostering, visit: [www.surreycc.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/fostering) or call us on 08000 96 96 26

### SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL ARE IN URGENT NEED FOR MUSLIM FOSTER CARERS

A LOT OF PEOPLE DON’T REALISE THEY CAN FOSTER

You can be from any ethnic background.

Be Single or Married. Have patience, humour, be understanding, tolerant and a good listener. Able to provide stability and warmth.

Still think you can’t.....Come to our fostering event and speak to our fostering team.

A challenging and rewarding role which can make a difference and change a life. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, ‘I and the person who looks after an orphan and provides for him, will be in Paradise like this’, putting his index and middle fingers together (Bukhari)

Date: 1ST DECEMBER 2013, Time: 2PM - 5PM

Venue : HEATHERSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE, MARTINDALE AVENUE, CAMBERLEY, SURREY GU15 1BB

For more information and to book a place contact:

Brother Jonathan 07969317953

Sister Karen 07855119214

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### First World War: Then and Now

The First World War: Then and Now, provides grants of £3,000 to £10,000 for communities to mark the Centenary of the First World War, available from the Heritage Lottery Fund. First World War: Then and Now is a rolling programme, meaning you can apply anytime.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/FirstWorldWarThenandNow.aspx#.UozwjcQ71u4>

### Hilden Charitable Fund

Funding is available to charities in the UK and non-governmental organisations in the developing world. In the UK, the Fund supports projects concerned with: homelessness; asylum seekers and refugees; community-based initiatives for young people aged 16-25 years and penal reform. In the developing world, the Fund supports projects concerned with: community development; education; and health.

Average grants are £5,000. Hilden will consider funding for more than one year. Second 2013 deadline: 13 December 2013.

For more information please contact: PA to the Secretary of the Trustees  
Hilden Charitable Fund, 34 North End Road, London, W14 0SH  
Tel: 0207 603 1525, E: [hildencharity@hotmail.com](mailto:hildencharity@hotmail.com)

### Other Various Funding Opportunities:

Voluntary Support: <http://www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/funding.html>

Surrey Community Action: <http://www.surreyca.org.uk/category/funding/>

Surrey Care Trust Crisis Grants: <http://www.surreycaretrust.co.uk//Crisis-Grants.html>

Active Surrey: <http://www.activesurrey.com/funding>

Surrey Rural Partnership: Surrey's rural communities, organizations, businesses, farmers, growers and foresters are now able to access a range of new funding opportunities! The Rural Access to Services Programme (RASP) and the Surrey Hills LEADER Programme are now open for applications from rural areas. To find out more information please visit:

[http://www.surreyruralpartnership.org.uk/programmes.php?id\\_prog=10](http://www.surreyruralpartnership.org.uk/programmes.php?id_prog=10)

### Councillors' Allocations:

Every county councillor in Surrey has a personal 'members allocation' of over £8000 which can be granted to local community organisations to support local projects and events. You can find out whether your group is eligible to apply for a member's allocation grant and how to go about this by visiting Surrey County Council's Local Committee webpages:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/decision-making/local-committees>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Christmas Fair at St Dunstan's Church, Woking, GU22 7DT

On Saturday 30th November, 12:30pm– 2:30pm

A GRAND DRAW: 1st Prize £500, 2nd Prize £200, 3rd Prize £75

Delicious cake sale, Tombola, face painting, gift, book, jewellery, toys and DVD stalls and not forgetting Santa's Grotto!

In support of: WOKING HOSPICE & CHRISTOPHERS CHILDRENS HOSPICE

#### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Donate unused items including gifts, bottles, toys, books etc.

Help sell Raffle Tickets before and after Mass.

Help to man the stalls.

Help sort the donated items.

Help clear up after the event.

PLEASE contact us if you can help in any way: Bea: 07941220815/ 01483841891, [beasomer@googlemail.com](mailto:beasomer@googlemail.com)

### An Event for Interfaith Week: The Struggle for the Sacred in Today's Society

With The Revd Patrick Morrowan (Anglican priest and former university chaplain, now working at the Council of Christians and Jews)



Thursday 28th November, 8pm

The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, Gresham Road, Staines, TW18 2BD

Followed by refreshments; ALL WELCOME

There is no charge for our meetings but we welcome donations towards expenses and the work of CCJ

The Staines and District branch of the Council of Christians and Jews is focused on Staines and neighbouring towns in North West Surrey and also draws members from a wider surrounding area.

Contact us at [ccjstaines@gmail.com](mailto:ccjstaines@gmail.com), 01252 622978, [www.ccj.org.uk/staines](http://www.ccj.org.uk/staines)

Kingston Liberal Synagogue invites you and your members to a **chaverah (friendship) supper and service** at Kingston Liberal Synagogue on the **6th December**. For Jews this comes the day after Chanukah, the Jewish festival of lights has ended. A wonderful opportunity to come together as different faiths and share traditions we have at this time of the year to light up the darkness of winter. There will be a vegetarian meal to share; please bring your stories, traditions and yourselves! Please let the office know if you will be able to join them.

**Start at 6.30pm with a sharing circle and a creative Jewish Shabbat service at 8.00pm.**

For more information please contact Helen Mendelson, Kingston Liberal Synagogue Co-ordinator.

E: [office@klsonline.org](mailto:office@klsonline.org) [www.klsonline.org](http://www.klsonline.org) T: 020 8398 7400



### Hearing Champions: Hearing Aid maintenance training

Free, simple sessions open to everyone HEAR HERE!

We are looking for volunteers to:

- Be trained in the basic maintenance of hearing aids
- Offer these simple maintenance sessions, at existing church social events e.g. coffee mornings & lunches

Hearing Champions Training will include:

- Checking the hearing aid is working
- Replacing the battery, battery life
- Re-tubing
- Fitting the hearing aid in the ear
- Hearing aid controls
- T-loop
- Use of hearing aid
- Assistive listening devices
- Communication tactics
- Outline of audiology pathways in your area

Future dates: 12th December, 28th February 2014,  
4th April 2014

If you would like to find out more, please contact:  
TraceyWade, Deaf & Inclusion Co-ordinator

Communities Engagement Team, Diocese of  
Guildford.

E: [tracey.wade@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:tracey.wade@cofeguildford.org.uk)

T: 01483 790327

### Free Training In Guildford from SAdAS

Please find below details of free training available through SAdAS being held in Guildford. For more information please contact the South West Surrey Cruse office

E: [southwestsurrey@cruse.org.uk](mailto:southwestsurrey@cruse.org.uk) or T: 01483 418781

- Working With Friends & Family Members of Substance Users, Fri 10/1/14, Abbey Lounge, YMCA, Guildford
- Solution Focused Intervention, Fri 17/1/14, Abbey Lounge, YMCA, Guildford
- Relapse Prevention using CBT, Fri 24/1/14, Abbey Lounge, YMCA, Guildford
- Drug Awareness, Wed 5/2/14, YMCA Guildford
- Working With Suicidal Ideation, Tue 4/3/14, Abbey Lounge, YMCA, Guildford

### Open Door Church, Sunbury warmly invites you to join them celebrate Christmas

Kidz Klub Christmas Special on Sunday 8th December 10.30 a.m. to  
2.00 p.m. at Sunbury Manor School Hall, Nursery Road, Sunbury, TW16 6LF

Christmas Carol Celebration on Sunday 15th December 6.00 – 7.00 p.m. at Sunbury Manor School Hall, Nursery Road, Sunbury, TW16 6LF. Followed by Mulled Wine, Coffee & Mince Pies

All Age Nativity on Sunday 22nd December 10.30 a.m. at Sunbury Manor School Hall, Nursery Road, Sunbury, TW16 6LF. Come dressed as a part of the Christmas Story. Followed by Mulled Wine, Coffee & Mince Pies.

Christmas Morning Meeting 10.30 – 11.30 a.m. at Open Door Church Centre, Green Street, Sunbury, TW16 6QQ

For further details please call the Church Office on 01932 782005,  
or visit website at [www.opendoorchurchsunbury.com](http://www.opendoorchurchsunbury.com)

## WOKING DEBATES 2014

The Woking debates have been a great success in 2013; they seek to encourage active participation in our community by looking at underlying issues facing us. The debates will continue in 2014 as follows:

- 11 January: Restorative justice - does it work? Ken Hurley (Police and Crime Commissioner), other speakers TBC
- 8 February - Is welfare fair? Hazel Craig Waller and specialists from Woking CAB
- 8 March - What is Democracy - Jonathon Lord MP and David Babbs (Executive Director 38 Degrees)
- 5 April - Do weapons keep us safe? - Carl Thomson (Conservative Woking Councillor) and Kate Hudson (CND)

The debates are held at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG, from 11.00 am—12.30 pm  
For more information please contact Keith Scott T: 01483 824980, E: [keithsc\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:keithsc_2000@yahoo.com)

### The Annual Arundel & Brighton Justice and Peace Assembly:

In 2014 it will take place on the 17th of May and not the usual January date. The main topic of the Assembly will be the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### Second Benedict XVI Lecture

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi will speak on the topic of “Freedom of Religion in the Public and Private Sphere”



The lecture is to be chaired by Archbishop Vincent Nichols, and will be followed by a Q&A

Date: 2nd December

Time: 18:00 for 18:30

Venue: Trafalgar Hall , University of Notre Dame in London, 1 Suffolk Street, London, SW1Y 4HG

Katharina Smith-Müller on [Katharina.Smith-Muller@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:Katharina.Smith-Muller@cbcew.org.uk) by noon on 29th November.

All are welcome to attend, admission by registration only



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T: 07502 460 397, E: [Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk)

