



JULY 2024

Dear Friends

Firstly a special “thank you” to all those who came along to our meeting in June and contributed so many thoughts and ideas about what you would like to see addressed in both our Monthly Meetings in 2025, and in Interfaith Week this year (Saturday November 9th-Sunday November 17th 2024). Dee has kindly taken notes of our discussions, which are reproduced below.

WHAT WE NEED NEXT !

Please have a look at the topics and suggestions and if you know of a person,(including yourself), with any expertise in the suggested areas who might be willing to speak at a monthly meeting please get in touch with Tina Funnell via the YIG email. yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

If you would be willing to serve on a sub-committee for planning
Please contact Tina for Monthly Meetings and Dee for Interfaith Week planning. via the Interfaith email, yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

If you interested in helping with Interfaith sessions in schools
Please contact Dee to add your name to the list of people willing to go into schools.

If you would consider taking over the job of editing the Newsletter please contact Anne castle
am.castle@btopenworld.com This job takes about four hours per month - full training will be given!!

YORK INTERFAITH GROUP NEEDS YOU !

Many Thanks

Anne Castle

Our July Meeting will be **Live**

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

Tuesday **July 2nd 7.00 - 8.30 pm**

The Role of Art in different Faiths (part 2)

As in April this year, several speakers, each from a different faith, will contribute. (See further details below)

Organisers: Christopher Styles and Sarah Hubbard.

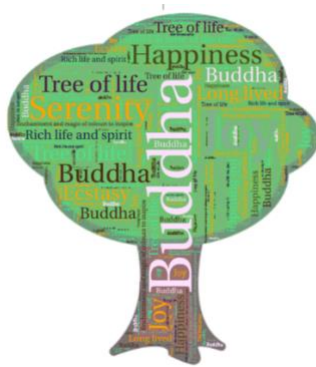
OUR NEXT MEETING -Faith in Art....and Vice Versa

In our July meeting (02-July-2024) we will be hosting the second of our sessions looking at art in the context of faith journeys and explorations. This will follow on from our April meeting where we explored themes from Buddhist, Christian and Jewish narratives, along with “Bring and Share” personal perspectives from Daryoush and Raj on art from Baha’i Sikh traditions.

In April we enjoyed a practical workshop, where three pieces of artwork were displayed around the room and everyone was invited to note how the pieces struck them: the collected comments were then processed and produced as word-cloud pieces of “art” in their own right:



Jean-François Millet: “The Angelus” (1857-59)



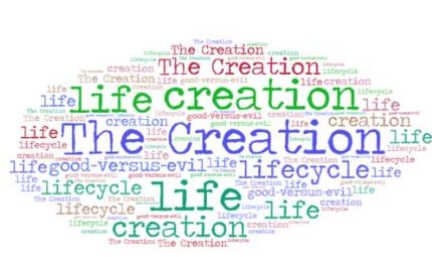
“Buddha” (1895)



Odilon Redon:



Marc Chagal: “Creation” (1960)



(full-size reproductions of the word clouds will be on display at the July meeting)

These encounters got us thinking not just about looking at art from different perspectives, but ways of seeing art, so our July session we will explore together some “Ways of Seeing”, informed by the seminal 1970s work of the same name by John Berger which some of you might be just old enough to remember.

The meeting will also include further insights from other faith backgrounds, and we will conclude with a segway on the relationship between visual narrative and story-telling across two different faiths in a historical context here in York.

York Interfaith Group Planning Session

These are the ideas suggested by members present on 4th June 2024

Monthly Meetings

Pilgrimages – talking about different faith pilgrimages as well as watching TV programme

What are we doing as ‘City of Culture, of Faith, of Sanctuary’ and a Human Rights City’?

Art/Faith/Stained Glass/ - York Minster, other churches & buildings

How does our Interfaith Group react to and have an impact on ‘common issues’ i.e. social justice, environment, modern day slavery?

Young Persons Event

Family – relationships, Rites of passage, Rights of Women, Religion.

Food – Religion, a taster night

Education – Schools, SACRE, developing spirituality in children

QED – The High Sheriff of West Yorkshire, the new County Mayor of North Yorkshire, maybe a visit High Sheriff of West Yorkshire to Bradford

Personal Faith Journeys of YIG members – customs, language, what is important & respectful?

Guided tours / Visit to places of worship / Walking Tour to worship places in York

Talks that share information e.g. English Heritage on Clifford’s Tower – Louise Hampton

Poetry / Creative Writing

Interfaith week – Possible theme of ‘Unity’ was suggested

Autumn Tree Care session

Remembrance Sunday

Music Night – Youth event / YSJ? / Involving different faiths. (Maybe in YSJ ?chapel?)

Health & Faith & Healing – Mohammed will give a talk – food

Faith Work – Ocean may know someone

Family Events – involve children

Walking tour of York – places of worship

Hindu / Sikh event

Youth Event

Library – Story Telling & Human Book sessions

Various meditations including Zen

35th year celebration – possibly on final day – afternoon or early evening

City Events / Festivals - By YIG taking part in some of these it would help raise our profile

Holocaust Memorial Week(Jan)

Residents Weekend(Jan)

Women’s Week (March - Women of faith)

World Book Week(March - stories/faiths)

Mental Health Week (May - maybe offer meditations, coping with pain & calamity in life)

York Pride (June)

Dragon Boat Races (June)

Refugee Week(June)

Festival of Ideas (June - Making York safer, interfaith, intercultural etc.) Our City (June)

Fair Trade Fortnight (Sept) Anti Modern-Day Slavery week (Sept)

Arts Festivals ???

York Health Mela (was in Sept but now postponed until ‘25)

Environment Week(Sept / Oct – Possibly another visit to our tree site)

Black History Month (Oct)

Older Peoples Festival

(Oct)

Interfaith Week(Nov)

York Film Festival (Nov- show short films - New Earswick Village Hall or City Screen)

Minster Tree Festival (Dec)

Other discussions & points to consider

Awareness for the need for Prayer Rooms around York. Not just for those working within the City Centre but a quiet / prayer space to meet the needs of visitors to York and also the spiritual needs of our refugees currently arriving in York. A list will need to be drawn up as to where they are within the city at present. A suggestion to check out what Leeds has available would be a help as this could then be quoted to York organisations when contacting them.

Day / Half Day Interfaith Conference – to be organised by new North Yorkshire Mayor & others. It would need a large space with smaller rooms for break out groups. Possible places to consider would be the Council Offices, YSJ, University of York & the Central Library. We could support the work needed but it would need more than just our YIG committee group to organise it all, hence the need for the new mayor to take the lead.

An Interfaith Centre - There is even more need now for an Interfaith Centre or at least a permanent Interfaith Room to be within the City Centre as this could be used in several ways; a general meeting place for YIG and for some Interfaith activities / events; an interfaith library; a place of worship for those currently without one and offering a prayer space / quiet space for prayer or spiritual meditation.

We could perhaps consider changing Interfaith Week from its current time of November with dark, cold, winter days to holding it in summer time with lighter, warmer, summer days.

REVISED PLANNING FOR MONTHLY MEETINGS 2024

July 2nd: (transferred from October) – The Role of Art in Different Faiths: as in April this year, several speakers, each from a different faith, will contribute.
Organisers: Christopher Styles and Sarah Hubbard.

August 6th: Annual Picnic, this year at York Mosque. An informal evening to share food and conversation. You are welcome to bring a vegetarian contribution to share, but this is not in the least obligatory!!! Do come along
Organiser: Rasha Ibrahim

September 3rd: Music Which Inspires Me. People are invited to bring recorded music which they find spiritually enriching, to play and comment on, briefly.
Organiser and chair: Anne Castle

October 1st: The Urantia Book and the Life of Jesus.
Speaker: Ocean Melchisedech.
Chair: Patricia Harriss

November 5th: Sharing the pain : using faith stories for healing. Mary Callan will lead an evening which will be a mixture of performance and commentary, based on stories from the Bible and other sources.
Chair: Patricia Harriss

December 3rd: AGM followed by social activities organised by Anne Castle.



MUSIC WHICH INSPIRES ME OUR SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

At this meeting you are invited to share a piece of music which means a lot to you and to explain what it is that has inspired you, produced a sense of awe and wonder, comforted you, or even developed your spirituality and faith.

If you, or a person from your faith, would like to perform their piece, that would be amazing!

Alternatively you could send me your favourite piece by email as either [mp3 file](#) or a [WAV file](#). If it is the words that are important, send a copy and I will print out some sheets for attendees to keep.

Depending on how many people respond to this request, we may only be able to play the first 2-3 minutes of your piece followed by approximately 3-4 minutes for your talk and comments or questions from our listeners.

PLEASE DO RESPOND BY Saturday 13th July as I may not be able to chair this meeting as planned and would need to prepare everything well in advance for my “understudy”



Welcome Bags for Refugees



Many thanks to those who have already returned their 'Welcome Bags' for the refugees arriving into York. Peter from York City of Sanctuary collected another 11 bags in total from the Unitarian Chapel to take to RAY for them to distribute as new families arrived. I forgot to remind people that you can put a small 'welcome card' with a message into your bags. If you have a card from your own faith group please use those or just a home-made one from your family but if not I can try to include one of the YIG cards that I have made providing that I have time to put it in before the bags are collected. You do not need to put your name in the card but just a few words of welcome and to let them know that we are part of York Interfaith Group and are supporting York City of Sanctuary and Refugee Action York.

Drop off times at the Unitarian Chapel in St Saviourgate remain the same Thurs 10.30 – 11am or 12 – 1pm and Sunday 10.30 – 11am or 12 – 1pm.

If anyone wants more bags please let Dee know and she can bring them to the monthly meetings or you can collect them at the times listed above.

Interfaith Service to mark the end of Refugee Week 2024



There was an Interfaith Service, to mark the end of Refugee Week at the Unitarian Chapel in St Saviourgate at 11am on Sunday 23rd June. This was put together brilliantly by our very own Dee and enjoyed by all

The theme for Refugee Week this year was 'HOME' and so the service reflected this theme with contributions from York Interfaith Group, York City of Sanctuary, Refugee Action York and the Refugee Council of the UK.

At the end of the service after listening to the speakers, pictured above, talk about different aspects of their work with refugees and how important it was for people to have a place to call home we created a collage of everyone's ideas.

All were invited to attend a 'Bring & Share' vegetarian lunch after the service

Extract from the YIG contribution

Your spiritual home is the place where you feel that you belong, usually because your ideas, attitudes or beliefs are the same as those of the people who are there alongside you. People of faith may well have different beliefs regarding their own religions but they tend to be very similar when they consider the values of 'a home'.

Extract from the City of Sanctuary contribution

York City of Sanctuary would like to thank the Interfaith Group for their continuing support for refugees in the city, as well as their support for our organisation. More than ever, during Refugee Week it is important to acknowledge the assistance we receive from all the different faith groups in the city. In the past three years, York has seen an unprecedented number of sanctuary-seekers arrive in the city. We have around 380 Ukrainian refugees (mainly women and children) who have come on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. As well, there are around 400 people from across the globe housed in a hotel in York awaiting their asylum claims. The large number of sanctuary-seekers has required a concerted effort across multiple agencies in York. By working as a team, it shows how we can pull together, offer practical assistance and a warm welcome in York.

Yoga As Personal Worship

submitted by Varsha Gulati



Yoga comes from Sanskrit word “Yuj” which means to join, meet, come together. Yoga, therefore, represents the union of man or woman with God and embraces the threefold nature of living beings: physical, mental and intellectual.

Hindus believe that by engaging in prayer or meditation, the mind is enabled to focus on thoughts about God. At that moment the soul unites with the almighty. This is YOGA

The aim of Yoga, therefore, is the realization of God. It is a form of Personal worship.

There are many branches of Yoga which can be followed according to one’s interest and ability. These were scientifically developed by the Rishis and sages in the ancient times, based upon their spiritual experiences.

There are four most well-known systems of Yoga:

1. Raj or Dhyana Yoga: Yoga of meditation
2. Karma Yoga: Yoga of action. This entails doing good for others selflessly
3. Jnana Yoga: Yoga of knowledge leading to truth by means of intelligence and logic.
4. Bhakti Yoga: Yoga of Devotion. One is endowed with feeling of love and devotion and taking total refuge in Divinity .

YORK ENVIRONMENT WEEK



Dear Members of the Interfaith group, My name is Adam Myers, I am part of a group seeking to organise York Environment Weeks 2024 these will be in September/ October this year. YEWs24 is an umbrella allowing and supporting organisations to come together to celebrate their work and to share it with the wider public. Last year YEW23 involved 60 events reaching approximately 2,500 people.

More information about last years YEW23 can be found here: <https://yorkenvironmentweek.org.uk/yew-events-2023/>

This year we are exploring bringing organisations together under themes, one being faith-based groups.

I wonder if you would be able to spread the word about this to members of the Interfaith group so that YEWs24 is able to reach as many groups as possible that are active on Environmental and Climate related issues in faith-based communities within the City.

All the best Adam Myers

NEW BEGINNINGS - YORK BEREAVEMENT ALLIANCE



from CHRIS CHARTERS St Leonards Hospice and Bereavement Alliance project lead

2024 sees the start of the York Bereavement Alliance, which is a collaborative effort aiming to embed a whole city approach to Bereavement for people of any age (adults and children). Work has begun to engage all stakeholders in York (including primary care, St Leonards Hospice, York District Hospital, Humber and North Yorkshire ICS, Carers Centre, Healthwatch, South Bank multi Academy schools trust, church groups and many others) to best support York citizens; provide support for partners in the city who are providing Bereavement care and ultimately improve outcomes for bereaved people. An early aim of the project is to understand and build on bereavement provision already in place across the city in order to build a directory of support that enables truly equitable and accessible support; and through which we can collectively fill any gaps in provision.

Engagement with stakeholders is gathering momentum and highlights a strong desire to work as a collective alliance across York in order to achieve be the best bereavement support possible and we would like to invite the York Interfaith group into these discussions.

As part of the Alliance we are very keen to hear from members of all York's religious communities. If you are aware of any Bereavement support within your communities or have any thoughts on how we can help to support and reach out to Bereaved people, please do get in touch on christopher.charters@nhs.net

Thank you



York Together

Fighting injustice by standing together

A MESSAGE FROM Atoosa Khatiri - Development Lead YORK TOGETHER

I wanted to reach out to let you know about a new collective, York Together. We're a group of individuals in York who have come together to support local activists and groups trying to make a change in the city. You can find some more information about us . <https://www.yorktogether.org/>

I met Prof Avtar Matharu recently at a York Festival of Ideas event, and was going to drop by your planning event in June. But unfortunately I couldn't make it

It would be great to connect with the inter-faith group and let you know more about what we're working on at York . We also have an upcoming launch event on 24th of July, we'd like to extend an invitation to your members (I can share more details on this soon).

Look out for further information soon

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS JULY 2024



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



6 (Saturday) to 15 (Monday) 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.



7 July (Sunday) RATHA YATRA Hindu

‘Chariot journey’. This is observed most notably at Puri in the Indian state of Orissa, where processions of thousands of devotees pull huge waggons (*rathas*) supporting images of Krishna. He is known under the name of ‘Jagannath’, (Lord of the Universe), from which the English term ‘juggernaut’ comes. Krishna is attended on his journey by his brother and sister. The festival and others like it are celebrated in Britain with processions through various parts of London on appropriate Mondays.



7 * July (Sunday) AL-HIJRA 1446AH / 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 1446 AH begins.

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



9 * July (Tuesday) 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 (Saturday) to 15 (Monday) 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.



16 July (Tuesday) 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!



17 * July (Wednesday) 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.



20 July (Saturday) 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.



21 July (Sunday) ENTRY TO THE VASSA [beginning of the Rains Retreat] Buddhist

Vassa is the three-month annual retreat observed by Theravada Buddhists. Taking place during the wet season, Vassa lasts for three lunar months, usually from July to October.



21 July (Sunday) 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 (Tuesday) BIRTHDAY OF HAILE SELASSIE I Rastafarian

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

And finally, A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As Chair, I continue to value your membership and my aim for 2024/25 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.

York Interfaith Group Committee 2024	
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
Tina Funnell	Planning assistance
Sarah Hubbard	Jewish Representative

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 in our August Newsletter, please email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or send direct to am.castle@btopenworld.com **by July 16th**

Please ensure that your contributions are in 'Word' or a format which can be converted to 'Word'. (PDF Leaflets are particularly difficult).

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

Avtar Matharu, Chair, YIG