



YORK INTERFAITH NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2022

Dear Friends

Firstly may I wish all of you a happy and peaceful holiday season and hope that the new year brings hope to all. As I write this letter on the eve of the darkest day of the year, at least there is one thing we can be sure of, that 'light' will return and the days will begin to lengthen.at this turning of the calendar year.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

OUR JANUARY MEETING WILL BE A VIRTUAL MEETING USING ZOOM

TUESDAY JANUARY 11TH (Second Tuesday in the month) at 7.30pm Join from 7.20 onwards

Dee Boyle and others talk about how their personal faith has developed or changed over the course of their lives so far

Chair - Daryoush Mazloun

A zoom link will be sent via email to those on our email list. For anyone new to York Interfaith Group who wishes to attend then please email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

INTERFAITH MEETINGS FOR 2022

Please find below the proposed themes for our meetings in 2022. At the present time we cannot speculate as to whether we will be able to meet in person in the coming year, but at least we still have the 'Zoom' option and you will be informed of any changes as the year progresses

Thank you to Sister Patricia and her team for their work in devising the proposed meetings and for all your suggestions.

FEBRUARY 1st: The Engagement of Interfaith in Schools: David Hampshire, former Vice-Chair of the Interfaith Network. **Chair: Patricia Harriss**

MARCH 1st: Women in faith – a panel of women from several faiths.

APRIL 5th: The Lord Mayor: How the pandemic has affected my public life.

MAY 3rd: Refugees in York – what has been happening?

JUNE 7th: PLANNING MEETING

JULY 5th: Faith and working with people who have mental health issues

AUGUST 2nd: An evening in York Minster

SEPTEMBER 6th: What part do animals play in my faith?: A panel of members from several faiths.

OCTOBER 4th: Race, faith and Identity

NOVEMBER 1st: Some women who appear in the Old Testament and in the Qur'an – a dramatic presentation by Mary Callan.

DECEMBER 6th: AGM, followed by 'Does God have a sense of humour? - Dee Boyle

Makar Sankranti by Varsha Gulati



Makar Sankranti is a significant Hindu Festival and will be celebrated on 14th January 2022

From ancient times, Hindus saw that the Sun is the life giver and they have given thanks to the Sun. The movements of the Sun are mentioned in the Vedas, and Makar Sankranti is the time of this celebration.

Considered to be one of the most ancient Hindu festivals, Makar Sankranti is observed according to the solar cycles. Thus, it almost always falls on the same Gregorian date every year: 14th January.

Makar Sankranti is a major festival, celebrated with much fervour across several parts of India. This day marks the beginning of a new **harvest season**.

On this day, people express gratitude to the **Sun-God "Surya"** and thank nature for its abundant resources. This festival is celebrated in most parts of the country, with different names.

The celebrations include bon fires in colder north India with prayers, plenty to eat especially sesame seed and jaggery combinations, washing in holy rivers, making colourful beautiful diagrams on floors (Rangoli) and interestingly kite flying.

Though the sentiment is the same in celebrations but the names can be different and some regional difference in celebrations. The various names in different parts of India are Sankranti, Lohri, (Punjab) Maghee, Bihu (Assam), Pongal (South India), Uttarayan (Gujarat) Pouch Parba (Bengal) and so on.

The passage of Sun to northern hemisphere as it enters into Capricorn from 14th January, as the days are getting longer, carries a religious significance and is considered a good time to elevate personal and business relationships, for lovebirds to tie the knot, and to start new business and of course prayers and become more aware of the goodness on earth.

BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH (1666 CE)

Suki Kaur Matharu



On the 5th of January 2022, Sikhs from all over the world will celebrate the birth of Guru Gobind Singh-ji, the tenth and last Sikh living guru.

Guru Gobind Singh, born Gobind Rai, was the tenth Sikh Guru, a spiritual master, warrior, poet and philosopher. When his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was executed by Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh was formally installed as the leader of the Sikhs at the age of nine, becoming the tenth and final human Sikh Guru

Guru Gobind instituted the practice of the Five Ks (Kesh (hair), Kashera (baggy shorts), Kara (metal bracelet), Kanga (comb) and kirpan (sword)) and established the Order of the *Khalsa* on Vaisakhi (Baisakhi). An *akhand path*, an unbroken reading of the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book), spreads typically over a 48 hour period.

Here are some poignant quotes (known as Bani) from Guru Gobind Singh-ji.

"Without the support of the One Name, Consider all religious ceremonies superstitions."

"Karta (The Creator) and Karim (The beneficent) are the names of the same God.

Razak (The provider) and Rahim (The merciful) are also the names given to Him.

Let no man in his error wrangle over differences in names.

Worship the One God who is the Lord of all.

Know that his form is one and He is the One light diffused in all."

INVITATION FROM YORK RACIAL EQUALITY NETWORK

Dear Friends

We would like to invite you to YREN's Open Day to be held at St Sampson's Centre on Wednesday 12th January 10am onwards. St Sampson's is in the heart of York City Centre and we are hoping that this will be more accessible for attendees. YREN will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2022 and the event on the 12th January will be the first event to celebrate the work of the Charity, its Trustees and volunteers and everyone who has attended and supported us over the years.

YREN would also like to take this opportunity to introduce you all to our new Chairperson Rama Isaiah, who will introduce herself and talk about YREN's new direction going forward with a new vigour and enthusiasm to meet the needs and challenges of minority ethnic and racial communities in York. Our aim is to be more visible and accessible.

We will also be welcoming Venetia Wrigley the High Sheriff of North Yorkshire. YREN were delighted to be invited to take part in the High Sheriff's Dragon's Den Funding Event, coordinated by the Two Ridings Community Foundation at Birdsall, North Yorkshire back in October 2021.

Please find below, an Agenda for the day and please could we kindly ask that you **RSVP** by email so that we can track attendees for catering.

Lisa Evans

Office Coordinator York Racial Equality Network, Wharfedale
Tower Court, Oakdale Road York, YO30 4XL

Email: info@yren.co.uk Office: 01904 557612 Web: www.yren.co.uk [twitter](#) | [facebook](#)

- YORK RACIAL EQUALITY NETWORK

- (YREN) OPEN DAY

- Wednesday 12th January 2022 - 10.00am - 4.00pm At St Sampson's Centre, Church Street, York YO1 8BE

Agenda

1. 10.00am Registration, Tea & Coffee
Photographs & Displays of YREN events to date
2. 10.30am – 11.45am Open Forum
3. 12.00 noon – 1.00pm Visit from the High Sheriff of North Yorkshire
- Venetia Wrigley

Followed by Lunch

4. 2.00pm – 3.00pm – Speakers – YREN brings services to you.
5. 3.00pm - 4.00pm - Speakers – YREN's experience with you.

Followed by Question & Answer session

Quilt on display

For anyone who missed seeing the Interfaith Inter-lockdown quilt that was created in the pandemic it will be on display again in the Unitarian Chapel in St Saviourgate, York over the Residents Weekend at the end of January on Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th. For opening times please check their website www.york.unitarians.org.uk Please note that if further restrictions due to COVID come into place in January this event may not go ahead.



RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS - JANUARY 2022



1 January (Saturday) NEW YEAR'S DAY/HOGMANAY National

A day widely observed, as is New Year's Eve the preceding night, throughout the UK, and more especially in Scotland, where bagpipes, haggis and first footing are widespread.



1 January (Saturday) YUANDANJIE (NEW YEAR) Chinese



1 January (Saturday) THE CIRCUMCISION OR NAMING OF JESUS Christian

Celebrates the circumcision and naming of Jesus in accordance with Jewish custom.

Catholics also celebrate the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God on **January 1st**



1 January (Saturday) GANJITSU Japanese

New Year's Day celebrations in Japan are sometimes extended for up to three days, during which businesses are closed, families spend time together, decorations are put up and the first visit of the year is paid to local Shinto shrines.



5 January (Wednesday) BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH (1666 CE) (Bakrami Lunar Calendar) Sikh

Birth Anniversary of the tenth Guru, who instituted the practice of the Five Ks and established the Order of the *Khalsa* on Vaisakhi (Baisakhi). An *akhand path*, an unbroken reading of the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib, spreads over a 48 hour period.



6 January (Thursday) THEOPHANY / BAPTISM OF CHRIST Christian (Orthodox)

Orthodox Christians commemorate the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. 'Theophany' means 'Manifestation of God'. Jesus' miracle at Cana in Galilee is also remembered



6 January (Thursday) EPIPHANY Christian (Anglican and Roman Catholic)

Celebrates the visit of the magi/wise men to the infant Jesus, bearing symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. This is the twelfth day of Christmas.



6/7 January (Thursday/Friday) CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY Christian (Orthodox)

(Eastern Orthodox: Julian calendar). Many Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas (and other fixed festivals) thirteen days after the Western churches.



6/7 January (Thursday/Friday) ETHIOPIAN CHRISTMAS DAY Rastafarian

To Rastafarians this is a time not only to celebrate the birth of Jesus in the manner prescribed by tradition, but also to reflect on this event in the context of the original prophecy of his birth, seen as a manifestation of God not only as Priest but as King



9 January (Sunday) BAPTISM OF CHRIST (ANG) / BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Roman Catholic) Christian. Sunday after Epiphany

Christians commemorate the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist; they recall how at this event the heavens were opened and a voice was heard proclaiming Jesus, while God's spirit descended on him in the form of a dove



12 January (Wednesday) BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA Hindu

Vivekananda, an Indian Hindu monk and a disciple of Ramakrishna, was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world.



13/14 January (Thursday/Friday) MAKAR SANKRANTI/LOHRI/PONGAL Hindu

This is a day for almsgiving and patching up quarrels. It is celebrated with rice sugar, pancakes, halva or cornmeal *chapattis*, eaten around a fire



16 January (Sunday) SHINRAN MEMORIAL DAY Buddhist

Shinran was the founder of Jodo Shin-shu, one of the schools of Pure Land Buddhism.



16 January (Sunday) WORLD RELIGION DAY Baha'i and other groups

This day promotes interfaith understanding by emphasizing factors common to all faiths. It was first introduced among Baha'i communities in the 1950s, and is now celebrated by a wider spread of communities, including the Baha'i, usually on the third Sunday of January.



17 January (Monday) TU B'SHEVAT Jewish

A popular minor festival which celebrates the New Year for trees. Jewish tradition marks the 15th of Shevat as the day when the sap in the trees begins to rise, heralding the beginning of spring. It is customary for Jews all over the world to plant young trees at this time and to eat fruit produced in Israel.



18 (Tuesday) to 25 January (Tuesday) WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY Christian

United services are held, and dialogue on unity is encouraged; some worshippers visit other people's churches or invite preachers from denominations different from their own.



20 January (Thursday) LABAJIE/ LABA FESTIVAL Chinese



25 January (Tuesday) HONEN MEMORIAL DAY Buddhist

Honen (1133-1212 CE) is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Japanese Buddhism, and was the founder of Jodo Shinshu, one of the schools of Pure Land Buddhism.



25th January : Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. Catholic and Anglican



27 January (Thursday) HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY National

A day for remembrance of people who suffered, chiefly at the hands of the Nazis during the second World War but also in other persecutions. It aims to keep memory fresh and ensure that no such atrocity happens again.



30 January (Sunday) JASHN-E SADEH Zoroastrian [Iranian]

A mid winter bonfire festival to signify that days are getting longer. The litany to fire, the *Atash Niyayeesh*, is recited, and Iranian legends are told of King Hoshang (who discovered the art of making fire). Piping hot stew, dancing and merry making feature.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

May I wish everyone a very Happy New Year and also, welcome the new Management Committee for 2022 which was voted in at our AGM on Tuesday 6th December 2021.

Avtar Matharu	Chair
Dee Boyle	Vice-Chair and special responsibility for planning Interfaith Week
Penny Coppin-Siddall	Secretary and special responsibility for planning Interfaith Week
Daryoush Mazloum	Treasurer
Rasha Ibrahim	Press and Publicity Officer
Anne Castle	Member with special responsibility for our monthly newsletter
Varsha Gulati	Member with special responsibility for planning our annual calendar of meetings
Sister Patricia Harris	Member with special responsibility for planning our annual calendar of meetings
Tina Anderson	Member with special responsibility for planning our annual calendar of meetings

We are grateful to Keith Bishop, given his considerable experience with the National Interfaith Network, who has volunteered to help with planning our annual calendar and interfaith work. Keith, we look forward to working with you.

Also, our 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.

As Chair, I continue to value your membership and my aim for 2022 is to continue to expand our network through mutual respect and shared values for a better and inclusive York.

Feedback

Your feedback is very important 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 January 16th to guarantee inclusion please.

Wishing you all the very best for the month of January and for 2022

Anne Castle, Newsletter Editor and Committee Member

Avtar Matharu, Chair, YIG