

APRIL 2026

Welcome to the April Newsletter

After the message from the Chair, this newsletter contains a list of forthcoming events in April and a report on last month's happenings.

Chaucer writes: 'Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote/The droghte of March hath perced to the roote...' and reminds us that growth comes with this emerging Spring season. Some of us may have had enough of 'showers sweet' already in March, but they are needed for the green shoots that those of us with allotments are carefully nurturing. There is rain, but there is hope too.

Rory Allen, editor

Message from the chair

I have been reflecting over the last week or so about all the momentous events that are taking place in the world, almost too many to keep up to date with: that large parts of the world are at war and, as always, ordinary people will suffer the most. But also that there is an increase in hate crime against people of faith – and all happening at a time when many faiths are celebrating major festivals – Easter for Christians, Passover for Jews, and the Eid-al-Fitr prayers to mark the end of Ramadan, as well as Vaisakhi for Sikhs.

So, it is important that we remind ourselves that all of these faiths celebrate the triumph of love over hate, and that all human beings are equal in God's eyes. Hope not Hate is more important than ever and I hope that we can all, whatever our faith, pray for peace to triumph over war.

On a personal note I am also celebrating the installation of Archbishop Sarah Mullaly as the first woman to be appointed Leader of the Anglican Church at a joyous service in Canterbury this week. She has a huge task in front of her so I hope you will join with me to send her prayers and good wishes for the many challenges she now faces. I thought she started off well by doing the Pilgrimage from London to Canterbury meeting lots of ordinary people along the way.

Tina Funnell, Chair

Contents

1. Note on upcoming YIG meetings: Dimensions of World Peace through the Lens of Faiths and Religions (Tuesday 7th April)
2. More future meetings: Pesach Seder, 3rd April; Community Reflection evening, 13th April; YLGC clothes sale and sing along, 18th April
3. Unity Messages from the Movement for Progressive Judaism
4. Video resources on faith beliefs; announcements from York Human Rights City Network
5. Reports on previous events: our 3rd March meeting on Fabric and Touch in Faiths; Purim celebration on 1st March; York Mosque Unity Iftar, 7th March; Clifford's Tower memorial, 16th March; Hate Crime Awareness training, 23rd March; YIG visit to York College, 25th March
6. Faith Notes on Passover, Vaisakhi and Easter
7. Shap calendar of festivals for first half of 2026

Planned future YIG talks and events

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month in the Council West Offices (in fully disabled accessible premises). The Meetings start at 7.00 pm with a moment's silence and finish around 8.30pm. People gather from 6.30-ish for drinks and a time to 'catch up'.

YIG hugely appreciates the support of our members and friends and especially your attendance at our monthly meetings. Please see the table below which shows the programme for 2026.

	Meeting topic
April	Dimensions of World Peace through the lens of faiths and religions: challenges and contributions
May	Physical movement and gesture in faiths
June	Planning meeting
July	Sikh Temple visit
August	Picnic: venue TBC
Sept	Religious faiths in Japan (part 1) Chris Collingwood
October	Languages in faiths
November	Talk from Local Chaplain from the Fire service
December	AGM and bring and share of food from different faiths and cultures(social event)

This year we have tried to build on the successes of last year, for example holding meetings in which members can share their personal experiences of their faith(s). We have also tried to include topics that enable us to connect with our local community as well as the wider world. We are distributing the organisation and chairing of meetings, as we now have a team of people who oversee meetings, which includes myself, Bessie and Alicia.

Sarah Hubbard

Pesach Seder meal, 3rd April, with York Liberal Jewish Community



Eventbrite link: [Pesach Sedar Tickets, Friday, Apr 3 from 5:45 pm to 8:30 pm | Eventbrite](#)

Overview

It's that time of year again—our community Pesach Seder is approaching, and we're excited to celebrate together. This year's theme is green,

Pesach Seder 2026 3rd April – An Evening of Fun, Frogs, and Freedom

It's that time of year again—our community **Pesach Seder** is approaching, and we're excited to celebrate together. This year's theme is **green**, in at least four different ways, inviting us to explore liberation from a fresh and growing perspective. Expect warmth, storytelling, community, and a touch of frog-themed fun (symbolic only!).

Venue

York St John University – On-site Chapel

This is a new venue for our Pesach celebration and for some of our future Shabbat services. If you haven't been before, you can find directions and the campus layout here:

<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/map/>

Committee members will also be available on the evening to guide you to the chapel.

Time

Doors open: 5:45pm

Seder begins: 6:15pm

Bring-and-Share Meal

We will continue our traditional bring-and-share format. Please bring:

- A **vegetarian or vegan dish** with **no grains**.
- If you follow **Sephardic traditions** and include rice, corn, or beans, please label your dish clearly.
- **Green desserts** are especially welcome.
- All food must be **pre-prepared, served cold**, and **clearly labelled** for allergens.

Please bring your dish in its **serving container**, with any serving utensils needed. There are **no washing-up facilities**, so please take home any non-disposable items.

We will provide **Seder plates, matzah, and water**.

To help us balance the meal, please let us know **what dish you plan to bring**, by emailing; chair@jewsinyork.org.uk

Cost

- **Members:** Free
- **Non-members:** £5

Volunteers

If you can help with **setting up** or **tidying down**, we would be very grateful.

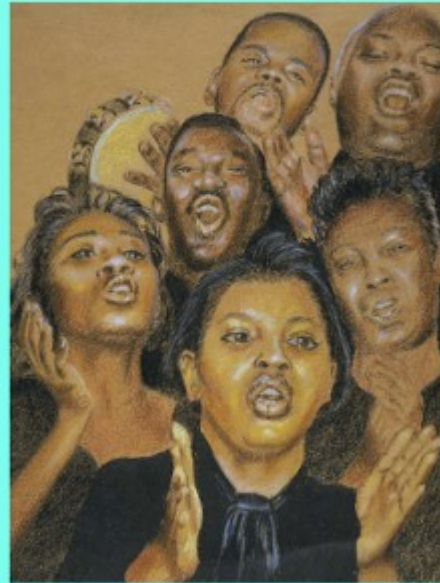
Community Reflection Evening, 13th April



Community Reflection Evenings are a regular monthly space for everyone from any background or belief, to come together to listen to inspiring passages in an uplifting atmosphere, on a variety of subjects and themes, allowing anyone who wishes, to share their reflections in a non judgmental and friendly atmosphere. It is aimed to promote community building and creating fellowship. All are welcome. For any queries please contact Helen on 07545 755188.

YLJC Clothes Sale and Gospel Sing Along, 18th April

*YLJC Presents their
Spring Preloved
Clothes Sale &
Gospel Sing Along
In Aid of York
Foodbank*



At
York Unitarian Chapel
31 St. Saviourgate
York
YO1 8NQ

*18th April
1pm to 3pm*

*Come and explore a world of
preloved fashion & music with
coffee & cake.*

**Mitzvah
Day**



The Movement for
**Progressive
Judaism**

News

Updates from our Movement and communities

Over recent weeks, our Progressive Jewish communities and clergy have been proud to join and host interfaith and civic Iftar gatherings, moments of shared humanity, faith and connection.

As some of these public expressions of prayer and partnership come under criticism, we stand alongside our Muslim neighbours, affirming both the importance of public religious life and the value of a society in which different faiths can be visible, confident and at ease with one another.

Alongside this, we celebrate the voices and work of our young volunteers and share an update on the global effort to protect the egalitarian prayer space at the Kotel.

Your Progressive Judaism Comms Team



Progressive clergy - including Rabbis Charley and Josh - have joined with leaders of all faiths to condemn this damaging language and uphold the values we share.

In a letter, set to be published in The Times, the group of faith leaders write: "Britain's public spaces have long reflected the diversity of our country. From Easter Passion Plays to Diwali, Vaisakhi, and Chanukah celebrations, people of all faiths have gathered openly and peacefully. These are not acts of division, but expressions of belonging.

"To single out Muslims practising their faith in this way risks stigmatising a whole community and undermines the principle

of religious freedom. Characterising peaceful worship as inherently threatening is both inaccurate and damaging.

"At a time when cohesion matters more than ever, political leaders have a responsibility to uphold the shared values that bind us together."

Our thanks to Lilian Coulson for contributing this extract from the Proessive Judaism newsletter.

Please also see the following link to another article from the Movement website, entitled: 'Who gets to be visible in Britain?'

[Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Rabbi Josh Levy: Who Gets to Be Visible in Britain? - The Movement for Progressive Judaism](#)

A useful resource on faith beliefs and practices

We have recently come upon a website with some very interesting and helpful links to short YouTube videos dealing with the basic tenets of a number of faiths: Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and the Sikh faith. They are freely available via the following link: <https://www.penninelearning.com/film-resources/>

Those involved in religious education, as well as anyone interested in their own or other faiths, may find these of value.

A message from Claire Fox on York Human Rights City Network

Following yesterday's YHRCN Steering Committee meeting. I'd like to share a couple of updates with you. The first is from Sian at [Healthwatch](#), and the linked invitation to the [York Health and Arts Mela](#) comes from Shamin Eimaan.

Shamin has expressed how lovely it would be to see everyone at the event, and if anyone would like to steward the event, then that would also be greatly appreciated. For further information on volunteering, please contact Shamin directly at shamim.eimaan@hotmail.com

Thank you
Claire

Cllr Lucy Steels-Walshaw has put forward a motion in support of Healthwatch York for the next Full Council meeting on Thursday 26 March. Read the motion here: <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=15006&x=1>

The Kings Fund have also published a report "The future of patient voice: learning from the Healthwatch model" which basically reiterates all the concerns we have raised about the need for an independent vehicle for public voice in the health and care system. Read more here: [The future of patient voice: learning from the Healthwatch model | The King's Fund](#)

We are hearing that the timeline for getting the Health Reform Bill out in April is becoming increasingly tight. This may be good news for Healthwatch as it sounds like our abolition, despite being a small part of the Bill, is being seen as contentious, and something that will snag the Bill's passage through Parliament.

We have recently published two reports in partnership with others that touch on rights-based issues:

What trans, non-binary and intersex people told us about healthcare in York: <https://www.healthwatchyork.co.uk/seecmsfile/?id=153>

Getting to healthcare:

<https://www.healthwatchyork.co.uk/seecmsfile/?id=151>

We have also recently published our quarterly "What we are hearing" report for Oct-Dec 2025:

<https://www.healthwatchyork.co.uk/seecmsfile/?id=154>

We were also asked for a 2025 roundup which draws from all our quarterly reports in that year and lists out all reports published:

<https://www.healthwatchyork.co.uk/seecmsfile/?id=157>

We are still encouraging people to share their experiences. Current surveys include:

Women's experiences of long term health conditions: We want to hear from women with long term health conditions to understand what is working or not in diagnosis and treatment/care. Please share your experience through our anonymous survey: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/77KRR3/ Or you can email: healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk or call 01904 621133.

Young people and vaping in York.

There has been a significant rise in the number of young people vaping. With mounting evidence that vaping is a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of young people, we wanted to examine why more young people are vaping, the links to smoking cigarettes and other harmful behaviour, as well as the risk of adulterated vapes and unpredictable effects. We are also keen to share information about where young people can get support to stop vaping.

We have launched a survey which is available via the link below and on our website and invite young people up to the age of 25 to share their experiences and views about vaping. Please get in touch if you would like paper copies of this survey.

Survey: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Z7VKLP/

Support is available to help you stop vaping. Just contact the Health Trainers using the online form and a Health Trainer will be in touch. You can also contact the team by telephone or WhatsApp: 07789 946 384, or email: healthtrainers@york.gov.uk.

Details are available on their website [here](#).

Our Core Connectors (young people volunteering with Healthwatch York) are working on their second report - this one will focus on young people's views on mental health support. We are also interested in hearing more from anyone affected by the collapse of NRS who provided the local wheelchair and community equipment service. We understand although a new provider has been found people are facing at least 8 month waits to access new wheelchairs, and some people have been provided with items not fit for purpose.

Claire Fox

Centre and Programmes Manager

[The Centre for Applied Human Rights](#) (CAHR)

York Interfaith Group Explores the Significance of Touch in Faith:

Reflections from the Latest Meeting chaired by Bessie on 3rd March

The most recent gathering of the York Interfaith Group was an inspiring and thought-provoking exploration of the theme “Faith and Touch.” Under the warm guidance of Bessie, who chaired and supported the evening. We were privileged to hear four of our members speak movingly about the role of touch within their respective faith traditions.

Bessie set the tone by sharing the importance of his distaff and staff in his worship of Frigg, providing a vivid insight into how these objects enhance his connection to the goddess and the earth. The tactile connection with these items, he explained, fosters a deeper sense of continuity with ancient rituals and our forefathers and foremothers .

Next up the Rabbi from YLJC offered a fascinating explanation of the tallit and tefillin—sacred Jewish garments and objects imbued with centuries of meaning. Sarah Hubbard had the opportunity to try on these items, experiencing first-hand the physical and spiritual connection they provide during worship.

After the rabbi, Dee delivered a wonderful talk on the significance of touch in Buddhism, captivating the group with her knowledge and the array of artefacts she brought along. Among these were beautifully coloured khata scarves, which participants were encouraged to handle, allowing everyone to feel the texture and symbolism of these meaningful objects. Dee’s presentation offered a unique perspective on how tactile experiences can cultivate mindfulness and compassion within Buddhist practice.

Last but by no means least, Mary explained the significance of touch in Catholicism, focusing on Rosary Beads and the significance of each bead in the creed. Her discussion elucidated the importance of touching each bead. Mary brought with her a variety of rosaries which members of the audience touched and felt.

The evening was a testament to the power of sharing and learning across faiths, deepening our appreciation for the ways in which touch enriches worship and spiritual life. Thanks are due to Bessie for chairing with such warmth, and to all our speakers for their generosity and insight. We look forward to future meetings where we can continue this journey of discovery together.

Contributed by Sarah Hubbard

Examples of fabrics from Buddhism:





Tibetan Buddhist Monk Robes, showing how it can be patched together



Orange kasaya; Young Buddhist Monks in Sri Lanka showing robes of just one piece of material



The kesa (or okesa) is a traditional, rectangular, patchwork robe worn by Zen Buddhist monks in Japan



Tibetan Buddhist Mala Beads

Beads from various faiths:



Buddhist / Hindu Sandalwood Mala Beads



Islamic Prayer Beads



Catholic Rosary Beads



Eastern Orthodox Silk Prayer Rope

Packed House for Purim Celebration at Haxby Memorial Hall, 1st March



On a lively evening at Haxby Memorial Hall, members and friends of the York Liberal Jewish community gathered to celebrate Purim in style. The event drew a wonderful crowd of around fifty people, all eager to join in the festivities and mark this special occasion in the Jewish calendar.

The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the entertainment provided by the children and young people of the community. Their play, retelling the story of Esther, Haman and Mordecai, brought laughter and applause as they cleverly gave it a Bake-Off twist. Much to everyone's delight, the Rabbi donned a pink wig for her role. The creativity and enthusiasm of all the actors shone through, making the story accessible and engaging for all ages, especially for fans of the TV show young and old.

It was particularly heartening to welcome some of our interfaith friends to the celebration, reflecting the spirit of openness and friendship that characterises our community. The evening was filled with warmth, good humour, and a true sense of togetherness, as everyone joined in to enjoy delicious food, lively conversation and the joy of Purim.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making the event such a memorable success. Here's to many more occasions of shared celebration and community spirit!

Contributed by Sarah Hubbard

York Mosque Unity Iftar, 7th March

On 7th March, York Mosque hosted around 400 guests in the annual unity iftar, where York residents celebrate Ramadan with the York Muslim community.

The day started with a welcome from our newly elected and youngest ever President, who is 25 years old. After a short talk about the spirit of Ramadan by the York local Imam, two Muslim pharmacists shared knowledge with the guests about the health benefits of fasting and provided professional advice on how to maintain wellbeing resilience in challenging times. Attendees took part in an activity, each sharing a positive note on the wall, to spread an atmosphere of gratitude.

The day also featured a song by the children of the mosque, and a speech by a mosque student. Later the guests attended the Muslim prayer before sharing a meal together.

The York Interfaith chair, Tina Funnell, commented on the event; "I'd like to say how wonderful it was to join all friends at the Mosque for the unity iftar to celebrate the breaking of the fast. The programme was really inspiring, and it was good to see so many people from the city sharing the celebrations with the Mosque." Other guests sent feedback praising the service and the warm community atmosphere.





Contributed by Rasha Salah

Clifford's Tower Commemorations, 16th March 2026, by Christopher Styles

16th March 2026 saw the now annual civic event in commemoration of the massacre of the Jewish population of York on the site of Clifford's Tower in 1190.

The massacre – one of the darkest moments in the history of the city and the worst recorded atrocity against the Jews of England – saw York's Jews seeking safety and the protection of the Sheriff inside the wooden structure on what is now the site of Clifford's Tower^{*1}. As all England's Jews were the personal property of the Crown, the Sheriff was sworn to protect them in times of persecution, but failing in this duty led the Jewish community to barricade themselves inside the tower against the onslaught, and as the situation worsened, became obliged to take their own lives rather than face what would have been the gruesome slaughter from the besieging mob outside.



(Getting underway. Cameo appearance of the back of my head in the foreground)

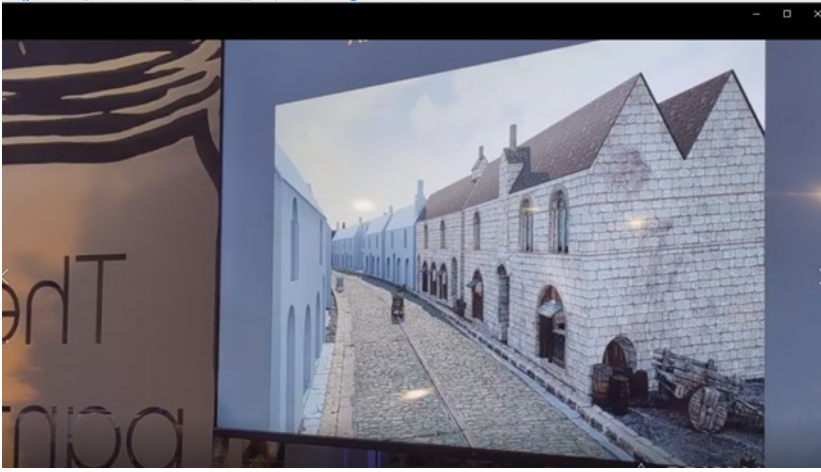
At the Civic event then, the Lord Mayor of York - Councillor Martin Rowley BEM – rehearsed a summary of the background to and events of the night of 16th November 1190 and Dr. Louise Hampson from the University of York delivered the main presentation featuring the latest historical research from The Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture.

The talk by Louise covered some of the latest research from the Centre and elsewhere and highlighted the interesting period of cooperation between the recovering Jewish community and York civic and Christian religious society in the period after the 1190 massacre, all the way to the ultimate expulsion of the England's Jews in 1290 (yes: that's pretty much a century for the second Jewish community here!).

One popular misconception Louise highlighted was that 1190 saw the end of the Jewish presence in York, and following the theme of this year's Holocaust^{*2} Memorial commemorations: "Bridging the Generations" she identified four distinct periods of Jewish settlement here.

1068 – 1190. The first community here was settled by William the Conqueror to manage his financial affairs in the North and also to undertake engineering works for the city. Relationships between the newcomers and the resident locals were probably mixed, but deteriorated significantly in 1190, no doubt stirred up by the Anglo-Norman nobility anxious to liquidate their debts to the Jews and to facilitate their raid on the legal documents appertaining thereto in the library at York Minster^{*3}. This then led to the infamous massacre of 1190.

Post 1190, to 1290. After the massacre the Jewish community was resettled and thrived (as well as anyone could under the Plantagenets). The Highlights of this period were the cooperation between John Romanus, sub-Dean of York Minster, Rabbi Aaron of York and Adam Fleur, Lord Mayor of the City in the construction of York's second synagogue on Coney Street, eventually becoming Guildhall, and also the North Transept of York Minster featuring the Five Sisters a.k.a. "Jewish" window. In 1290 all of England's Jews were expelled bringing to an end this, our second Jewish community here^{*4}.



(artistic impression of what the Second synagogue might've looked like).

1886 to 1975. Jews started arriving in York in the mid-late 19th Century fleeing the pogroms in Eastern Europe, and by 1886 the community was sufficiently large enough to establish the third Synagogue on Aldwark. By 1975 the community had dwindled and its sacred scroll was transferred to Leeds.



(The boarded up synagogue building in 2025, just prior to its deconsecration).

2015 – present. A new, Liberal Jewish community was established in York and continues to grow, flourish and carry on the tradition of contributing to and enriching the civic, social and spiritual life of the City. Indeed we have hopes for our Jewish community that we may one day establish our fourth Synagogue in York. It's been done before!



Rabbi Elisheva gave a short memorial address and concluded with the traditional Mourners' Kaddish, followed by a modern re-interpretation and re-imagining of the words into English by American progressive activist: Marge Piercy.

"You know, we stand so close to the place where people made a choice that nobody should be ever forced to make.

And so if you are comfortable I would ask you to rise in their honour.

To remember Rabbi Yom Tov who came surely from Normandy to lead this community, and who did lead this community to the bitter end.

You may have been the last person standing, the last person holding a knife, the last person to set fire to the building that was there;

along with the unnamed, but not forgotten

It's our tradition in Judaism to hallow and exalt the name of the divine at moments such as this; to remember the graciousness that permits us to live, and the hope that fills our heart."

You can see the whole of the event, complete with interviews by John from Explore Yorkshire at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyjBWKQyuKk>

*1. It is a quite common error to think that the massacre took place in the stone structure of Clifford's Tower we see today. Actually this wasn't commissioned until 1225 and wasn't finished, at typical York building rates until around 1260.

*2. The word "Holocaust" is derived from the Latin "holocaustis", for example:

Psalms 51:18 "Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedissem utique; holocaustis non delectaberis."

"For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted."

The word used by the Jewish communities is "Shoah", the Latin scholars who translated the Psalms being not entirely au fait with the specifics of the "burnt offerings" detailed therein.

*3. Like with Clifford's Tower, This wasn't the York Minster we see today either, which wasn't started until 1206. The Minster raided by Malbis & Co. in 1190 would've been the Romanesque one built to replace the one William the Conqueror burned down in 1068.

*4. Although the Jews were expelled en masse by Edward I in 1290, it is believed by myself and others that many remained and drifted into obscurity in the Welsh and Scottish marches, or took up a life of itinerant tinkers and travellers.

Interestingly enough, we had a second commemoration this year, thanks to the Orthodox Jewish communities recognise the events of 16th March 1190 on the 7th day of Nissan by the Hebrew calendar.

This year (5,876) 7th Nissan fell on the 25th March, and so an additional commemorative event was held in the tower itself, attended by Orthodox Jews from London and Leeds along with fellow Liberal Jews from York and members of our interfaith community.

Rabbi Amrom Marmortstein from the Orthodox community in London led a short act of worship and remembrance and the event concluded with the Mourners' Kaddish led by own beloved Rabbi Elisheva. It was a great pleasure to be able to spend time in contemplation and worship with friends from Orthodox Judaism and the event was followed by refreshments and a further visit to the site of the Jewish Cemetery on Jewbury*5.

*5. "Jewbury" means "Jew's settlement" and the "bury" has nothing to do with burial. It's probably one of our many misnomers as the Jewish communities lived interspersed with everyone else in the City and did not have separate areas or ghettos for their settlement. It's quite a common term in English placenames, e.g.: Canterbury in Kent and Bury in Lancashire.

Session on Hate Crime Awareness Training, 23rd March

We are grateful to Tanya Lyon, Head of Community Safety at York City Council, for inviting members of York Interfaith Group to attend a training session on this topic on the morning of 23rd March.

The training was presented by Sergeant Nigel Collins, responsible for Hate Crime in the Local Policing Support unit of North Yorkshire Police, and his colleague, Amy Collins. The presentation was very thorough and for a quite technical subject, put across with a flair and authority that made the two hours pass very quickly. There was an active question and answer session which helped clarify possible issues.

Selections from the slides, and links to two videos on the nationwide campaign, and the importance of bystander intervention, are given below. Sergeant Collins clarified that though the definition of a hate incident or crime involves the *perception* of the victim, not all perceptions are valid. It is not a hate crime *per se* to accuse a foreign government of genocide, for example. Context is important.

Rory Allen

What is a Hate Incident?



Any **non-crime** incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by **hostility** or **prejudice** based on:

- **Disability or perceived disability**
- **Race or perceived race**
- **Religion or perceived religion**
- **Sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation**
- **Transgender identity or perceived transgender identity**
- **Misogyny (NYP)**
- **Sex Worker (NYP)**

What is a Hate Crime?



The Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have agreed the following definition for identifying and flagging hate crimes:

Any **criminal offence** which is perceived by the **victim** or **any other person**, to be motivated by **hostility** or **prejudice**, based on a person's:

- **Disability or perceived disability**
- **Race or perceived race**
- **Religion or perceived religion**
- **Sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation**
- **Transgender identity or perceived transgender identity**
- **Misogyny (NYP)**
- **Sex Worker (NYP)**

Examples of Hate Crime:



Physical attacks



Public Order Offences



Criminal Damage



Malicious Communications



Harassment



How to report:

Directly to North Yorkshire Police



999 IN AN EMERGENCY: Does it feel like the situation could get heated or violent very soon? Is someone in immediate danger? Do you need support right away? If so, please call 999 now. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service **18000** or text us on **999** if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.

101 FOR NON-EMERGENCIES: A non-emergency is where there is nobody at risk of harm or there is no risk of damage to property and the offender isn't close by and has left the scene.

ONLINE: Report Hate Crime online at: www.northyorkshire.police.uk/hatecrime

How to report: *Third Party Reporting Centres*



SUPPORTING VICTIMS NORTH YORKSHIRE:

01609 643100 Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm

Online: www.supportingvictims.org. Offer a tailored victim support service including counselling, referrals to other agencies and restorative justice.



TRUE VISION (Online only)

www.report-it.org.uk website has a lot of information for victims. Reports are taken and sent back to the 'host' force where the offence has taken place.



GALOP:

The UK's LGBT+ anti-violence charity, combating hate crime, sexual violence & domestic abuse. Incidents can be reported online or via phone.



Community Security Trust (CST)

Organisation that supports the Jewish community and takes reports of Anti-Semitism. Incidents can be reported online or via phone.

Tell MAMA



Tell Mama is a one stop shop service supporting victims of anti-Muslim hate. Incidents can be reported online or via phone



On Your Side

On Your Side is for anybody in the UK who identifies as part of an East or Southeast Asian Community. This is a place where you can find support and make a report if you experience or witness racism or any form of hate.



Start Safe Stay Safe APP

For reporting street harassment and hate incidents, particularly in areas like York and North Yorkshire, allowing users to report anonymously or formally, capture evidence (audio/video/photo), and access support,

[Hate Crime - Nationwide Campaign](#)

[What is the bystander effect?](#)

York Interfaith Group visit to York College, 25th March



The outings we attend as York Interfaith Group are always worthwhile, even if it is just a chance to hang out with each other and deepen our friendship. Every outing is a learning situation, and at York college culture fair, during lunchtime, 25 March, we learned some valuable wisdom. Our neighbouring stall was run by four delightful language students from Switzerland, offering cheese to taste, and a quiz to test one's knowledge. Passers-by were intrigued enough to stop and chat, whereas they usually passed by our stall without pausing. "We'll have to bring hot cross buns next year?" I suggested, only half joking. Then "We ought to concoct a quiz." We certainly should concoct a quiz, with at least one prize. Our logo of the twelve faiths would be the perfect stimulus for a quiz. Make it easy, with twelve easy memorable answers, and our quiz will spread a glimmer of knowledge. Meanwhile, as always, I returned home with enhanced respect and friendship for the colleagues with whom I had shared the afternoon, and the students who had organised the event - not forgetting the delicious snack I bought in the cafeteria.

Mary Callan

Our thanks go to Charley Oliver-Holland, who invited York Interfaith Group to attend the event. We look forward to working with Charley and York College on future events, and would like to express a big thank you for the warm welcome we received.

Rory Allen

Upcoming festivals

The festival of Passover, 1st - 9th April

Passover, or *Pesach*, is of paramount importance in the Jewish religious calendar. The festival begins on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, usually in March or April, and lasts for seven or eight days, depending on tradition. It commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt told in The Book of Exodus. In many ways The Book of Exodus can be seen as a coming of age story for the Jewish people as well as for Moses.

The festival of Pesach centres around the Seder, a special meal in which symbolic foods are eaten. The Seder meal is a family occasion and is held on the first one or two nights of the festival. During the Seder meal, families retell the story of the Hebrew slaves' Exodus from slavery. Children play a crucial role in the Seder. The meal is meant to be a fun and educational experience. Traditionally the youngest child present, asks the Four Questions (Mah Nishtanah) which enquire about the symbolic meaning of the Seder. These questions encourage children to participate fully in the meal.

During the Seder meal, the Haggadah (meaning to recount in Hebrew) is read aloud. It guides participants through the meal, outlining the order in which the symbolic foods should be eaten. It also includes prayers, songs, and poems on themes of freedom and gratitude. The symbolic foods are laid out on Seder plate, which is big platter that is often artistically decorated [see photo]. Six different symbolic foods are arranged on the platter, including bitter herbs like horseradish, which represent the bitterness of slavery, and a mixture of fruit and nuts (charoset) which represents the mortar used by the Israelites in Egypt to build pyramids.

Passover is a time for reflection on themes of oppression, resilience, and faith. It is celebrated by Jewish communities worldwide, bringing families together to remember their shared heritage and the enduring importance of freedom.

Sarah Hubbard

VAISAKHI or BAISAKHI, 14th April



On Sunday 14th April, Sikhs from all over the world will celebrate Vaisakhi or Baisakhi

Vaisakhi or Baisakhi is both a cultural Spring harvest festival and celebrates the founding of the Sikh community or brotherhood known as the Khalsa on 13th April 1699. Vaisakhi is a joyous occasion.

In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Guru of the Sikhs, called Sikhs from all over India to the city of Anandpur Sahib. At the gathering, the Guru told Sikhs to uphold their faith and preserve the Sikh religion.

He asked for anyone prepared to give his life for his religion to come forward. There was a huge silence, until one person finally came forward and followed the Guru into a tent. Shortly after, the Guru reappeared with his sword covered in blood and asked for a second volunteer. Another person came forward and the Guru repeated this until five people had offered their heads.

Finally, the Guru emerged from the tent with all five men still alive and dressed in blue and wearing turbans. They became known as the Panj Pyare (the Five Beloved Ones): Bhai Daya Singh; Bhai Dharam Singh; Bhai Mukham Singh; Bhai Himmat Singh; Bhai Sahib Singh. The Guru-ji gave them sacred holy water (Amrit). The Panj Piare were from different castes, so by creating Khalsa he abolished the caste system.

The Khalsa was given five distinctive symbols of purity and courage (**the five K's**) by the Guru are: **Kesh** (uncut hair); **Kara** (steel bracelet); **Kangha** (comb); **Kirpan** (sword), and **Kachera** (shorts). Baptised men and women have the name Singh (Lion) and Kaur (Princess), respectively

The Khanda resembles the symbol of Sikhism. It is based on a double-edged sword (also known as a *khanda*) surrounded by a circular ring known as the *Chakar* resembling eternity and enclosed with two swords – *miri* and *piri* representing equality and justice.

In normal times Vaisakhi is celebrated by a visit to the Gurudwara (Sikh 'House of God' or Sikh place of worship) followed by visiting families and friends and joining cultural festivities such as music, singing and bhangra dancing. **HAPPY VASAIKHI TO EVERYONE.**

Contributed by Suki Kaur Matharu

Holy Week and Easter in the Catholic Christian tradition



It may surprise non-Christians that Easter celebrations, celebrating the core of Christian faith, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, vary widely among different Christian churches.

The strictest Protestant and newest churches have no rhythm of festivals, but more and more groups are discovering the value of intense annual celebrations, whether of mourning or rejoicing, and Easter brings us plenty of both.

The Protestant reformers gradually distanced their churches completely from what they regarded as empty frivolity and mere ornamentation, unnecessary to Christian living. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic church gradually restored the Easter three-day celebrations to bring out their full meaning.

Over centuries, the services had moved forward during the day, so that the evening services of Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday had crept up to the early morning, with hardly anyone present. The Good Friday service, mourning Jesus's death on the Cross, had migrated to 10am instead of 3pm. To be sure of a seat, you had to be there an hour beforehand.

Good Friday had become the most important focus of Catholic faith, not just for a day, but throughout the year. Suffering and hardship were regarded as the reality of our life on earth; happiness would be reserved only for heaven. The restored three-day celebration, launched in the 1950s by pope Pius XII, has brought the Resurrection of Jesus back into focus, and reminded Roman Catholics, in the words of St Augustine,

“We are the Easter people. ‘Alleluia’ is our song.” Jesus’ Resurrection should fill us with joy, not just RCs, but all Christians.















The three days begin on Maundy Thursday, with evening Mass (Eucharist) which includes the priest washing some members’ feet, as Jesus taught us. The service ends with a procession to a side altar, where believers remain in silent prayer, meditating on Jesus’ agonised prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Good Friday’s celebration is not a Mass, but a solemn service of mourning, reading the longest account of Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, mournful hymns, and long prayers for blessing on every category of society the liturgy can think of, followed by slow, silent veneration of Jesus crucified, and silent Communion, before leaving the church bare and empty.

On Holy Saturday, the ‘Easter vigil’ should not begin till after sunset. It is the most glamorous celebration of the year, fire, water, breath, and all the elements in use as we wait for the Resurrection. We start outside the church, if possible, gathered around a genuine, dancing fire, where the huge Easter candle is blessed and lit, and we gradually light our own candles as we crowd into the church. The priest or a cantor sings an ancient song in praise of the returning light and life, whose warbling tune reminds us of Christianity’s roots in Judaism. The scripture readings – nine, if you have the stamina, but usually only five – tell us the Bible story from Creation till Jesus’s Resurrection. Water is blessed, though the ceremonial dippings of the Easter candle, and the blessings breathed across the water, are much reduced nowadays. The ceremony gradually becomes the familiar Mass. Incense returns, unused during the days of mourning. The Gloria prayer returns and bells are rung wildly. After the Gospel, new Christians may be baptised, and we all make the annual renewal of our baptismal vows. We receive the sacrament of Communion with heightened awareness of our Saviour, crucified and risen, and go out into the night blessed and rejoicing.

Easter Sunday Mass is full of the same joy but nothing compares to the Easter vigil. Non-Catholic churches, especially our friends the Anglicans, are discovering the power of these intense three days of grief and exultation.

Contributed by Mary Callan

FAITHS	January	February	March	April	May	June	
BAHA'I	18 World Religion Day	25 - 1 Mar Ayyam-i-Ha	2-20 Baha'i Fast 21 Naw-Ruz	21-2 May Ridvan 29 9th day of Ridvan	2 12th Day Ridvan 24 Declaration of the Bab 29 The Ascension of Baha'u'llah		
BUDDHIST	3 Mahayana (New Year) 16 Shinran Memorial Day	8 or 15 Parinirvana * 18 Sonam Losar (Nepal)	3 Magha Puja 15 Hōnen Matsuri 20 Higan	8 Hanamatsuri 13 Theravada New Year	24 Buddha's B.day 31 Vesakha Puja Wesek		
CHINESE	26 Labajie (Laba Festival)	17 Tuan Yuan / Chun Jie (New Year: Horse)	12 Yuanxiaojie (Lantern Festival)	5 Qingmingjie (Tomb Sweeping Day)		19 Duanwuje (Dragon Boat Festival)	
CHRISTIAN	1 Naming of Jesus / Circumcision / Mary Mother of God 6 Epiphany [Ang/RC] 6/7 Christmas Eve/Day [3] 11 Baptism of Christ [Ang] 11 Baptism of the Lord [RC] 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 19 Theophany [3] 25 Conversion of St. Paul	2 Presentation of Christ in the Temple / Candlemas 14 St. Valentine 17 Shrove Tuesday 18 Ash Wednesday 18 Lent Begins [-Easter] 23 Great Lenten Fast [3]	1 St David 6 World Day of Prayer 15 Mothering Sunday 17 St Patrick 19 St Joseph [RC] 22 Passion Sunday 25 Annunciation [Ang/[3]/RC] 29 Palm Sunday	2 Maundy Thursday 3 Good Friday 4 Holy Saturday 5 Easter Sunday 12 Pascha [3] 23 St George	10-16 Christian Aid Week 14 Ascension Day 21 Ascension Day [3] 24 Pentecost / Whit 31 Pentecost [3] 31 Trinity Sunday	4 Corpus Christi Body & Blood of Christ [RC] 12 Sacred Heart [RC] 29 St. Peter and Paul	
HINDU	12 Birthday of Swami Vivekananda 13 Lohri 14 Makar Sankranti / Pongal 23 Vasant Panchami/ Saraswati Puja	15 Maha Shivratri	3/4 Holi 26 Rama Navami	2 Hanuman Jayanti 14 Tamil New Year			
JAIN			3 Holi 31 Mahavir Jayanti	10 Mahavir Janma Kalyanak			
JAPANESE	1 Ganjitsu (New Year)	3 Setsubun (Bean Scattering) 23 Emperor's birthday	3 Hinamatsuri / Dolls Day Festival 15 Hōnen Matsuri 17-23 Higan 20 Shūbun No Hi	29 Showa Day			
JEWISH [1]		2 Tu B'Shevat	3 Purim	2-9 Pesach 14 Yam Hashoah 22 Yom Ha'Atzma'ut	5 Lag B'Omer 22-23 Shavuot		
MUSLIM [2]	16 The Prophet's Night Journey [Isra and Mi'raj]	3 The Night of Forgiveness [Lailat-ul-Bara'ah] 18 Ramadan (till 18 Mar)	16 Lailat-ul-Qadr: Night of Power 20 Eid-ul-Fitr*		25-29 Hajj 27 Eid-ul-Adha	4 Eid-ul- Ghadir 17 Al-Hijra (1448) 26 Ashura	
RASTAFARIAN	7 Ethiopian Xmas Day 19 Timket			12 Easter Day [3] Faska 21 Groundation Day			
SIKHI	6 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh 13 Maghi / Lohri		4-6 Hola Mohalla 14 Nanakshahi (Sikh New Year)	14 Vaisakhi/ Baisakhi		16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji	
ZOROASTRIAN [PARSEE]	30 Jashn-e-Sadeh [IZ]		11-20 Fravardin [IZ] 21 Jamshedi Noruz [IZ] 22 Ava Mah Parab [S] 26 Khordad Sal [IZ]	20 Adar Mah Parab [S]	22 Zartosht-no- Diso [S]		
PAGAN / DRUID [4]		1 Imbolc/Candlemas	20 Vernal (Spring) Equinox (Ostara / Alban Eilir)	30 May Eve 30 Beltaine Eve	1 May Day / Beltaine	21 Midsummer Solstice / Litha / Alban Hefin	
Some Other Notable Dates	1 New Year's Day / Hogmanay 18 World Religion Day 27 Holocaust Memorial Day	14 St Valentine's Day	1 St David's Day 17 St Patrick's Day 25 Lady Day	23 St George's Day	1 May Day	21 World Humanist Day 24 Midsummer Day	

(*) Indicates some uncertainty about the date.

☾ [1] Jewish Festivals commence, like Shabbat, at **sunset on the evening of the day prior** to the date shown.

☾ [2] Muslim Festivals begin in the **evening before the Gregorian dates** shown in this calendar.

[3] Indicates a festival celebrated in the Orthodox tradition of the Christian church.

☾ [4] All Baha'i and certain Druid and Pagan festivals also commence in the evening.

[5] IZ, K and S denote three Zoroastrian Calendars: Iranian Zoroastrian, Kadmi and Shahenshai.

