



AUGUST 2024

Dear Friends

Firstly a special “thank you” to Christopher Styles and Sarah Hubbard who put together our second meeting about Art and Faith, in July. A full report can be read below. It was a great evening and opened up many interesting ideas for discussion.

This month’s issue also reviews YIG’s participation in the “Our City” festival in June.

Dee reports on the continued participation of YIG and other groups who help to welcome refugees to our city.

Please do take time to read the ideas which were suggested for topics at YIG meetings 2025. It is vital that both the Committee and the general membership work together to facilitate these meetings as well as help to organise and support Interfaith Week in November. Please consider if you could help in any way and contact the appropriate person.

As many of you know I will be moving away from York in the near future and someone will need to take my place as Newsletter Editor. (If you know me at all, you will know that the job requires minimal technical ability!!!) Do please contact me if you can help and I can tell you all you need to know.

Anne Castle

Our August Meeting will be Outside (or inside if the weather is unkind)

at Bull Lane Mosque, York YO10 3EN

Tuesday August 6th 7.00 - 8.30 pm

YIG Annual Picnic

This will be a social event, with the opportunity, (but not a necessity) to bring an item of vegetarian food to share. (Hot and cold drinks will be provided)

We are grateful to our hosts at York Mosque, where we are able to hold the event outside if the weather is kind, but retreat indoors if necessary and also for the provision of hot and cold drinks

Events in June and July

Our City Festival - Saturday 29th June 2024

Thank you attending Our City Festival where our stand attracted lots of attention, including the Civic Party (see picture below). Our new logo/banner was on show for the first time (see bottom picture, blue banner in the centre).



Faith in art Part 2 July 2nd 2024

This was the second meeting on faith and art. For this second meeting we changed the focus from thinking about specific works of art that depict religious events or ideas to exploring the way art works upon the soul. We introduced the topic through a discussion in which we invited the attendees to respond to Monet's famous painting *The Water-lily Pond*, currently on loan to York City Art Gallery.



We suggested that absorbing ones-self in a piece of art might be a kind of religious experience and that the **process** of responding to art was as important as the art work itself. We referred to a famous book by William James called *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In this book, James acknowledged the diversity of religious beliefs and practices, emphasizing that different paths can lead to similar spiritual outcomes. Just like different works of art might affect us differently. We linked James' theories about religious experience to some ideas about how one might consider Monet's series of paintings on water lilies, proposed by Francoise Barbe-Gall in his book, *How to look at a painting* (please see the table below). Attendees discussed in groups how they might view the painting using William James' categorizes to describe religious experiences. Each group chose one theory and applied it to *The Water-Lily Pond* painting.

Theories from Barbe Gall about the way we might experience the painting	What James thought about religious experience

Actively observing the detail first hand	Ineffability: The experience must be directly experienced to be understood and cannot be experienced third hand
Contemplating the sublime	Noesis: the experience is understood to be a state of knowledge through which divine truths can be learned
Exploring inherent tensions	Transience paradox– the experience is temporary and cannot be sustained, although its effects may last a long time. It can develop and deepen with subsequent experiences and the effects can last a lifetime
Abandoning ourselves to the gentleness of the painting	Experience is not initiated by the mystic but rather they have a sense that something is acting upon them. The experience is controlled from outside themselves.

Discussions were wide ranging, from exploring ideas about bridges and water direction to how we keep seeing something new in the lilies just like we find new meaning every time we read our Holy Books. Other groups explored how the painting showed a meeting point, the transience of nature coming together with something more eternal, such as a sense of the beauty in everyday life.

This was followed by excellent talks by Rory, Varsha and Rasha. Rory talked about the way science and art combined in The Renaissance, taking the wonderful painting of The Resurrection by Piero Della Francesca to illustrate his theory, which is the subject of a book he is writing. Varsha gave a wonderful talk on Hindu art with excellent illustrations. Rasha spoke about art in Islam and again shared some beautiful images with us. We really appreciated their input and thank them for their contributions.

Christopher Styles and Sarah Hubbard

Volunteer Police Cadet Leader Recruitment



Could you spare just a couple of hours a week or month to guide and inspire our Volunteer Police Cadets in North Yorkshire? 📍

We are looking for Volunteer Police Cadet Leaders to help manage and motivate our North Yorkshire Police Cadets who are aged 13 – 18 years old. Everyone has something to offer as a Volunteer.

Volunteer Police Cadets is all about teaching our younger generation about policing duties, skills, and basic law. Cadet sessions will also include physical activities, drill, and visits from various departments within North Yorkshire Police such as the Dog Section, Roads Policing and Crime Scene Investigation units. We want our Cadets and Leaders to enjoy Police Cadets, so we include team building games, activities, and we love to get our Cadets involved in community engagement events. 🧑🚔 🚗

We have multiple Police Cadet units across North Yorkshire that are recruiting for Cadet Leaders, so there is likely to be one near you! We have units at:

- 📍 Harrogate – Monday evening
- 📍 Scarborough – Monday evening
- 📍 York – Thursday evening
- 📍 Skipton – Thursday evening
- 📍 Catterick – Thursday evening

What we look for in a Police Cadet Leader:

- 🤝 Excellent communication, planning and organising skills.
- 🤝 Be able to encourage people to support law enforcement.
- 🤝 Be a positive role model for our young Cadets.
- 🤝 Be able to attend at least one to two cadet sessions a month.
- 🤝 Previous experience of working with young people is desirable, but not essential.
- 🤝 Be able to demonstrate a caring, mature and supportive attitude.
- 🤝 Be able to listen to and communicate with a wide range of people, treating everyone with respect.
- 🤝 Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- 🤝 Volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years of age.

To learn more and to apply, click the link - [North Yorkshire Police Volunteer Police Cadet Leader Application](#)



North Yorkshire Police – Special Constable Recruitment

Special Constables come from all walks of life and join for a variety of reasons. They are a vital part of all Police Forces across the country, supporting and enhancing the work of regular Police Officers. North Yorkshire Police have a well-established Special Constabulary of dedicated volunteers, and we are committed to recruiting hard-working individuals with a genuine interest in policing.

Our Special Constables need huge amounts of enthusiasm and determination to succeed. With the same powers, uniform and equipment (not including tasers) as Police Officers, you'll play a key role in maintaining our extremely high standards. This is not an easy role and is only suitable for driven individuals with a real passion for serving the public, with proven life experience and customer service skills. You will need to be markedly resilient to deal with the confrontational and potentially harrowing situations that you'll come across. If you are to succeed in this role you must have effective communication skills and strong team working ethics.

Joining the Specials opens up a world of opportunities for personal and professional advancement. Undergoing the training and then going out on patrol makes a welcome break from day-to-day life and challenges every day. You'll benefit from unrivalled training and investment in your development. We'll help you develop skills - from leadership to responsiveness - that will enhance every aspect of your life. After all, we need you to be the best there is. Whatever your background, you'll be truly valued as an integral member of our force.

You will need to be able to commit to volunteering a minimum of 16 hours per month, though during your initial training and probation it is likely you would need to complete significantly more hours and commit to ongoing training.

Becoming a Special Constable really is one of the most exciting and rewarding voluntary opportunities available!

Do you have what it takes to help make North Yorkshire a better place to live, work and visit?

Familiarisation sessions

These sessions will give a fantastic insight into the role of Special Constables from existing Special Constables. We have planned for these to take place on the following dates and locations, commencing at 6:30pm. These sessions are not mandatory, however we would advise you to attend one, if possible, to gain a further

insight and meet the team. Please register using the link below to receive the event details closer to the time.

- Tuesday 30th July 2024 at Knaresborough – [register here.](#)
- Wednesday 7th August 2024 at Northallerton – [register here.](#)
- Tuesday 13th August 2024 at Scarborough – [register here.](#)
- Wednesday 14th August 2024 at Malton – [register here.](#)
- Tuesday 20th August 2024 at York – [register here.](#)

Interview dates

In force interviews are scheduled to take place across Week Commencing 30th September and 7th October. We will be holding these in person, across multiple central locations, and confirm these closer to the time.

Training dates

If you are successful through the recruitment process, we have training courses for Special Constables starting in March 2025. All applicants should note that this training will take place on weekends and evenings, with a blend of in person and online training in conjunction with the Open University. There will also be a requirement for you to attend a full week of Officer Safety Training.

[Apply to be a special constable here](#)





North Yorkshire Police – Police Support Volunteer's

Police Support Volunteers are member of the public who give up their own time, to carry out a range of tasks for the police service. We call our volunteers Citizens in Policing, and the role plays a vital part in our force. They bring valuable skills and expertise to police teams, creating closer and more effective relationships with our communities, and provide extra support to the Local Policing Teams. They come from all walks of life, each bringing their own skills and specialisms.

The role of a Volunteer

You would volunteer in your local or preferred area, working alongside the neighbourhood Policing Teams, as well as helping other departments. The role is extremely varied, and can include assisting with crime prevention initiatives, being involved in NYP vehicle checking, assisting training for police dogs, signing up the community to our community messaging service, and carrying out role player for new trainee Police Officers!

As a Neighbourhood Support Volunteer, you would provide support to community-based activities including:

- Events
- Operations
- Community messaging systems
- Crime prevention

You can choose to participate in as many tasks as you wish, and you will receive ongoing training and support in trying new departments. Please note you will need to successfully pass vetting checks in order to be a Volunteer.

Benefits of being a Volunteer

Our current volunteers describe the role as fun and rewarding and say that they get a real satisfaction when they have helped someone, and that being able to give back to the community lifts them both mentally and physically. Additional benefits also include:

- Contributing to creating safer neighbourhoods.
- Supporting NYP in delivering their policing priorities.
- Engaging with a variety of individuals and be involved in a range of activities and events across the area.
- Gaining an insight into local policing issues.

- Meeting new people from all walks of life.
- Learning new skills and gaining more confidence.

If you are interested in becoming an NYP Volunteer, then apply today! We will be closing this advert on **Wednesday 17th July** to review applications and invite candidates to interview.

[Police Support Volunteer Application](#)



YIG support for refugees



Many thanks to students at Bootham School for their contribution to the 'Welcome Bags' for refugees. One of their teachers delivered 17 tote bags full of food items to the Unitarian Chapel for us to pass on to York City of Sanctuary (YCoS) and Refugee Action York (RAY) for their project to help newly arriving refugees to our city. The teacher had encouraged students to collect all of the items during Refugee Week in June having seen the article about the project in our York Interfaith Group newsletter. Some students had even decorated the bags with messages of 'Welcome' in different languages. It is such a lovely gesture and we know that their kindness will be much appreciated.

Thanks also go to everyone from York Interfaith Group who came along to the Interfaith service at the Unitarian Chapel to mark the end of Refugee Week in June. There was a collection as part of the service that raised £319 which was shared between RAY and YCoS to help towards their work supporting the refugees in York.

If you wish to continue to support the Welcome Bags initiative, 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.

Many Thanks

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 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.

WHAT WE NEED NEXT !

Please have a look at the topics and suggestions above 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, or If you would be willing to serve on a sub-committee for planning please get in touch with Tina Funnell via the YIG email. yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

If you interested in helping with Interfaith sessions in schools, or with Interfaith Week Planning, Please contact Dee. yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

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

YORK INTERFAITH GROUP NEEDS YOU !

REVISED PLANNING FOR MONTHLY MEETINGS 2024

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.

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

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AUGUST 2024



1 August (Thursday) LAMMAS / LUGHNASADH Wiccan LUGHNASADH Pagan

Lughnasadh, otherwise called *Lammas*, is the time of the corn harvest, when Pagans reap those things they have sown and when they celebrate the fruits of the mystery of Nature. At Lughnasadh, Pagans give thanks for the bounty of the Goddess as Queen of the Land.



5 August (Monday) to 14 August (Wednesday) FRAVARDIGAN / MUKTAD Zoroastrian (Shenshai / Parsi)

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.



6 August (Tuesday) THE TRANSFIGURATION Christian (Orthodox)

This festival commemorates the occasion when Jesus went up a mountain with three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, who saw his face change and his clothes become dazzling white. They witnessed him in conversation with Moses and Elijah, and heard a voice saying, 'This is my own dear Son with whom I am pleased – listen to him'. For many Christians this confirms the divine nature of Jesus.



10 August (Saturday) QIXIJE / CH'I HOU CHIEH [Herd Boy and Weaving Girl Festival] Chinese

This Double Seven festival perpetuates an ancient folk tale of two stars, one on either side of the Heavenly River (the Milky Way). They are held to have been a herd boy and a heavenly weaving maid who had married but were separated when she returned to heaven. The lovers are allowed a reunion on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month when a flock of magpies form a bridge across the Heavenly River.



13 * July (Tuesday) 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.



13 (Tuesday) to 15 (Thursday) August O-BON Japanese / Buddhist (In some Eastern regions, including Tokyo, the festival may be celebrated on the same dates but in July)



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.



15 (Thursday) August THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD (Orthodox) / ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (Roman Catholic) Christian

On this day, Christians commemorate the passing of Mary, Mother of Christ, in the presence of the Apostles. The apostles buried Mary at Gethsemane, where Jesus had also been buried; but on the third day after the burial, when they were eating together, Mary appeared to them, saying "Rejoice". When the apostles went to the grave, her body was gone, leaving a sweet fragrance. This event conveys the idea of death as 'falling asleep' (this is what 'dormition' means), to be followed by eventual resurrection.



15 August (Thursday) NAVROZE / NO RUZ Zoroastrian (Shenshai / Parsi)

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!



18 August (Sunday) ZHONGQIUJIE / CHUNG CH'IU [Festival of Hungry Ghosts] Chinese

Chinese Buddhist and ancestral festival, when paper objects for use in the spirit world are made and offered to aid those spirits who have no resting place or descendants. Large paper boats are made and burnt at temples to help spirits cross the sea of torment to Nirvana.



19 August (Monday) RAKSHA BANDHAN Hindu / Jain

Raksha means 'protection' and *bandhan* means 'to tie'. Girls and married women in families of a north Indian background tie a *rakhi* (amulet) on the right wrists of their brothers, wishing them protection from evil influences of various kinds.



20 August (Tuesday) KHORDAD SAL Zoroastrian (Shahenshahi)

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.



26 August (Monday) JANAM ASHTAMI / KRISHNA JAYANTI Hindu

Birthday of Krishna. Many *Hindus* fast till midnight, the time of Krishna's birth. Those unable to fast will have some fruit and milk. In the temples Krishna is welcomed with singing, dancing and sweets. In some homes and temples an image of the new-born Krishna is put in a cradle. Krishna is a very popular avatar or incarnation of Vishnu and this festival is celebrated widely.



31 August (Saturday) to 7 September (Saturday) August PARYUSHAN PARVA Jain

These are eight days of purification, devoted to study, prayer, meditation and fasting, and ending with a period of confession and forgiveness. Often monks will be invited to give teachings from the Jain scriptures. Paryushana means 'to stay in one place', which signifies a time of reflection and repentance. Originally the practice was monastic for the most part.

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 Mazloun	Treasurer
Rasha Ibrahim	Press and Publicity Officer
Anne Castle	Newsletter
Varsha Gulati	Hindu Representative
Sister Patricia Harriss	Annual Meeting Planning
Tina Funnell	Annual Meeting Planning
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

X @Yorkinterfaith

email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com

If you would like to contribute an article or advertise an event in our September Newsletter, please email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or send direct to am.castle@btopenworld.com **by August 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 August.

Avtar Matharu, Chair, YIG