



**As people of faith look towards the winter and keep festivals  
concerned with the turning of the year and new creation, greetings to you all!**

As I write this the news is full of the atrocities of war: Ukraine and Russia, countries in the Middle East, Gaza and Israel, central Africa..... All grievously wounding those who live there, families just like our own, and severing in a horrifying manner their relationships with the neighbours they live among. Or finding themselves confronted by outsiders, fearsome and brutal, with different beliefs than ours. What are we to do? Flee with our spouse and children and only what we stand up in? What of our elderly, frail grandparents, our disabled child? And what if our families' only chance of escape to safety is to leave behind these so much cherished members of our family...? Or do we stay, knowing that we will be killed, or die from thirst, starvation, untreated illness? How would we feel, if any of this was happening to *us*?

The news in Britain seems no better: Buckinghamshire arrests for offences against children by groups of men from a variety of backgrounds, but unfortunately mostly migrants to this country; TV celebrities from the white culture being accused of, or found guilty of sexual exploitation of minors; more than a thousand children, over a period of years, systematically abused by men of Pakistani heritage in Rotherham. What can we do in this maelstrom of human depravity? Can we stand up together against this tide of criminality and brutality?

Our faith communities can individually or together send letters to our MPs and newspapers saying that none of these actions is in the true spirit of our faiths. But, if that is all we do, can we expect those outside our faith communities to even listen, let alone believe what we are saying? I reflect on the umbrella held by a Muslim with a pamphlet stall in Oxford's Cornmarket Street - 'God is Gorgeous' is one its messages on it. Its owner beams at passers-by as he offers his leaflets: 'What Muslims really believe', 'Islam: a religion of Peace'. Where have we gone astray? Further along the street a Christian hands out *his*: 'God is a God of Peace and Love'; Buddhists give their message of peace, and Brahma Kumaris offer *their* shop busy Broad Street as a centre of peace and quietness. But look in the middle of the street: set flat into the cobbles is a small stone cross, a nearby plaque telling how near to that spot three Christian teachers were burned to death in the 17th century, their beliefs not deemed to be 'correctly Christian'. We do well to remember their execution, as we think of the brutal killing of those who went to another country working for an aid agency - perhaps their beliefs weren't 'correct' either.

Let me end with two last questions: What response should we, as people of faith, make in all these situations? How can our Councils of Faiths or Faith Forums help us all to learn to live with difference? Surely, first and foremost we must be urged to be people of prayer: in our personal prayers, in the services we hold, perhaps praying alongside people from other faith communities, out on the street. Our prayer does not need to be expressed in words but in the act of bringing God into the situation. We can announce an intention and then silently come together for a time to demonstrate our peaceful co-existence.

An Iraqi friend protests that things were never like they are now: 'Whatever the differences at home, we learned to live peaceably with each other'. It seems that we never grasp the lessons of the past. How long, before we understand that faith is there to make people truly human?

**Bede Gerrard, Chair, SEEFF**  
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## **TO PRAY ABOUT AND TO DO BOMBING ALONE WILL NOT DEFEAT 'IS'**

Imam Monwar Hussain, Founder of The Oxford Foundation, has issued the following statement in the light of recent developments relating to a terrorist group named *IS*:

'I am deeply saddened to hear of the tragic death of my fellow British citizen David Haines. My thoughts and prayers are with David's family and friends at this very difficult time. Islam condemns the taking of innocent life and those who do so are criminals and, do terrible violence to the Islamic tradition through their actions.

Mainstream Muslims have been fighting the extremist ideology that underpins IS for over two centuries. The idea that bombing alone will defeat this evil distortion of the Islamic tradition is wholly misplaced. We must defeat the 'ideology' that underpins it. This can only be done through cutting the supply of petro-dollars that funds it and by encouraging our "friends" in the Middle East to provide equal freedom and monetary support to mainstream Muslim scholars as they do to the Wahhabi religious establishment and its affiliates throughout the world. Without this, we will continue to see this violent extremist ideology rear its ugly head, under a different banner or a different context, without any end in sight.'

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### **PLEASE WRITE TO YOUR MP**

Find their name at [www.findyourmp.parliament.uk](http://www.findyourmp.parliament.uk)

Write to them about? There are thousands of refugees from conflicts across the world; but in the Middle East there is religious and ethnic persecution and a stated aim to destroy people of faith who will not convert to that of their oppressors. Ask your MP to speak and vote in favour of Britain opening its doors to people fleeing religious persecution and to give them a safe refuge where they can rebuild their lives.

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### **INDIA / PAKISTAN FLOODS**

Relief operations struggle in the Indian-administered portion of Kashmir and in parts of Pakistan where six days of rain and flooding have left hundreds of people dead.

On the Pakistan side of the border, a spokesman for the National Disaster Management Authority, said more than 190 people had been killed, more than 60 in the Pakistani-administered part of Kashmir and about 130 in Punjab Province. Severe damage was caused by the Jhelum and Chenab Rivers, which swelled after heavy monsoon rainfall last week, flooding hundreds of villages adjoining the rivers. Thousands of displaced people were living in tents, waiting for medical supplies and food. The Pakistani military oversaw relief efforts. In one day, 970 people were rescued in Punjab. 'We did not expect this kind of flood,' said Muhammad Hameed, 54, the head of a family of 13 people in the Chiniot district. 'We were sleeping at night when all of a sudden water came and we had to rush out of our home.'

The Jhelum River also breached its banks in Indian-administered Kashmir, in the summer state capital of Srinagar, where water levels rose to 15 to 18 feet at points, according to the Indian Army. At least 150 people died in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, according to the divisional commissioner there. The death toll in both countries is expected to rise as rescuers reach areas that had been inundated. 'Our focus will remain on Srinagar and areas of south Kashmir because there are still a very large number of people stranded without food and water, and our idea is to reach them quickly,' the chief of the Indian Army's Northern Command said.

Shakeela Rahman, 34, spent nights sleeping on a road from Bemina, where she lives, to Srinagar. She fled her home with her two small children early Friday morning, after water started flowing into houses. 'We have not eaten anything, my kids are starving, and our house is completely submerged under water,' Ms. Rahman said. Nearby, a camp for the Central Reserve Police Force was also flooded, and its personnel had spent the evening sleeping in buses parked outside. In the Karan Nagar neighbourhood of Srinagar, where Ahmad Mujtaba, his wife and three children were trying to reach the higher parts of the city, the water level rose several feet on Sunday.

## EVENTS REPORTS

### PRAYER FOR PEOPLE IN IRAQ, PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH

In an unprecedented ecumenical gathering at Lambeth Palace 3 September hosted by the Abp Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and initiated by Bp Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK, a statement was agreed by leaders and representatives of the Churches of the Middle East and the wider Christian Church in Britain.

The meeting began with a round table discussion regarding the plight of Christians and minority communities in Iraq, Syria and the wider Middle East to agree a statement, expressing solidarity with, and advocating for, all those who continue to suffer gross violations of the fundamental right and freedom to practice their chosen faith.

The discussion was followed by a service of prayer to give thanks for Christians in the Middle East and to remember all those who have lost their lives or continue to suffer persecution. A short press briefing followed.

### REJOICING IN THEIR FAITH AND SHARING IN THEIR COLLECTIVE PAIN

A new situation has arisen which creates a state of emergency in the Middle East for Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities. The recent increase in violence and aggression has resulted in gross violations of fundamental rights and freedoms in the region. We gathered today as Christians including those originally from the Middle East to stand in solidarity and prayer with our brothers and sisters who seek to practice their faith and belief in lands where they have been a continuing presence for centuries.

The Middle East is the birthplace of Christianity, and home to indigenous Christian communities that have been an indispensable part of its history. Despite the challenges, Christians in the region were and are a stabilising and reconciling presence. Today, particularly in Iraq and Syria, they are at great risk from violence fostered by extremist ideologies which no longer see them as being part of the future. The Middle East is in desperate danger of losing an irreplaceable part of its identity, heritage and culture.

We are seeing an extreme religious ideology that knows no limits in its persecution of those who are culturally or religiously different. Those who promote this intolerance must be challenged and the perpetrators of violence held to account. The suffering of those who bear the brunt of its terror requires us to act and bear witness to their plight, whatever ethnic group or religious minority, they come from. We must provide relief and safety for those displaced and in fear of their lives in consultation with our partners in the region. We must also bring pressure to bear on those who can provide security to those affected.

In meeting and praying together, we give thanks for our brothers and sisters as they continue to live their Christian faith with strength and perseverance. We commit to continue to stand with them in prayer, to speak for freedom from persecution for Christians and all other religious communities and those of no faith who live as minority groups across the region. We also continue to urge Her Majesty's Government to work within the international community to safeguard and provide for all those affected.

To our brothers and sisters in the Middle East, We "share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance." Revelation 1:9

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### GARDEN FULL OF CULTURAL DELIGHTS 2014

Hastings and District Interfaith Forum,

Hastings Intercultural Organisation, and Friends of St Leonard's Gardens

St Leonard's Gardens were 'Full of Cultural Delight' as this buzzing yet intimate interfaith, intercultural festival reached its 5<sup>th</sup> sunny success, thanks to all participating community and faith groups and our wonderful performers, caterers and volunteer helpers. 'The best one yet' said Council Leader Jeremy Birch who shared opening words with Hasting's Mayor and MP Amber Rudd.

Chinese dancers, Acromax gymnasts, Seven Streets young people with Anyme & Kele, Nicola Rodmell dancers, Gizmo Kids, Mimi's Indian dances & Michelle Foo's Chinese songs,

folk singers Steve LeSqueeze and the Wobblies and Cosmic John all graced the stage with a rich variety of spectacle, beauty, joy and fun. Local Moslems, Baha'is, Anglicans, Catholics and Quakers engaged with the community, In2Play and our stilt walker entertained, the children and we were all fed by Taj Mahal, You's Chinese restaurant and Esther's African catering service.

It was delightful to see young and old and a multitude of faiths and ethnicities enjoying each other's cultural riches in a way that encourages friendship and mutual respect. We are lucky to share in peace and well-being, unlike many others in our world, as other stalls and local charities reminded us through their displays and causes. Funds could be raised for Sudanese orphans and 'Mary's Meals' and concerns raised for Gaza, World Development and protection of birds.

Looking forward to Garden Delights in 2015 – have a great summer!

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## WHAT HAVE HINDUS BEEN DOING?

Whether through fasting, worshipping the Shiva Lingam, abstaining from intoxicants, or resolving to behave in a particular manner, many Hindus across the world have been marking Shravan Maas ('the holy month of Shravan'). Recognised by many as the most auspicious month in the Hindu calendar, because of the number of significant and popular festivals taking place within it, a key feature of Shravan Maas is the worship of Lord Shiva, 'the destroyer'.

Known as one of the famed 'Hindu trinity', the qualities exhibited by Lord Shiva, as well as the values represented by his behaviour, clearly demonstrate the priorities of Hindu thought, and the ideals that the Hindu psyche places as the highest. In this time of devotion, piety and celebration, it is important to take some time to understand these behaviours and qualities, and to attempt to use this month as a catalyst for change.

Highly relevant to those of us working with the City, is Lord Shiva's meditative state and his ability to contemplate and consider situations. Those familiar with his exploits will no doubt be aware of his long periods of deep meditation and also be aware of the contemplative nature of the actions of his famous devotees. In a world of such pressure and demand, the ability to take a step back and contemplate would no doubt be much appreciated, and this is only area where Lord Shiva should inspire and guide us.

This special month marks the time when the Samudra Manthan (or 'churning of the ocean') took place and when one of Lord Shiva's most famous acts was exhibited. When the Samudra Manthan was being performed and poison was released, it was Lord Shiva who decided to consume this and store it in his throat to avoid any harm befalling the world. Translating this into our lives, especially in the City, there are doubtless times when we may have to hold our tongues and control our negative thoughts to prevent harm to those around us. It is therefore times like this when we should keep the poison within us and take the time to consider our actions.

Last, but by no means least, Lord Shiva is known as 'the destroyer' and bears the responsibility of removing all that is negative from the world so that truth can prevail. Many of us will in fact be familiar with the stories of Lord Shiva's wrath, be that with the destruction of Kamadeva (who had tried to distract Lord Shiva from his penance) or the destruction and creation of the universe at the end of each cycle, but these events should be explored for their deeper meaning and not just taken at face value. Rather than seeing them as acts of wanton destruction, much like those seen in today's world, Lord Shiva's destructive nature should be taken for what it truly represents: the destruction of the negative and the unnecessary, for the establishment of the new and necessary (not dissimilar to the cycle of death and rebirth).

This is another example of the true beauty of Hindu Dharma, the deep symbolism in each of the acts and events our faith incorporates. In the midst of this holy month, we should take time both to enjoy the festivities, and to understand their deeper significant and personal impact.

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## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE FROM OXFORDSHIRE

A **Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** is a multi-agency team which co-locates safeguarding agencies and their data. It aims to identify risks to vulnerable children and adults,

at the earliest possible stage, and provide a safe and speedy triage to determine the most effective interventions. The Oxfordshire project is seeking to build upon best practice elsewhere in the country.

Oxfordshire MASH will be based at Cowley Police Station starting in September for children's safeguarding referrals and three months later for adult safeguarding referrals. The MASH will include staff from Children's Social Care, Adults Social Care, Early Intervention, the Emergency Duty Team, Thames Valley Police, Oxford Health, and Oxford University Hospitals. There will also be input from other agencies on a 'virtual basis' such as South Central Ambulance Service, Youth Offending Service, Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards and Probation.

Calls to the MASH will be screened by Oxfordshire County Council's Customer Services Centre, which will provide a single front door to children's and adult's services. Calls on open cases and general enquiries will be diverted to the appropriate team. Calls forwarded to the MASH will be assessed by social care staff, who will make recommendations for next steps.

The new telephone number for children's safeguarding referrals will be advertised closer to its start. An online MASH enquiry form is being designed for professionals to email to MASH.

**More details - [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safeguarding-hub](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safeguarding-hub)**

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## **HELPING PEOPLE LEAVING PRISON**

### **NEW LEAF - a project to assist prisoners on release**

Did you know that most short-term offenders leave prison with less than £50 to support them. Many are homeless on release with nowhere adequate to live. In such difficult circumstances there is more chance of an individual reoffending. Access to help and support in the first few hours and days can be crucial. New Leaf mentors prisoners serving less than 12 months who plan to resettle in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire including Milton Keynes. We offer a 'through the gate' collection service, transport and practical support on the release day, and provide a 'Community Pack' of basic essentials in a waterproof bag, to help prevent ill health, maintain personal hygiene and build self esteem and confidence.

Recipients have said: 'A big bonus to me to get anything. It helps'. 'The packs are a very good idea. Everyone needs these essential products when they come out'. 'Great, I wasn't expecting this; it's a big help when I haven't got any money'. 'Fantastic, if I was to buy all this I would only have £20 left'.

How can you help? As harvest time approaches, and our communities come together to give thanks, New Leaf would like to highlight our Community Packs, as a way of giving back to those less fortunate than ourselves. Why not hold a harvest collection or collect items for the packs? If you would like us to come to talk to your congregation about our work please contact:

Lesley - [communitypack@newleafproject.co.uk](mailto:communitypack@newleafproject.co.uk); 07530-725 462

New Leaf Lead Mentor & Community Pack Founder

New Leaf Project, Thames Valley Partnership, Townhill Barn, Dorton Road, Chilton, Aylesbury, Bucks HP18 9NA; [www.newleafproject.co.uk](http://www.newleafproject.co.uk); @NewLeafProject1

New Leaf is part of Thames Valley Partnership, registered charity number 1031545

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **LONDON CITY HINDU SOCIETY**

#### **SEPTEMBER**

**19th** *All Day, Villa Vrindavana Retreat Center & Temple, San Casciano in Val Di Pesa Florence*  
**The Tuscany Mind Body Soul Retreat - Mantra Therapy**

**19th-20th** *7.30pm-9.00pm, Central St Martins, London* **Tamasha Theatre Company's 4 star**  
**'My Name is...'**

**20th** *7.00-11.30pm, JFS School, Kenton Middlesex* **Young Jains Raas Garba Extravanganza**

#### **OCTOBER**

**19th** *7.00-10.00pm, The Cockpit, London* **Hindustani Vocal - The Cockpit**

23rd 7.30-9.30pm, RichMix, London London Daljit Nagra's 'The Retold Ramayana': a live literature show

## DECEMBER

5th-13th 12.00 noon-9.00pm, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry Adventure to Consciousness

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### **HOW CAN RELIGIONS FOSTER PEACE?" - Tuesday 23 September**

7.30pm (refreshments 7.00pm), The Friends' Meeting House, 3 Ward St, Guildford GU1 4LR

There will be at least five speakers from different traditions:

Muslim, Buddhist, Baha'i, Catholic Christian and Quaker. All are welcome.

The Forum is an informal group of people interested in interfaith.

It exists to promote understanding and friendship among people of all faiths and none.

**Information** – 01483-424 257; 01483-415 773; [www.spanglefish.com/gginterfaithforum](http://www.spanglefish.com/gginterfaithforum)

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### **EPSOM MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**

**For Your Peace of Mind Sunday 5th -Saturday 11th October**

This year's theme has a different meaning for each and every one of us. To many of us it means an absence of anxiety or stress, to others it could be not having worries or problems financially, physically, mentally and emotional. We have included the word 'Peace' as a reminder that 2014 marks 100 years since the start of WW1. The week of activities devoted to mental health provides a forum for discussion, sharing and distributing information and answering questions. Activities include workshops, talks, music, drama, dance and film.

The Week was established to promote a better understanding of mental health and to reduce the misunderstanding, fear and stigma which surround it. We work in partnership with local service users, carers, voluntary and statutory organisations and mental health professionals, to offer information to all local groups in the community about mental health issues and the treatments, services and resources which are available. In addition, the Week offers people a chance to explore and discuss issues in more detail and to ask questions of the people who really understand. Although this is a challenging and difficult subject, there is also an opportunity to relax, meet others and participate in enjoyable activities.

**Events timetable** - [www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk/imetable14.html](http://www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk/imetable14.html)

#### **WALKATHON - Saturday 11 October**

As part of Epsom Mental Health Week (EMHW) you are invited to a circular 5-mile walk, taking in the sites of the old Epsom Mental Health Hospitals, and visiting Horton Chapel and the Old Moat Garden Centre. Registration – 9.00am, to start at 9.30am, Lunch - St Barnabas. The walk starts and finishes at St Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom KT19 8HA.

**Register** - during EMHW at St Barnabas; [walkathon.2012@aol.co.uk](mailto:walkathon.2012@aol.co.uk); [www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk/walkathon.html](http://www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk/walkathon.html). The route is subject to change.

Speakers' profiles, photos, much more - [www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk/emhw.html](http://www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk/emhw.html)

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### **WHO CARES - FAITH, CULTURE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

**9.30am-4.30pm, Saturday, 16 October**

**St James's Church Centre, Church Lane, Finchampstead, Berks RG40 4LU**

**Conference details** - visit our website - [www. http://se-faithforum.net/](http://se-faithforum.net/)

**ORGANISED BY SEEFF** (Thames Valley sub region),  
Berkshire Health, and Diocese of Oxford

## ELMBRIDGE MULTI FAITH FORUM ANNUAL GALA EVENING

Saturday 18 October, 6.30 for 7.00pm

The Grenfell Centre, Claremont Fan Court School, Esher

An evening of foods from many cultures, interspersed by performances by local young people of dances, songs and music from across the world. Light refreshments provided.

Donations towards the costs of the food and the hall will be welcome.

**To help us estimate refreshments numbers**, contact

Geoff Morris 01932-868 454; [geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk](mailto:geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk)

Surrey Faith Links [www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk](http://www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk)

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## IS THE UNITED NATIONS STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

Saturday 25 October, 11.00am-12.30pm, Christ Church Gallery, Woking

The next Woking Debate to celebrate UN day, 24 October, marking the anniversary of the UN Charter, 24 October 1947. The debate will be introduced by Neville Grant and Tom Miller.

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## NATIONAL INTERFAITH WEEK IS FROM 16 - 22 NOVEMBER:

Watch out for events in your area during that week

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## THE GREAT WAR: FROM INDIA TO WOKING

Tuesday 4 November-Saturday 29 November (normal opening hours)

Surrey History Centre foyer, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND

More than a million Indian soldiers fought for Britain in WW1. This display, produced by Woking Borough Council and the Shah Jahan Mosque, demonstrates the importance of Woking as both a site of worship and a final resting place for Muslim troops of the British Indian Army.

Discover the history of Woking's Muslim Burial Ground, commissioned in 1915, and see the exciting new plans for this unique memorial. Free.

01483-518 797; [shs@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:shs@surreycc.gov.uk)

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## BETTER CARE TOGETHER - Thursday, 6 November

12.00pm - 4.00pm Princes Park Stadium, Dartford, DA1 1RT

The NHS in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley, and Kent County Council working together to look at how health and care teams join up to provide *better local care*.

One service meeting your needs. [www.dartfordgraveshamswanleyccg.nhs.uk/](http://www.dartfordgraveshamswanleyccg.nhs.uk/)

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## SWIMMING SESSIONS FOR LADIES

Woking Leisure Centre, term time - 7.00-9.00pm Tuesday, 1.30-2.30pm Thursday

Guarantees female only lifeguards. For women from all backgrounds.

**Further information** - Woking Leisure Centre – 01483-771 122

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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### CREATIVE ENGLISH INNOVATION FUND

**Offers funding to** registered charities, including faith and community groups, who want to use innovative methods to teach basic English to non-English speakers.

**The participants should** come away with an increased knowledge of everyday vocabulary and an increased sense of confidence to use conversational English in their daily life in this country.

**Groups must be able to** show how their projects will help grow confidence, integration, and communication. **Preference will be given to** organisations that are seeking to reach Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali communities although applications working with other groups will also be considered.

There is a total funding pot of £140,000. Grants of either £7,500 or £10,000 are available.

**Applicants need to** show a good level of financial sustainability which can be achieved by match funding, other grants and funding streams, or revenue generated from the project itself.

**Eligible projects must** take place in England and: Be person led, seeking to increase the everyday vocabulary of the participants, boost their confidence in conversational English; and facilitate further community engagement; Promote the overall aims, values and objectives of the Creative English Programme but be innovative with how/where the English training is delivered to increase its reach into the community it serves: for this purpose the Creative English Programme may be used as it is or adapted to suit the context and target audience.

Demonstrate sustainability beyond the funded period.

**Preference will be given to** projects that can show that they are sustainable beyond the life of the six-month grant. There will be two funding rounds with application deadlines of

**22 September** and **17 November**.

**Further details** - <http://ce.faiythaction.net/innovate/>

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### OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

**Voluntary Support** [www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/funding.html](http://www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/funding.html)

**Surrey Community Action** [www.surreyca.org.uk/category/funding/](http://www.surreyca.org.uk/category/funding/)

**Surrey Care Trust Crisis Grants** [www.surreycaretrust.co.uk//Crisis-Grants.html](http://www.surreycaretrust.co.uk//Crisis-Grants.html)

**Active Surrey** [www.activesurrey.com/funding](http://www.activesurrey.com/funding)

[www.surreyruralpartnership.org.uk/programmes.php?id\\_prog=10](http://www.surreyruralpartnership.org.uk/programmes.php?id_prog=10)

#### **Councillors' Allocations**

Every county councillor in Surrey (and many other LAs) has a personal 'members' allocation' of over £8000 which can be granted to local community organisations to support local projects and events. To find out whether your group is eligible to apply for a member's allocation grant and how to go about this, visit Surrey County Council's Local Committee webpages [www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/decision-making/local-committees](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/decision-making/local-committees)

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## 2014 INTERFAITH CALENDAR AND INFORMATION

### SEPTEMBER

**22 September EQUINOX-MABON** *Wicca/Pagan* Northern hemisphere Wicca observance of the autumnal equinox when day and night are of equal length. A harvest festival time.

**24-26 September** (Sundown to Sundown) **ROSH HASHANAH** *Jewish* New Year: a time of introspection, abstinence, prayer and penitence. The story of Abraham is read, the ram's horn is sounded, and special foods are prepared and shared.

**27 September MESKEL** *Ethiopian Orthodox Christian* Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Christian commemoration of the discovery of the True Cross by Queen Eleni (St Helena) in the 4th century AD

**29 September ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS** *Christian* Commemoration of the holy, spiritual, heavenly beings created to glorify and serve God. This feast remembers the dedication of the Church of St Michael and all Angels, Mount Gargano in Apulia, Italy. Orthodox Christian celebrate this feast on 8 November

**29 September-3 October NAVARATRI** *Hindu* Festival of the divine mother honouring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. Also observed as a celebration recalling the days of Lord Krishna.

## OCTOBER

- 3 October WAQF AL ARAFA (HAJJ DAY) *Islam*** Day during Hajj when pilgrims pray for forgiveness and mercy.
- 4 October YOM KIPPUR *Jewish*** Day of Atonement. This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting and ceremonial repentance.
- 4 October ST FRANCIS *Christian*** Francis was the headstrong son of a rich family from Assisi, who after a period of remorse for his former way of life founded the order of friars which now bears his name. He died in 1226. He is remembered particularly for his love of the natural world.
- 4 October DASARA *Hindu*** Celebration of victory and valour. Lord Rama is remembered as winning a victory over evil.
- 4-7 October EID AL ADHA *Islam*** Festival of Sacrifice. Beginning on the day after Arafa, (the most important day in Hajj ritual), a 3-day festival recalling Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah.
- 9-15 SUKKOT *Jewish*** Feast of Tabernacles which celebrates the harvest and the protection of the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness dwelling in tents. Temporary dwelling places have leaves for a roof so the sky can be seen. In temperate climates, night is spent in the booth.
- 16 October SHEMINI ATZERET *Jewish*** Completion of the annual cycle of reading of the Torah (first 5 books of the Hebrew Scriptures, The Law).
- 17 October SIMCHAT TORAH *Jewish*** Day to celebrate the reading of the Law. Synagogue services involve readings, processions and blessing of the children.
- 20 October BIRTH OF THE BÁB *Baha'i*** Honouring of the founder of the Babi religion, forerunner to Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i faith.
- 20 October GRANTH SAHIB *Sikh*** Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib remembrance of the eternal installation of the holy books.
- 23 October DIWALI *Hindu, Jains, Sikhs*** The festival of lights, most popular of all the festivals from South Asia. It is an occasion for celebrations by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs. For Sikhs, Diwali is particularly important because it celebrates the 1619 release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, and 52 other princes with him.
- 31 October HALLOWE'EN (All Hallows' Eve) *Christian*** Night before All Saints' Day (All Hallows' Day), origins dating back over 2000 years to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. Celebrated as a Christian festival by the 8th century.
- 31 October SAMHAIN (Hallowe'en) ('sow'inn') *Pagan*** Marks the Feast of the Dead. Many Pagans also celebrate it as the old Celtic New Year. Some mark this at Imbolc (2 February, One of 4 Celtic 'Fire Festivals', celebrates first signs of Spring).

## NOVEMBER

- 1 November ALL SAINTS' DAY (All Hallows')** *Christian* Celebration of all saints, known and unknown, of the Christian church. *Orthodox Christians* celebrate it on the Sunday after Pentecost.
- 2 November CORONATION OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I *Rastafari*** Emperor of Ethiopia. Rastas believe Haile Selassie is God, and that members of the black community living in exile will return to Africa.
- ALL SOULS' DAY *Christian*** Christians remember and pray for the souls of people who have died.
- 3 November ASHURA *Muslim*** Holy day - 10th of the Islamic month, Muharram. Shi'ite Muslims: major commemoration, marking the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Hussein.
- 6 November BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK (Lunar Calendar) *Sikh*** Some celebrate festival on the date fixed in the Nanakshahi calendar: 14 April
- 11 November ARMISTICE DAY** Marks end of WW1 1918 on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. At 11.00am people in the UK keep 2 minutes silence to remember those who gave their lives in past conflicts.
- 12 November BIRTH OF BAHA'U'LLAH *Baha'i*** Celebrates the 1817 birth of the founder of the Baha'i faith.

- 15 November SHICHIGOSAN ('7-5-3')** *Shinto* Festival to give thanks for children of 3,5, and 7. Celebrated on nearest weekend to allow working parents to take part.
- 23 November NIINAMESEI** *Shinto* Labour Thanksgiving Day, national holiday: Japan, originally a harvest festival.
- 24 November MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR (Nanakshahi calendar)** *Sikh* Guru Tegh Bahadur, ninth Sikh Guru, is honoured as champion of religious freedom; executed, 1675, for refusing to convert to Islam.
- 26 November DAY OF THE COVENANT** *Baha'i* Minor festival celebrating covenant of Baha'u'llah. Baha'is also mark life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on this day.
- 28 November ASCENSION OF ABDU'L-BAHA** *Baha'i* Marks death of son of Baha'u'lláh. This is a minor holy day and work is not suspended.
- 30 November ST ANDREW'S DAY** *Christian* St Andrew, brother of St Peter and originally a fisherman, became the first Apostle. He is patron saint of Scotland, Greece, Romania, Russia. Scotland's flag is Cross of St. Andrew.
- ADVENT SUNDAY** *Christian* Church year begins on Sunday closest to 30 November. Advent, with 4 Sundays, is season preparing for Christmas. *Orthodox Christians* Season of fasting preparing for Christmas, begins on 16 November.

## DECEMBER

- 8 December 2014 BODHI DAY** *Buddhist* Buddhism is founded on sage Gautama Buddha's teaching. Some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India. Kept, Chinese calendar: 8th day of 12th lunar month, Japan: 8 December.
- 8 December FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** *Christian* Roman Catholic Christians celebrate remember Mary's conception as being without sin, 'immaculate'.
- 9 December MEETING OF JOACHIM AND ANNA** *Orthodox Christian* Feast celebrates the conception of Mary, Jesus mother, Mother of God; seen as a celebration of married life as shown by Mary's parents, and Mary's normal birth within a loving relationship.
- 13 December ST LUCY'S DAY** *Christian* Feast of St Lucy is marked by many Christians, including members of the Lutheran Church.
- 16 December sunset-24 December nightfall HANUKKAH** *Jewish* Festival of Lights marking the restoration of the temple by the Maccabees in 164 BCE. Celebrated for eight nights and days, starts on 25th day of Jewish month of Kislev (falls sometime late November-late December).
- 21 December WINTER SOLSTICE - YULE** *Pagan* When the sun child is reborn, an image of the return of all new life born through the love of the Gods. In the Northern Tradition Yule is regarded as the New Year.
- 24 December CHRISTMAS EVE** *Christian* Day before Christmas Day. *Orthodox Christians* Strict fast day.
- 25 December CHRISTMAS DAY** *Christian* Most UK Christians celebrate birth of Jesus Christ.
- 26 December ST STEPHEN'S DAY** *Christian* Celebrate St Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

## JANUARY

- 1 January CIRCUMCISION** *Christian* Marks the day when Jesus was circumcised.
- 1 January FESTIVAL OF ST BASIL THE GREAT** *Christian* One of the great teachers of the early Church.
- 1 January OSHOGATSU (OR SHOGATSU)** *Shinto* New Year, one of most popular occasions for shrine visits.
- 3 January MILAD UN NABI (Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad)** *Muslim* Shia Muslims celebrate this on 8 January. Some Muslims regard celebrating the birthday doing so as a religious innovation.
- 5 January BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH (Nanakshahi calendar)** *Sikh* Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) 10th and last of Sikh Gurus. He instituted the 'Five Ks' (symbols and articles of faith) and established the Order of the Khalsa.
- 6 January Christmas Day** *Armenian Orthodox Christian* Celebrate birth of Christ. Armenians in the Holy Land celebrate Christmas on 19 January.
- 6 January Epiphany** *Christian* Celebrates visit of the wise men (magi) to the infant Jesus. (Some Christians celebrate this on 1 January)

- 6 January Theophany** *Orthodox Christian* Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.
- 7 January CHRISTMAS DAY** *Slavic and pre-Chalcedonian Orthodox Christians* Christmas, 25 December, by Julian Calendar (church dates become 13 days later civil dates), which they retain for liturgical dates. So Christmas is *still kept* as 25 December but that church date becomes on civil date 7 January.
- 8 Milad un Nabi** *Shia Muslim* Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Sunni Muslims celebrate this 3 January.
- 11 January 2014 Baptism of the Lord** *Christian* Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by St John the Baptist. Kept on first Sunday after Epiphany. Orthodox Christians: see 6 January.
- 14 January Makar Sankranti** *Hindu* One of most important festivals of Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into northern hemisphere.
- 15 January Seijin Shiki (Adults' Day)** *Shinto* Japanese who have reached legal adulthood (20 in Japan) in previous year attend a shrine to give thanks.
- 18 January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (start)** *Christian* First celebrated 1908. Runs from 18-25 January. 18th is a feast of St Peter and 25th is a feast of St Paul.
- 25 January St Paul's Day** *Christian* Celebration of St Paul's conversion on road to Damascus.
- 28 January St Thomas Aquinas** *Christian* Teacher of the Church, patron saint of students and theologians.
- 30 January Holy Ecumenical Teachers Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom** *Orthodox Christian* Remembering three important teachers and theologians of the Church; day of prayer for all involved in education, both teachers and students.
- 31 January Birthday of Guru Har Rai (Nanakshahi calendar)** *Sikh* Guru Har Rai (1630-1661) was 7th of Sikh Gurus.

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## NEXT ISSUE - MID-JANUARY 2015

**Events or reports you would like included** - please send them to me **before 25 December**.

**Short explanation of a festival** – I am happy to be sent these.

**For reasons of space or balance** articles may be edited. If you would like to see an edited version of what you send, please let me know.

Bede Gerrard

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## Late extra

**LOVELL (INTERFAITH) LECTURE Tuesday 7 October, 6.30pm, Winchester Cathedral**

***Jesus the Christ in a World of Faiths* Speaker:** Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Frost, Bishop of Southampton.

How can the Christian community make a positive and peaceable contribution to a world of faiths while remaining true to the proclamation of Jesus?

**6.15pm**, Cathedral North Transept - vegetarian buffet reception: an opportunity to share hospitality together.

**7.00pm**, Cathedral Nave – Lecture, followed by a chance to ask questions. Bp Jonathan was awarded the degree of Doctor of the University of Surrey for his work in promoting inter-religious dialogue and religious literacy in Universities. Bp Jonathan has been a member of the National Advisory Board of the Three Faiths Forum.

**All are welcome to attend.** There is no charge for the Lecture, and no requirement to pre-book.

**More information** - please contact [canons.pa@winchester-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:canons.pa@winchester-cathedral.org.uk); 01962-857 242.