



***"Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self"***  
***(Baha'ullah)***

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2017!  
 Local interfaith forums are busy planning their events especially around Interfaith Week in November so get your diaries out!  
 If you don't have a local interfaith forum but would like to attend or organise something near you, please contact me.

Kausar Akhtar  
 Faith Links Adviser  
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**Religious and Cultural training for Staff & Volunteers**

It has become evident in today's increasingly pluralist society that constructing and developing relations between people of faith and none is important for social cohesion. A positive attitude towards dialogue is essential for creating an environment in which different religions can relate to one another in a spirit of mutual respect .

It is equally important for professionals to understand different faiths for better working relationships between colleagues and staff with clients.

If you would like to hear from different faiths, please get in touch and I will organise a talk for you that is suited to you.

If you are a business or voluntary groups and you would like to know more about 'faiths and cultures' or you would like some training for your staff, please contact me.

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**Main Faith Festivals in August 2017**

1st, Tisha B'av (Jewish)  
 1st, Lughnasadh (Pagan)  
 6th, The Transfiguration (Christian)  
 7th, Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)  
 7th, Fravardigan, Zoroastrian  
 14th/15th, Assumption (Christian)  
 15th, Janmashtami (Hindu)  
 17th, No Ruz (Zoroastrian)  
 19th—26th, Paryushan (Jain)  
 22nd, Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)  
 25th, Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)  
 26th, Samvatsari (Jain)  
 31st—4th Sep, Hajj (Muslim)

## LANTERN FLOATING FESTIVAL CELEBRATES LOCAL COMMUNITY HARMONY

Despite pouring rain, over 650 people turn out to take part in inclusive lantern floating

On Saturday 22nd July, an audience of more than 650 people – comprising local families, mixed-faith groups, and the Mayor of Elmbridge, Rachael Lake – gathered for a traditional Shinnyo Buddhist Lantern Floating Ceremony at the peaceful and serene Shinnyo-en Buddhist Centre in Long Ditton.

Originating in the ancient Japanese Buddhist custom of remembering friends and loved ones, the floating of lit lanterns traditionally offers a moment for reflection and appreciation.

As well as taking part in Lantern making workshops, and floating their own lanterns, attendees were invited to spend time exploring the Shinnyo-en's UK centre, which houses a temple in a once important manor house, finding out more about the Shinnyo Buddhist tradition, and experiencing Japanese Taiko drumming, Buddhist chanting, and guitar and violin duets. Children were entertained by Shinnyo-en practitioners who hosted story-telling workshops in the early evening.



Dharma teachers performed chanting and rites which form the traditional Lantern Floating Ceremony. Attendees who had created a lantern decorated with a personal message or prayer of remembrance, appreciation or hope, were invited to light their lanterns and float them across the lake in the Temple's beautiful gardens throughout the day. Mayor Rachael Lake and her companion took part in the ceremony, floating their lantern along with hundreds of others, as daylight began to fade.

Rev. Michiko Delucia, Director of Interfaith Programmes for Shinnyo-en UK, said: "We are delighted that this ceremony has become something of a local tradition in Surbiton. It is our intention to continue to grow stronger bonds with our neighbours and the local community, and this ceremony, provides the perfect opportunity to do so. With its deep roots in Shinnyo Buddhism, Lantern Floating is a beautiful, tranquil and inclusive rite which allows people to gather to express gratitude to all that has come before us. In turn, we believe this togetherness can transcend differences, and helps build peace, understanding and hope in our society".

## Can Faith be relevant in Epsom and Ewell today?

Epsom and Ewell Faith Forum inaugurated their new faith forum on Sunday 2nd July 2017 in The Islamic Centre, Epsom.

Speakers included: Mike Thornton, Minister, Epsom Baptist Church, Saidhanya Raviendrakumar, Education Coordinator, Sri Raja Rajeswary Amman Temple, Stoneleigh, Joynal Ahmed, Imam, Epsom Islamic Centre, Trevor Finch, Baha'i Community and Jonathan Lees, Epsom and Ewell Food Bank.



All faith speakers highlighted the importance of faith in society today and coming together as people of faith. Jonathon Lees spoke about the importance of all local faith groups reaching out to help the poor and the weak in the Community locally; he mentioned that there is, very much, co-operation in this respect, between Faiths in the borough.

Questions were taken from those in attendance.

## Interfaith Week 2017

Inter Faith Week was established as a way to highlight the positive contributions that faith communities make to society and to strengthen inter faith engagement, as well as dialogue with those of non-religious beliefs. All these aims remain crucially important. Bringing people of different backgrounds together for positive interaction and cooperation has never been more vital.



Inter Faith Week offers a great platform for local inter faith bodies to showcase the important work that they do year round, to increase understanding and to engage new people in dialogue and cooperation for the common good.

If you are thinking about whether to hold an activity and what that might be, the [Inter Faith Week Toolkit](#) has lots of ideas for marking the Week complete with helpful checklists for organisers. IFN has also published a short, illustrated report on Inter Faith Week 2016: [Stories from 2016, Inspiration for 2017](#). This is full of the interesting and exciting ways that people chose to mark the Week last year. The report concludes with a short section looking forward to the Week in 2017. We hope that it inspires you to take part!

Just a few ways of marking the Week include:

- ⇒ Launching a new project or initiative - or using the Week to give prominence to one that you have already planned
- ⇒ An inter faith dimension to a Remembrance Sunday event - the Week begins on that day
- ⇒ A faith trail, open door day or an exchange visit with a local congregation from a different faith community
- ⇒ A discussion or debate on a particular issue
- ⇒ A one off social action project such as volunteering to support a local project working with and for the homeless, refugees or others
- ⇒ Putting on a learning activity or small exhibition - perhaps at your place of worship
- ⇒ An inter faith sporting event of some kind
- ⇒ A series of Facebook posts, blogs or articles for the local press about faith communities in your area and local inter faith activity - perhaps with a different author each day
- ⇒ A faith-linked music or dance event

Sunday 19 November will be [Mitzvah Day](#) - a Jewish-led day of social action involving people of all faiths and none working together in their local communities. Many events are being jointly held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day.

For more information about Interfaith Week, please visit: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/>

## Pope Francis message for first 'World Day of the Poor'

At the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy in November last year, Pope Francis in his message 'Misericordia et Misera' instituted a World Day of the Poor to be marked on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, which this year is 19 November. Ahead of that day, the Vatican issued this, the Pope's first message, in which he urges that, in the week before that Sunday, parishes and other Christian communities "make every effort to create moments of encounter and friendship, solidarity and concrete assistance" with the poor.

To read the Pope's message please visit:

<https://cvcomment.org/2017/06/13/pope-francis-message-for-first-world-day-of-the-poor/>

### Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum AGM

This year Elmbridge Multi faith Forum held their AGM at St Peter's Church in Hersham on Tuesday 25th July.

The Mayor, Cllr. Rachael Lake and her husband Ian, as well as all in attendance.

Nabil Mustapha and Geoff stepped down from their roles as Chair and Secretary respectively; Margaret Hicks was duly elected as Chair and Jackie Foster taking on some of the secretarial role alongside Geoff.

Nina Halyon spoke about the Food Bank held weekly at St Peter's Church; she described how people may face situations, usually of a temporary nature, when a supply of food will be very welcome. She also said that the food bank is run as a charity with minimal expenses, and that people show tremendous generosity in donating food and money

This was followed by a talk from Super Intendent Sarah Milligan of Surrey Police, showing the increase of "Hate Crime", and how important it is for all of us to be aware of its danger. She described the eight categories of hate crime, and also that in many situations hate crime may be a factor in cases of "Domestic Abuse", which itself is rising, and appears to be statistically well above average in North Surrey.

The last address was by the Mayor Cllr. Rachael Lake, who spoke about her chosen charity, "OASIS", which deals with homeless children. She spoke about EMF and about her hopes for her mayoral year.

The proceedings of the AGM were ended with a token of thanks to Nabil and Geoff. who duly thanked everyone, and pledged to maintain their support and assistance to all the efforts of EMF, and to the best of their ability.

Nabil M Mustapha



### Bridges Youth Mentoring Project

The overall aim of Bridges: To empower young people to take responsibility for their own lives and choices, to enable a positive impact within the local community

Specific aims:

- For young people to develop: Increased Self-Esteem
- For young people to develop: Improved ability to manage their lives
- For young people to develop: Better Relationships

The project provides volunteer adult mentors to support young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years who are experiencing issues at home, school or are beginning to be involved in low level crime or anti-social behaviour. The mentors are volunteers recruited from the local area who commit to mentor a young person regularly for up to a year. Each mentor receives training and is supported by the project co-ordinator.

For more information, or if you would like to become a mentor please contact:

David Paterson, BRIDGES Project Coordinator, [David.Paterson@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:David.Paterson@cofeguildford.org.uk)

### **Week of Prayer for World Peace (8th to 16th October 2017)**

It was a Christian initiative that led to the founding of the Week of Prayer for World Peace in 1974. It soon became an interfaith activity, and now welcomes everyone, of all faith traditions or none, to take part. Our first Chair, the late Dr. Edward Carpenter, former Dean of Westminster Abbey, established the guiding principle of the Week in the words "The peace of the world must be prayed for by the faiths of the world", and this continues to be the basis of our work today.

The things we agree on are many and precious. What we disagree on is precious too. We give our interior assent to all who stand and pray for peace with us. When that is challenging, we withhold our interior assent, yet stand with that person, as a friend and as a partner for peace.

Each year, the committee produces a leaflet of prayers and inspirational quotations for peace drawn from the major religious traditions of the world. At the present time, the committee and the sponsoring body include adherents of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian religions, and prayers and readings from all these faiths are included in the prayer leaflet for the year.

For this year's leaflet, for which we would ask you to make a donation and/or order hard copies:

<http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/orders.html>

Online version:

[http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/download/wpwp.leaflet\\_2017.pdf](http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/download/wpwp.leaflet_2017.pdf)

For more information about Week of Prayer for World Peace and how you can get involved:

<http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/>

### **Trust in Crisis: The Emergence of the Quiet Citizen**

Trust in Crisis: The Emergence of the Quiet Citizen reports upon the findings of a three-year Woolf Institute research project examining the effect of, and responses to, different forms of crisis on relations within and between communities in London, Paris, Berlin and Rome. It is an extremely timely report and comments on the post-2008 financial crisis and resultant 'austerity', mass migration, the integration of minority communities and the impact of recent terrorist violence and implications for both experienced and perceived security issues.

The key finding is that whilst trust in centralised government structures has been significantly eroded in recent years, trust within local communities can be strengthened in times of crisis. These local forms of trust are found in faith communities working side-by-side, supplying food banks and confronting the needs associated with refugee resettlement and cohesion. The local response is very different from the state with 'quiet' citizens, some with a faith basis and others secular, coming together to assist people in need. The report discusses how this development has the potential to bond previously disparate communities, both long-established and new to an area.

To read the report:

<http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Trust%20in%20Crisis%20Report.pdf>

### **'Behind Closed Doors' report**

Behind closed doors – voices against gender-based violence, human trafficking and modern-day slavery, is a research project, commissioned by Churches Together in England, and made possible through a legacy gift of the former Leicester Free Church Women's Council.

To read the report: <http://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=192874>

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Vulnerable Faith Institutions Scheme**

The scheme will provide funding for security measures to places of worship and associated community centres that are vulnerable to attack on racial, religious or ideological grounds. We will consider bids from places of worship in England and Wales. Below are some examples of places of worship eligible to apply for the funding (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

Mosques, Gurdwaras, Temples, Churches, associated faith community centres (for example a community centre run by a place of worship or near a place of worship that is faith based).

For more information about the Scheme and how to bid, please visit:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/vulnerable-faith-institutions-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/vulnerable-faith-institutions-scheme)

### **People's Postcode Trust Small Projects Grants (PPT)**

PPT invites applications for projects that focus on the prevention of poverty, promotion of human rights, equal rights and conflict resolution for some of society's most vulnerable groups.

Registered charities in England, Scotland & Wales can apply from £500 - £20,000 (£10,000 in Wales); other organisations may apply for up to £2,000. It's a two-stage application process with an Expression of Interest at Stage One followed by a Full Application Form for those projects invited to apply.

Closing date for applications: 28 August 2017

For more information please visit: [www.postcodetrust.org.uk](http://www.postcodetrust.org.uk)

### **Sport England Families Fund to Open for Applications (England)**

Sport England has announced that the first funding round of its Families Fund is now open for applications. A total of £10 million is available for sports projects that focus on families with children aged 5-15, with a particular emphasis on low income families and families living in areas of high deprivation.

Sport England are looking to fund organisations, both sporting and non-sporting, who understand children and families and have a proven track record of working with them. The anticipated size of funding for projects will be from £50,000 up to £500,000 (for the right project)

Closing date for applications: 31 August 2017 at 3pm

For more information please visit: [www.sportengland.org/funding/families-fund/apply-to-our-families-fund](http://www.sportengland.org/funding/families-fund/apply-to-our-families-fund)

### **GSK IMPACT Awards provides funding and training**

The GSK IMPACT Awards provide funding and training and development for charities doing excellent work to improve people's health. They are funded by GSK and managed in partnership with The King's Fund.

The awards are open to registered charities that are at least three years old, working in a health-related field in the UK. Up to 20 awards will be made, ranging from £3,000 up to £40,000.

Closing date for applications: 22 September 2017

For more information please visit: [www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/gsk-impact-awards#inbrief](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/gsk-impact-awards#inbrief)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**FLOAT CANDLE-LIT GRAPEFRUIT SKINS ON THE RIVER WEY AT SEND**

SATURDAY 5 AUGUST, 7PM ONWARDS  
REMEMBER HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI



Woking Action for Peace is one of hundreds of groups worldwide campaigning to make the world a safer place by persuading the nuclear powers to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

This unique ceremony will begin at about 8pm. There will be time before this for people to read out a poem or short passage or say a few words.

Come and join us at the New Inn, Send GU23 7EN, from 7pm if you would like to have a meal first.

Woking Action for Peace

Contact Allison on 01483 725439 or Keith at [keithsc\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:keithsc_2000@yahoo.com)

**“Where do our morals come from?”**

Tuesday 12th September, 7.30pm | Speaker: Oliver Curry

The Guildford Institute in Ward Street, Guildford, GU1 4LH

Oliver Scott Curry is a Senior Researcher in Anthropology, at the University of Oxford.

Oliver’s work takes an evolutionary approach to moral psychology – he argues that morality is a set of biological and cultural strategies for promoting cooperation. He will be talking about his recent survey of ethics in 60 societies, and the seven moral rules found all around the world.

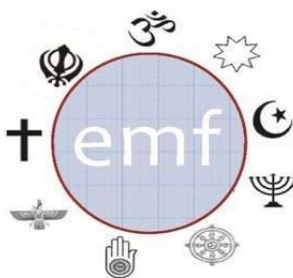
Tea/coffee and biscuits break at about 8.30.

[There is no charge, but a small donation is requested of £2 or £3 (but not from students) to cover the speaker’s expenses and the hire of the hall.]

If anyone would like further information, please telephone Mike Adams (01483 233324) or David Simmonds (01483 800397). We are also on Meetup, Facebook and Twitter.



**Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum**  
**Upcoming Events**



⇒ Garden Tea Party, Sunday 13th August , 3.00 pm—5.00 pm

⇒ Saying Goodbye, Tuesday 26th September, 7.00 pm

The last part of a three part event looking at faith perspectives of death and services after death.

⇒ Visit to Winchester Cathedral and Christmas Market, Monday 27th November, 9.30 am—3.30 pm

For more information please contact Geoffrey Morris: [geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk](mailto:geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk)



Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh near St. Jean d'Acre

The Surrey Bahá'í community, along with Bahá'ís all over the world, are celebrating the bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of their Faith. Each Messenger brings social teachings designed for that particular age and the coming of Bahá'u'lláh was the beginning of a new age in the history of mankind. Much information about His life and teachings can be found at [www.bahauallah.org](http://www.bahauallah.org) & [www.bahauallah.com](http://www.bahauallah.com).

A number of events and receptions will be taking place around the area in September and October, including Camberley, Epsom, Godalming and Guildford, and on September 16th a gathering specifically for friends from local Interfaith groups will take place in Cobham. Please contact [salimrahmani9@hotmail.com](mailto:salimrahmani9@hotmail.com) if you would like an Invitation to this.

Please contact [CarolynNeogi@aol.com](mailto:CarolynNeogi@aol.com) for information about activities in your area.

### Peace Day Celebration

Saturday 23rd September  
Mercia Walk, 12.00 pm—1.00 pm



Woking People of Faith and Surrey Faith Links invite you to their 5th annual Peace Day celebration!

Children have taken part in a Peace Day competition; winners will be awarded prizes by the Mayor of Woking, faith leaders will share words of peace from their faith, singing by different faith groups, FREE henna and face painting with Peace designs. Free public event, all welcome!

For more information please contact:  
Simon Trick, E: [nstricks@yahoo.com](mailto:nstricks@yahoo.com) or  
Kausar Akhtar, E: [Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:Kausar.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk)



Woking People of Faith





### Diwali Community lantern parade 2017

Thursday 12 October 2017, 6pm, Woking Town Centre  
FREE opportunities to take part...

Dance and Educational workshops :Thursday 12 October 2017, 9.30am



Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is the most popular of all the festivals from South Asia, and is also the occasion for celebrations by Jains and Sikhs as well as Hindus.

The Diwali parade organisers will be presenting a short evening of Indian music, song and dance immediately after the parade. The event at the H.G. Wells Centre will feature performances such as Kerala drumming and traditional Indian dance.

The party is FREE to attend and will be hosted by the Woking Malayalee Association, The Art of Living, Surrey Hindu Cultural Association and the Woking Nepalese community.

For more information please contact: Tara Stevenson, Arts Development Officer  
E: [tara.stevenson@woking.gov.uk](mailto:tara.stevenson@woking.gov.uk)

### An Evening of New Sacred Jewish Music

with singer, teacher and celebrant Alexander Massey  
Monday 9th October, 7.45 pm  
Staines Synagogue, Westbrook Road, Staines TW18 4PR

This year marks 25 years of the Council of Christian and Jews (CCJ) Branch of Staines and District. Today we draw people from a wide area that includes parts of Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Greater London, as well as those closer to home in Spelthorne and Runnymede and neighbouring boroughs. So Alexander's visit to Staines Synagogue will be a celebration of our first quarter of a century.

Alexander Massey is a solo singer, multi-instrumentalist and composer, writer, teacher, prayer leader, consultant, and coach. His presentations blend his music with commentary on Jewish thought and prayer; above all, his work points to the sacredness of our shared humanity.

Find out more his inspirational work at [alexandermassey.com](http://alexandermassey.com)

RSVP to Cedric Dowe on 01252 622978 or email [ccjstaines@gmail.com](mailto:ccjstaines@gmail.com)

Please do mention this event to friends and colleagues. They would be most welcome.

Another date for your diary is Tuesday 21 November when we will welcome Rabbi and Rebbetzen Meir and Rina Shindler from Richmond United Synagogue to speak about the work of a rabbinic couple today





## SEEFF ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM

### Chaplaincy in a Plural Society: Faiths in Service

Tuesday 17th October, 9:30 am—5:00 pm  
WORTH ABBEY, Turners Hill, Crawley, RH10 4SB  
Performance Arts Centre (Building Opposite the Church)

Speakers and workshops will cover chaplaincy work:

In hospitals (General, Mental Health, Hospices); in crisis (Prisons, Detention Centres, Police, Airports);  
in Education & the workplace

Why attend:

- To increase your understanding of the current landscape
- To gain insights into how to address immediate and longer-term challenges.
- To learn new tools and techniques to help you and your organisation and local area.
- To meet peers from across the Chaplaincy system and expand your professional network.



Conference Registration Fee: £12 (Lunch Included)

To register please contact Rabbi Wallach, E: [rabiwallach@gmail.com](mailto:rabiwallach@gmail.com) , M: 07909 506506

[www.se-faithforum.net](http://www.se-faithforum.net) | Email: [contact@se-faithforum.net](mailto:contact@se-faithforum.net)

## Woking Debates 2018

Woking Action for Peace, LA21, Friends of the Earth, Quakers, Churches Together, Woking People of Faith and Surrey Faith Links work in partnership to bring you some thought provoking and topical debates.

1. Is privacy a luxury or necessity? Saturday 20th January 2018
2. Is our democracy breaking down? Saturday 17th February 2018
3. Why are people living in poverty in 21st century Britain? Saturday 17th March 2018
4. What is the future of work? Saturday 14th April 2018

The debates are held at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG  
11.00 am till 12.30 pm

For more information please contact Keith Scott: [keithsc\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:keithsc_2000@yahoo.com)



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