



December 2022

Dear Friends

Welcome to December's Newsletter, which of course will feature some of the amazing events which took place during Interfaith Week in York and we wish to thank all who organised, attended and took part in these events which made it such a special time.

If you have read the text above I must confess that I am not a 'Happy Holidays' sort of person, although I totally appreciate the sentiment of mutual respect, tolerance and inclusiveness. My hope for the future is that by belonging to Interfaith group I will gain more knowledge of 'holidays' other than the ones I have celebrated since I was a child, by listening learning and participating. I also need you, my friends, to teach me the correct way to greet and give wishes to you upon your important occasions. Only if this happens, can I presume to wish you all "Happy Christmas" this month.

Anne Castle

OUR DECEMBER MEETING WILL BE LIVE

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

TUESDAY December 6th 7.00 - 8.30 pm

AGM (7.00- 7.45 pm: Chaired by Avtar Matharu) and "Does God Have a Sense of Humour" (7.45- 8.30 pm; Chaired by Dee Boyle)

INFORMATION REGARDING THE AGM

An email has been sent out to all on the mailing list. ONLY BONA FIDE MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. Please look carefully at the attachments in this email and consider the question of nominations for the Management Committee, which will be elected at the AGM. Nominations are to be for Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Publicity & Comms., as well as other working faith members of the Management Committee.

Our current Committee comprises:

Chair: Avtar S Matharu

Vice Chair: Dee Boyle

Treasurer: Daryoush Mazloum

Secretary: Penny Coppin-Siddall

Newsletter Editor: Anne Castle

Christian Faith Representative: Sister Patricia Harriss

Hindu Faith Representative: Dr Varsha Gulati

Jewish Faith Representatives Sharon Tagger and Adrian Tellwright

Muslim Faith Representative and Press and Publicity: Dr Rasha Ibrahim

Attachments are as follows:

The AGM agenda 6th December 2022

Minutes of the last AGM December 2021

Form for nomination to Management Committee

Nomination forms should be returned to the Secretary before the AGM, and no later than Monday 5th December 2022, by electronically using the York Interfaith gmail account, yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com. The consent of the person nominated must of course be obtained, but if necessary, provided verbal consent has been given, names and signatures may be added at a later date but no later than the day of the AGM when we meet in person, so that correct records may be kept.

Membership: you are reminded that only subscribing members are entitled to vote at the AGM; we invite you to renew your membership by the end of the year for the forthcoming year. We are asking for membership forms to be returned to Daryoush Mazloum, Treasurer and wherever possible, fees paid directly into YIG's bank account.

We are hoping that as many members as possible will be present and look forward to meeting with you in person this year.

York Interfaith Group

Nomination Form 2022

This form is for members of York Interfaith Group to submit nominations for members of the Management Committee for the year ahead.

All subscribing members of York Interfaith Group are eligible to stand as one of the management committee members to be voted in at the AGM each year.

All members can nominate another member of York Interfaith Group to stand for election providing that member is willing for their name to be submitted.

Please use the form below to submit your nominations.

Please remember to get the agreement of the person being nominated and also to seek someone to second your nomination.

I nominate _____ to stand for election as one of the

Management Committee members for York Interfaith Group at the AGM

Name _____ I am a member of York Interfaith Group

Seconded by _____ I too am a member of York Interfaith Group

I agree to be nominated _____ Name _____

Date _____

**AGENDA for AGM, York Interfaith Group – Tuesday 6th December 2022
in person at West Offices, York City Council**

7.00 pm AGM

1. Welcome by Chair, Avtar Matharu
2. Practical details
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of AGM December 2021 for approval by the membership
5. Presentation of annual report – Chair, Avtar Matharu
6. Report of Interfaith Week 2022 – Vice-Chair, Dee Boyle
7. Presentation of accounts – Treasurer, Daryoush Mazloum
8. Elections – Please note only those with a current membership subscription are able to cast a vote
8. A.O.B.

(Please refer to the email to view the minutes of the last AGM as the document is too lengthy to reproduce in the newsletter. Current members of the committee are listed at the end of this Newsletter as usual)

Many thanks

Interfaith Week Report 2022

Many thanks to all those members of our faith communities in York who organised the various events during Interfaith Week and also thanks to everyone who attended those events. In total the events had 334 people attending them which was really considering that we are not totally out of the pandemic just yet. One theme was 'Offering Sanctuary' and it was especially good that some events offered a zoom option as well as being there in person as there are still a few members who do not yet feel confident in attending events that are likely to be busy.

During the week representatives from the faiths were invited to take part in two special events. The first was to be present at the Installation of the new Dean of York Minster.



Then on Remembrance Sunday, 8 representatives from the faith groups were present at the parade and service at the war memorial where we laid several poppy wreaths on behalf of York Interfaith Group. This event gave us an opportunity to remember all the people from the different faiths who lost their lives, not just during the two world wars but also in conflicts since then and to offer prayers for peace for our world in the future.



At the end of the week we all came together again and were joined by the Lord Mayor and the whole of the Civic Party, Rachael Maskell MP for York Central as well as many other people from different faiths who had taken part in events during the week. At the end of the service David Carr, The Lord Mayor of York and Avtar Matharu, Chairperson of York Interfaith Group presented prizes to the winners of the YIG Logo Competition that had been underway since September. Winners of Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 were announced and 3 of the winners were there to collect their prizes. (See their entries below.) Following this event, we then all joined in a 'bring and share' vegetarian lunch and looked at a power point presentation of all the photographs of the week which made a truly perfect ending to our Interfaith Week 2022 having had two difficult years during the pandemic.

Many thanks again to everyone that made it all possible and here's hoping for another great year ahead in 2023.

Dee Boyle

Some other Activities During Interfaith Week

Gardening down by the river and at Clarence gardens



On Saturday night Dr. Rasha Salah El-Din facilitated an on-line meeting

Islam: a story of Sanctuary



Over the years, thousands of Greeks stayed in refugee camps across the Middle East

Greek
Refugees to
Syria in
WWII



Syria
hosted
European
refugees
during
World War
II

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-36499727>

Source: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/syria-hosted-european-refugees-during-world-war-ii/1362254#>

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Flourishing of Islamic Civilization (750-1258)

- Abbasid Caliphs Harun al-Rashid and his son, al-Ma'mun, who followed him, established a [House of Wisdom](#) in Baghdad—a dedicated space for scholarship. The House of Wisdom increased in use and prestige under al-Ma'mun's rule, from 813 to 833. He made a special effort to recruit famous scholars to come to the House of Wisdom. Muslims, Christians, and Jews all collaborated and worked peacefully there.



Sister Patricia welcomes us to the Bar Convent



Beautiful art activities led by the Baha'i group followed by prayer and meditation the following day.



Story Telling at York Library



Hindu Bhajans and Sikh Shabads at St John's



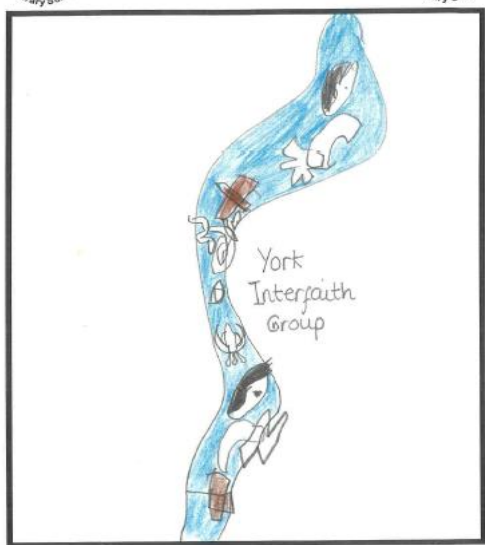
We would also like to thank those who hosted the Pagan Moot at the Black Swan, The Quaker congregation who invited us to worship, Dee, for organising the Interfaith Meditation on Thursday, York Chaplaincy who kindly organised a City Centre Churches tour, and York Buddhist Network for telling us all about "The Three Refuges: a Sanctuary of Inner Stillness and Outer Giving and Kindness. Reverend Dr Catherine Reid, University of York, held an impromptu student-led interfaith event on the theme of 'offering sanctuary' at Heslington Church.

As Dee mentioned in her report the Interfaith Service “Finding Sanctuary” was our closing event We thank the Unitarian chapel for hosting this and all those who participated.

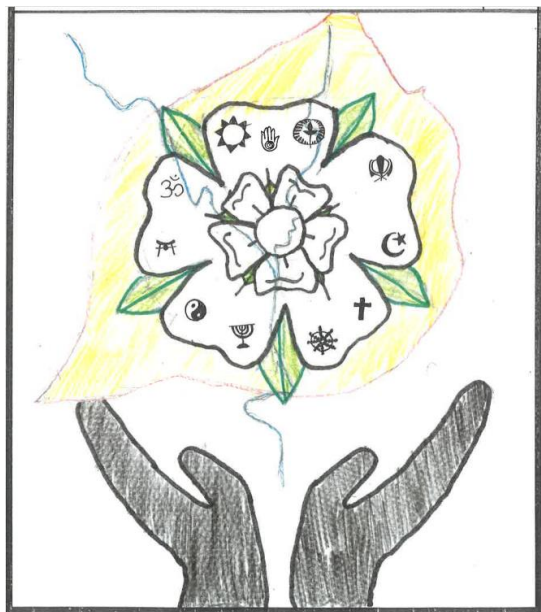
Long before Interfaith Week, the Interfaith Group worked hand in hand with SACRE to engage children in York in designing a new logo for our group. We would like to thank Olivia Seymour, Assistant director of Education (Distinctiveness), Diocese of York, Maxine Squire, Assistant Director, Education, skills and SEND, and York city Cllr Andrew Waller who currently sits as the chair of SACRE. They were all a tremendous help and support in launching and facilitating the competition.

And of course, it wouldn't have taken place without the children/young people who took part so many thanks to all who entered and to the Schools who took part!!

The results are in!!



Name Archie Walton
Age 6

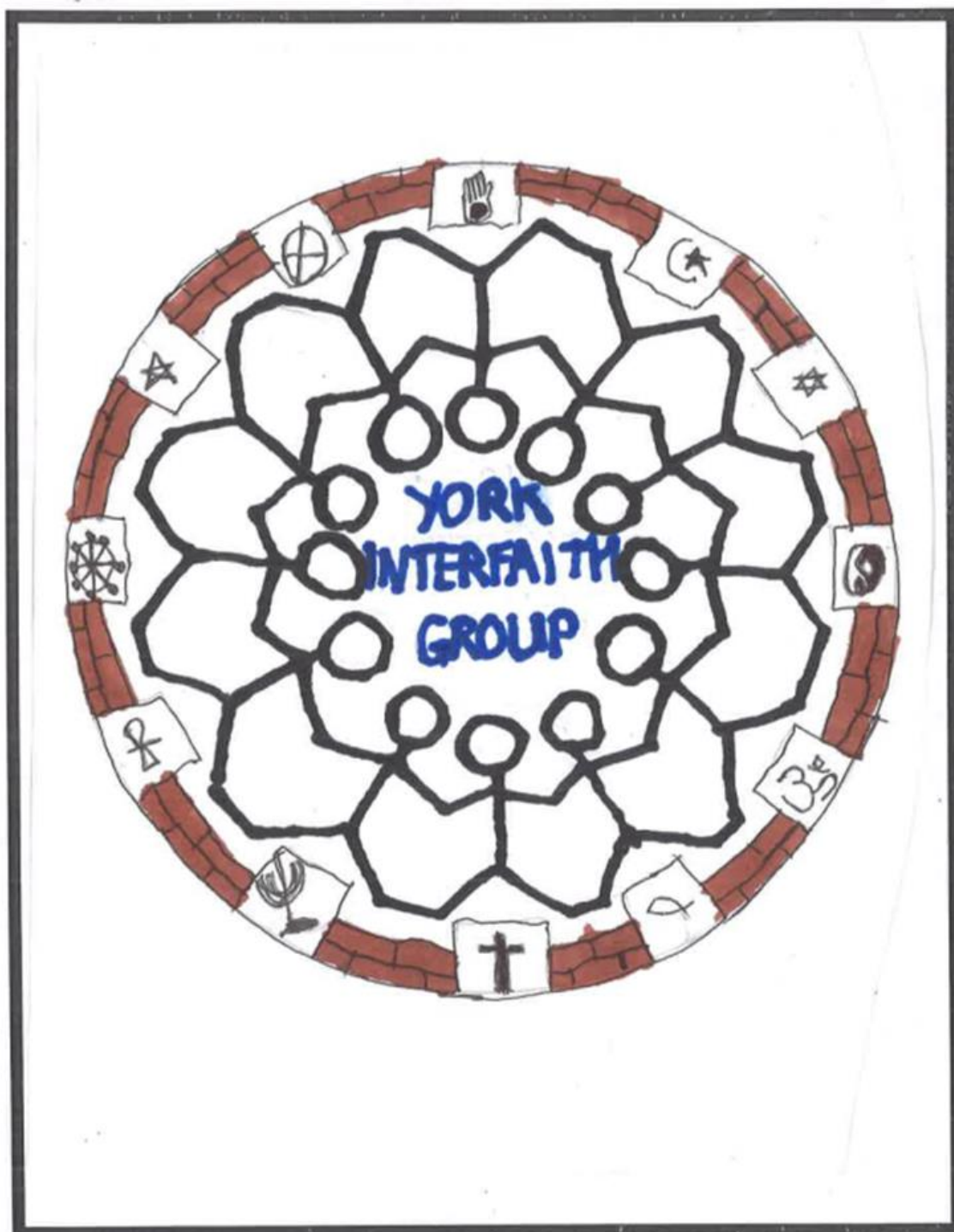


KS1 winner Archie Walton

KS2 winner Rudi Gali

KS3 joint winners Lily Goldsmith and Pavneet Matharu

Overall winner featured below - Liam Evans from Ralph Butterfield school



Well done to all the prize winners



A MESSAGE FROM AUDRY MILLER

My interest and volunteer experience of Interfaith projects began in Birmingham many years ago. I found that each faith was concerned about poverty and debt particularly in the global south. We formed the Jubilee Debt campaign and soon had the support of all the Faith leaders in the city. The group has grown and now extends its work into sustainability.

So many countries cut down trees to pay international debts for example. This is something I witnessed in Malawi when I was working there.

Having this shared commitment allowed me to realise the huge number of ideals we had across every faith group. The "Jubilee" concept being shared by the Abrahamic faiths was our starting point but the respect for creation, family and so many other ways of showing this in poetry, music, art and incorporating them into our worship was an enriching experience.

I do hope that 2023 will find openings for each faith to communicate and cooperate in actions to combat climate change and share resources in worship and open discussion for young people and the future of the planet.

Audrey Miller

Thank you to Audrey for reminding us of the importance of cooperation with these huge issues facing the world. Our thoughts and prayers are needed.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS DECEMBER 2022



8 December (Thursday) IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Christian (Roman Catholic)

This day celebrates the doctrine, held mainly by Roman Catholics, that Mary herself was born free from Original Sin, leaving her sinless for the conception and bearing of Jesus.



10 December (Saturday) HUMAN RIGHTS' DAY (National)

In 1948 The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.'



18 December (Sunday Evening) - 26 December (Monday) HANUKAH Jewish

Celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was recaptured from the Syrian Greeks by the Maccabee brothers in 165 BCE. For the eight evenings of the festival, candles are lit from right to left in a *Hanukkah*, a nine-branched *menorah* – one candle for each evening. The ninth candle is the *shamash* (the servant candle) from which the other candles are lit. Foods cooked with oil - such as doughnuts and *latkes* (potato cakes) – are traditional to remember the miracle with oil that happened at this time.



21 December (Wednesday) MARTYRDOM OF SAHIBZADA AJIT SINGH AND SAHIBZADA JUJHAR SINGH Sikh

This day commemorates the martyrdom of the elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh.



21 December (Wednesday) WINTER SOLSTICE (Alban Arthan or Alban Arthuan) Druid

21 December (Wednesday) YULE (archaic form Geola, pronounced Yula) Wiccan / Pagan

Yule is the time of the winter solstice, when the sun is reborn, an image of the return of all new life. Heathens celebrate Yule for twelve nights and days, starting the evening before the Winter Solstice (called Mother's night), when they think of their female ancestors and spiritual protectors. The night heralds the beginning of the major holiday in Heathenry.



24 December (Saturday) CHRISTMAS EVE Christian

Evening carol services, crib services and Midnight Masses inaugurate the festival of Christmas. Santa Claus (from the Dutch *Sinter Klaus*) is a legendary figure, based on St Nicholas of Myra, and is supposed to bring presents to children on Christmas Eve.



25 December (Sunday) CHRISTMAS DAY Christian

(see also 6/7 January 2020 Christmas eve and Christmas day Christian Orthodox))

Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus, whom Christians believe to be the son of God. Gifts are given as reminders of the offerings brought to the infant Jesus, and Christmas carols, plays and evergreens are associated with this time, while nativity sets are displayed in many churches and in some homes.



26 December (Monday) ZARATOSHT NO DISO Zoroastrian (Iranian)

Zaratosht no diso is the death anniversary of Prophet Zarathushtra and is a sorrowful occasion. Tradition records that he was assassinated at the age of 77. It is customary to visit the Fire Temple, participate in special remembrance prayers and ponder upon the *Gathas* or Hymns of Zarathushtra, which embody his eternal message to humanity.



26 December (Monday) MARTYRDOM OF SAHIBZADA ZORAWAR SINGH AND SAHIBZADA FATEH SINGH Sikh This day commemorates the martyrdom of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh.



26th December Catholic -St Stephen - First Martyr



27th December - Catholic St. John the Evangelist, whose gospel begins 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' making a strong statement about the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.



30th Feast of the Holy Family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph Catholic: a feast reminding us that Jesus is fully human as well as fully God



31 December (Saturday) BODHI DAY Buddhist

Some Buddhists (e.g. Pure Land followers) celebrate Gautama's attainment of Enlightenment on this day under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, North India.



31 December (Saturday) OMISOKA Japanese

Japanese festival which prepares for the new year by cleansing Shinto home shrines and Buddhist altars. The bells of Buddhist temples are struck 108 times to warn against the 108 evils to be overcome.



31 December (Saturday) HOGMANAY National

A celebration widely observed throughout the UK, and especially in Scotland, where bagpipes, *haggis* and first footing are widespread. Clearing one's debts, cleaning the house, welcoming guests and strangers and a host of other traditions feature at this time.

Our current Committee comprises:

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Treasurer: Daryoush Mazloum

Secretary: Penny Coppin-Siddall

Newsletter Editor: Anne Castle

Christian Faith Representative: Sister Patricia Harriss

Hindu Faith Representative: Dr Varsha Gulati

Jewish Faith Representatives Sharon Tagger and Adrian Tellwright

Muslim Faith Representative and Press and Publicity: Dr Rasha Ibrahim

As Chair, I continue to value your membership as York Interfaith Group continues to grow as a community.

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, please email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com Items by December 16th to guarantee inclusion please.

Anne Castle, Newsletter Editor and Committee Member

Avtar Matharu, Chair, YIG

AND FINALLY ...

I found the following table on the IFN website. Apologies about the quality but it wouldn't cooperate in the normal way to be copied. Maybe for your "homework" you could have a look at this document and let me know if it's correct. If you have any changes or additions I will create a table of your "requests" which will help me learn!!

Kind Regards

Anne Castle

2022 Festival dates and greetings

	Day	Festival	Faith	Greeting
February	1	Imbolc	Pagan/Druid	Happy Imbolc
March	21	Jamsheedi NoRuz	Zoroastrian	Jamsheedi NoRuz Mubarak
	31	Hydesville Day	Spiritualist	Happy Hydesville Day
April	13	Vaisakhi/Baisakhi (Khalsa Sajna Diwas - Creation of the Khalsa)	Sikh	Happy Vaisakhi/Baisakhi
	14	Mahavir Jayanti (Birth of Mahavira)	Jain	Congratulations or Greetings on Mahavir Jayanti
	16	Pesach (Passover)	Jewish	Happy Pesach
	17	Easter	Christian; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter- day Saints (CJCLDS)	Happy Easter
	21	Festival of Ridvan	Baha'i	Greetings on the Festival of Ridvan
May	2	Eid al-Fitr	Muslim	Eid Mubarak
	16	Wesak, Vesak or Sakya Dawa (Celebration of Buddha's Birth/Death)	Buddhist	Happy Wesak/Vesak
June	21	Summer Solstice	Pagan/Druid	Happy Solstice
July	3	Spiritualists' World Peace Day	Spiritualists	Greetings on Spiritualists World Peace Day
	10	Eid al-Adha	Muslim	Eid Mubarak
August	11	Raksha Bandan	Hindu	Raksha Bandan Greetings
	16	Shahenshai Navroze (Parsi Zoroastrian New Year)	Zoroastrian	Shahenshai Navroze Mubarak
September	2	Samvatsari (The most sacred day of Paryushan)	Jain	Samvatsari Greetings
	26	Rosh Hashanah (New Year)	Jewish	Happy New Year (or Shana Tovah)
October	24	Diwali	Hindu; Jain	Diwali Greetings (or Shubh Diwali)
	26/27	The Birth of the Bab and the Birth of Baha'u'llah	Baha'i	Greetings on the Birth of the Bab and the Birth of Baha'u'llah
November	8	Parkash Diwas Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji)	Sikh	Greetings on Parkash Diwas Guru Nanak Dev Ji
December	8	Bodhi Day (Celebration of Buddha's enlightenment)	Buddhist	Happy Bodhi Day
	25	Christmas	Christian; CJCLDS	Happy Christmas