



JULY 2023

Dear Friends

Welcome to our July Newsletter. I hope you will enjoy reading about recent events and looking at the photographic records.

Our meeting in July focusses on our relationship with our planet, a theme being addressed within all faith communities as well as more broadly within society at large. We are now seeing the devastating results of our exploitation of the natural world and there is little room to site ignorance as an excuse for our actions. Recently I was involved in a discussion group which was looking at 'Creation' in all it's wonder and beauty alongside our responsibility. The saddest aspect for me was the evidence to suggest that our young people often feel distressed, depressed and hopeless about the future of the world. When we were asked to describe our fears and hopes for an uncertain future, I realised that my answer to both questions was the same, "my children and their peers". Yes, I fear for my children's futures in such uncertainty and yet at the same time they are my hope because they, and their friends, care about these issues and are working towards solutions each in their own way. In short, I still have faith in them, and therefore in the future. Lets hope I'm' not just being naïve!

Anne Castle

Our July Meeting will be [Live](#)

At City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

Tuesday July 4th 7.00 - 8.30

Sacred Earth. How can we recover our bond with the Natural World ?

Speaker - Nick Morrice (Unitarian Church)

Chair - Dee Boyle



News from YLJC

It looks like YLJC's search for a Rabbi is finally bearing fruit. Having interviewed a number of candidates, involved them in leading services and study sessions, we believe that we have finally found the perfect match!

While the timing of this newsletter means that YLJC are not quite in a position to make a formal announcement we are optimistic that we can do that in time for the next YIG newsletter.

Our hope and expectation is now that York's first residential Rabbi since medieval times will be in place in time to lead this year's High Holyday Services.

YLJC will be holding a number of events to introduce our friends across faith communities in York to our new Rabbi and hope that that you will be able to join us at one more of these events.

Many thanks to Sarah Hubbard for that report and we look forward to hearing more!

York Interfaith visit to RAF Leeming 31 May 2023 by Varsha Gulati



When I got an email about the visit to RAF Leeming in February 2023, I jumped at the chance and booked myself in. At that time, I did not know what it is all about, except it was through Interfaith and that Penny had passed the message to us.

As the time was approaching, I realised that many other faith groups were also given the opportunity to visit and see the new multifaith prayer room, and be part of the opening ceremony.

Avtar hired a 7-seater vehicle and collected us all from our respective houses one by one and, very patiently (Thank you Avtar!), drove us all to our destination. We arrived on time, after a 30-mile journey to RAF Leeming.

We then had to be registered and needed our photo identity. I had completely forgotten to take my passport but luckily had my driving licence with me. Sister Patricia, Avtar, Dee, Penny, Daryoush, Rasha of course did not forget this essential document!!

While we were registering, a couple of Airforce officers came in the office to welcome us and escort us to the waiting buses to the Chaplaincy Centre. We were welcomed and offered tea and coffee, along with some wonderful homemade cakes and biscuits (which, I understand, were made by the Chaplaincy clerk Jane herself). There were representatives of other faith organisations and we all had some interesting conversation and some exchange of ideas.

The time had arrived and we went into a beautiful auditorium where there was a welcome speech by Reverend David Haslam, followed by a presentation by Alexandria, Assistant Commander of RAF Leeming.

There were few other presentations and then we were taken in our bus to look at the new MULTIFAITH ROOM. We all waited while the ribbon was cut by Alexandria, Assistant Commander, and then we entered this important faith room.

It is a simple room with a display cabinet in which the essential symbols and literature of the faiths were each presented on its own individual shelf. It seemed that a lot of thought and work has gone into this achievement.

People can sit down, read, meditate and it is a place to think and reflect.

York Interfaith Group presented Alexandria, Assistant Commander, with a copy of our interfaith prayer book, which is part of their book collection.

Following this we were taken for our lunch in the dining room and had a very nice lunch with coffee to follow.

After lunch the bus was waiting to take us to "Squadron 11", the Qatari squadron. I got a little late coming out of the canteen and the bus had just left. Luckily for me I was rescued by an officer from a neighbouring unit and driven there in style!

Unit 11 is a training unit for the Qatari pilots, and they had arranged a little briefing for us (half of which I missed due to my late arrival...!).

Next, we went to see the place where some of the training aircraft are kept. The trainee Qatari pilots showed and explained how the training happens. We were able to climb up and see the fighter aircraft from close up. It was very interesting and we had some photos taken.

A bus tour was then arranged, of the grounds and air fields of the RAF unit. We also visited the gym facilities in the grounds, which are used for training but can be used by the staff for personal relaxation.

We returned back to the chaplaincy centre for some more tea, cakes and photos and goodbyes were said.

Well, it was around 3:00 pm and time to go home. Our esteemed driver shepherded us all back in the 7-seater and dropped us back safely into our abodes.



REFUGEE WEEK INTERFAITH SERVICE

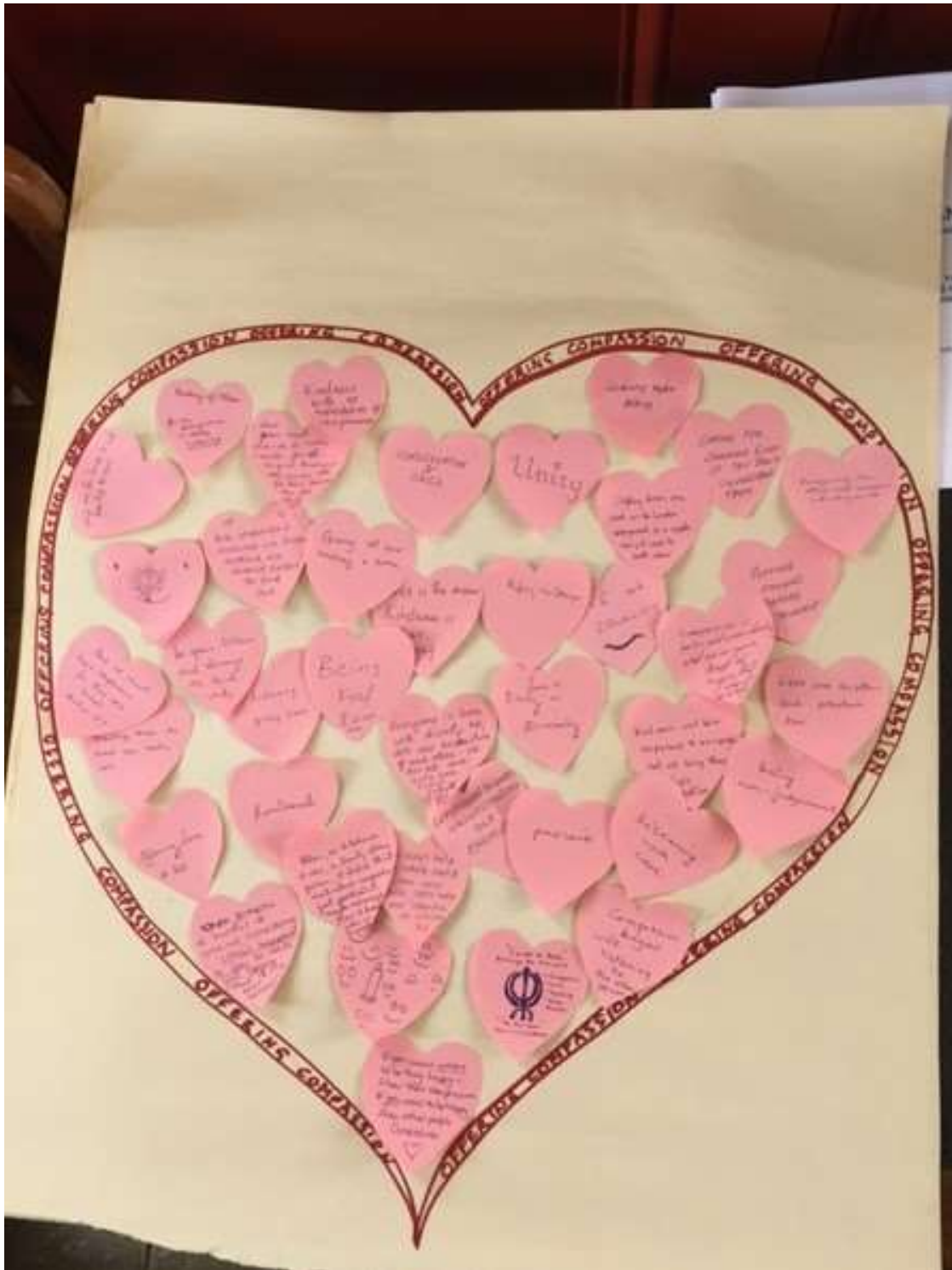
On 25th June members of the York Interfaith Group took part in a special service to mark the end of Refugee Week in York.

The theme of the service was 'Offering Compassion' and it included readings from various faith groups as well as representatives from RAY & YCoS.

During the service members of the congregation created a 'Collage of Compassion' and they then had a 'bring & Share' vegetarian lunch together.

Many thanks to all who took part and joined us at this really enjoyable event.

And a big thank you to Dee for organising it from all of us!



The Bags of Welcome initiative by York City of Sanctuary

THANK YOU!



Many thanks to all who contributed by donating items of food to the Bags of Welcome for the refugees who are newly arriving into York. The scheme is being organised by York City of Sanctuary and it was really good that we were able to respond to it so quickly and to help provide food for them as they arrive in York. York Interfaith Group were able to fill 5 'Bags of Welcome'.

There will still be a few other places that are continuing to accept donations over the coming weeks and months so please do feel free to drop items off with them if you want to continue to support the scheme.

A few places that we already know of who will still be collecting items are:

York Unitarians, York Mosque and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Thanks again to everyone for your support so far.

The list below is a guide. Feel free to add additional items and if you wish a card of welcome.

SUGGESETED CONTENT LIST

*** please do not include an perishable items (Fresh fruit etc.) or products containing meat**

Cooking oil/olive oil

Dried goods (Rice flour pasta pulses lentils chickpeas kidney beans etc.)

Tinned goods (Tomatoes...beans...chickpeas...kidney beans vegetables vegetable soup)

Vegetarian stock cubes

Tea Coffee Biscuits Chocolate

Cleaning and Laundry products

Toiletries

Any questions, please contact Rebecca Russell rebecca@yorkcos.org.uk / mobile: 07591 815485

or Dee Boyle via the Interfaith email: yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

York Interfaith Group Excursion Tuesday 2nd May 2023

Sinai Synagogue established in 1944

Sinai Synagogue is described as the home and heart of Reform Judaism in Leeds and the largest progressive community in Yorkshire. On 2nd May many of our group were privileged to be shown round by Helen Michael, the Education Coordinator.

There was so much to see and enjoy.

Everyone was particularly interested in the history and the script of the Torah scrolls usually housed in the 'ark'. We all had so many questions I think Dee was worried the coach might leave without us!!

This visit must represent one of the best ways to learn and understand more about Jewish values and practice. Many thanks to Helen for providing such a wonderful experience and to Laura Williams, Assistant Director Customer, Communities and Inclusion, City of York Council for their contribution towards transport costs.



2023 Programme continued: York Interfaith Group.

AUGUST 8th 'August Picnic' – an informal evening to share food and conversation in the Bar Convent garden.

SEPTEMBER 5th: Approaches to Prayer in different faiths.

OCTOBER 3rd: SACRED BOOKS II: Insights from the Jewish, Christian (the Reverend Dr. Christopher Collingwood) and Muslim faiths.

NOVEMBER 7th: Stories that help us grow in faith: examples from the sacred writings of various traditions.

DECEMBER 5th: AGM and Christmas activities.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS JULY 2023



1 * July (Saturday) END OF HAJJ Muslim
(for details of Hajj, see start date in June)

* Muslim festivals begin in the evening before the Gregorian dates shown in this calendar.



1 July (Saturday) JASHN-E TIRGAN (TIR JASHAN) Zoroastrian (Iranian)

Jashn-e Tirgan is an ancient summer festival, celebrated some three months after the spring NoRuz. Tirgan is devoted to the divinity Tir and is associated with the dog-star Sirius, the coming of the rains in Iran and the fertility they bring. On this day it is customary to visit the Fire Temple to give thanks to Ahura Mazda, and to participate in a *jashan* or thanksgiving ceremony.



3 July (Monday) ASALHA PUJA or DHAMMA DAY Buddhist

Dhammacakka day – '*The turning of the wheel of teaching*'. A Theravada celebration of the First Proclamation by Gautama to five ascetics in the Deer Park near Benares. In it he taught the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.



6 July (Thursday) BIRTHDAY OF HH THE DALAI LAMA Buddhist



**7 * July (Friday) EID UL GHADEER / EID-UL-GHADIR [Festival of The Pool]
Muslim (Shi'a)**

This is a festival observed by Shi'a Muslims, for whom it is an extremely important day. It commemorates an event shortly before the death of the Prophet and his announcement concerning Ali, which they understand to be his clear appointment to be successor to the prophet as the spiritual and temporal leader of Islam.

* Muslim festivals begin in the evening before the Gregorian dates shown in this calendar.



7 (Friday) to 16 (Sunday) July FRAVARDIGAN Zoroastrian (Kadmi)

In the Fravardigan festival the immortal souls, together with their *fravashis* (the guardian spirits of departed ancestors, half man/half bird), come to reside in the place of worship. Many Zoroastrians take time off to pray, recite the five *Gathas* and cleanse their houses. Daily samples of sacred food are tasted by them during the daily ceremonies.



**10 * July (Monday) ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF THE BAB -
1850 - Baha'i**

The *Bab* was executed by firing squad in Tabriz, Persia, at noon on this day. The *Bab's* death is commemorated at noon with readings and prayers from the Baha'i Scriptures.

* Baha'i festivals commence on the evening before the date given



**13 July (Thursday) to 15 (Saturday) O-BON Japanese (Eastern Japan,
including Tokyo. Elsewhere in Japan, celebrated in August).**

A Japanese festival when the spirits of the departed are welcomed back home with feasting and dancing. Fires are often lit to illuminate their arrival and departure.



17 July (Monday) NAVROZE / NO RUZ Zoroastrian (Kadmi)

New Year's Day on the Shenshai Calendar. By the twentieth century the Parsis of India had become the largest group in the world practising Zoroastrianism, and in the twenty first century over 95% of Zoroastrians in

the UK are Parsis. Like their Indian counterparts, they celebrate two new years – giving more time for making merry!



19 * July (Wednesday) AL-HIJRA 1445AH / RA'S UL 'AM (Muharram 1) [Islamic New Year 622CE] Muslim

This day commemorates the Hijra or migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Medina in 622 CE, which led to the establishment of the Muslim community there. The day is not universally celebrated amongst Sunni Muslims but is notable as Muslim years are dated from this time and are marked AH (After the Hijrah). In 2022 CE the Muslim year 1444 AH begins.

* Muslim festivals begin in the evening before the Gregorian dates shown in this calendar.



22 July (Saturday) KHORDAD SAL Zoroastrian (Kadmi)

Khordad Sal is the Birthday of Zarathushtra and falls on the sixth day after NoRuz. *Khordad* means perfection and the festival of Khordad Sal symbolically celebrates the birthday of Prophet Zarathushtra. It is customary on this day to visit the Fire Temple, to give thanks to Ahura Mazda for giving humanity the Prophet Zarathushtra, to participate in a *jashan* or thanksgiving ceremony, to listen to stories of the miraculous birth and life of Prophet Zarathushtra, and to share in a happy community meal, a drink and a dance.



23 July (Sunday) BIRTHDAY OF HAILE SELASSIE I Rastafarian

One of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year. It is celebrated with *Nyahbinghi* drumming, hymns and prayers.



27 * July (Thursday) TISHA B'AV Jewish

Full day fast mourning the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem and other tragedies in Jewish history. The Book of Lamentations is read.

* Jewish festivals commence at sunset on the evening of the day prior to the date shown.



28 * July (Friday) ASHURA (10th Muharram) Muslim

For Sunni Muslims Ashura is a minor fast observed by the Prophet. Shi'a Muslims recall a great tragedy that took place in AH 61 (680 CE). The Imam Husayn (son of Ali and Fatimah and therefore grandson of the Prophet) was attacked and killed at Karbala (now in Iraq) along with his family and followers by the troops of the Caliph Yazid.

* Muslim festivals begin in the evening before the Gregorian dates shown in this calendar

And finally, A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As Chair, I continue to value your membership and my aim for 2023 is to continue to expand our network through mutual respect and shared values for a better and inclusive York.

As York Interfaith Group continues to expand we are always looking for additional support. If you would like to assist or shadow any of the above roles then please do not hesitate to contact me. Your skills and expertise would be most welcome, especially as our June meeting is planning for next year. Our Committee continues to work hard to support your needs.

York Interfaith Group Committee 2023	
Member	Responsibility
Avtar Matharu	Chair
Dee Boyle	Vice Chair and Interfaith Week planning
Penny Coppin-Siddall	Secretary
Daryoush Mazloum	Treasurer
Rasha Ibrahim	Press and Publicity Officer
Anne Castle	Newsletter
Varsha Gulati	Hindu Representative
Sister Patricia Harriss	Annual Meeting Planning
Sarah Hubbard	Jewish Representative

Your feedback is very important to us. We constantly try to improve our service so that we can best support your needs and those of your faith. You can contact and/or follow us via:

Facebook York Interfaith group

Instagram @yorkinterfaith

Twitter @Yorkinterfaith

email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

If you would like to contribute an article or advertise an event in our August Newsletter, please email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or send direct to am.castle@bopenworld.com **by July 16th to guarantee inclusion**

Wishing you all the very best for the month of July.

Avtar Matharu, Chair, YIG