



Love of God & Love of The Neighbour  
Or Love of The Good & Love of The Neighbour

## World Interfaith Harmony Week – Toronto Steering Committee

### 2017 Theme – Reach Out

Since 2013, the Toronto Steering Committee for World Interfaith Harmony Week has been selecting annual themes that fulfill our Vision, Mission and Values.

**Vision** – We are committed to creating a world characterized by peace, social justice and a sustainable environment by cooperating with efforts around the world to bring about interfaith cooperation and intercultural dialogue.

**Mission** – To create and widen awareness of World Interfaith Harmony Week within the GTA, and to help plan, conceptualize, facilitate and coordinate its events.

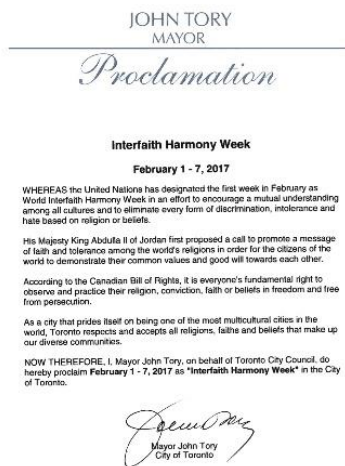
**Values** – We respect all faiths and beliefs and peoples of goodwill, and believe there is great value in knowing each other and working together.

Canadians were shocked by the attack on worshippers at the [Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec](#) on January 29<sup>th</sup>. While expressing our grief and offering support to the Muslim community, we also recognized just how important it is to *Reach Out* to each other. Diverse groups across the City accepted our invitation to learn, share and collaborate while bringing together people of faith and goodwill.

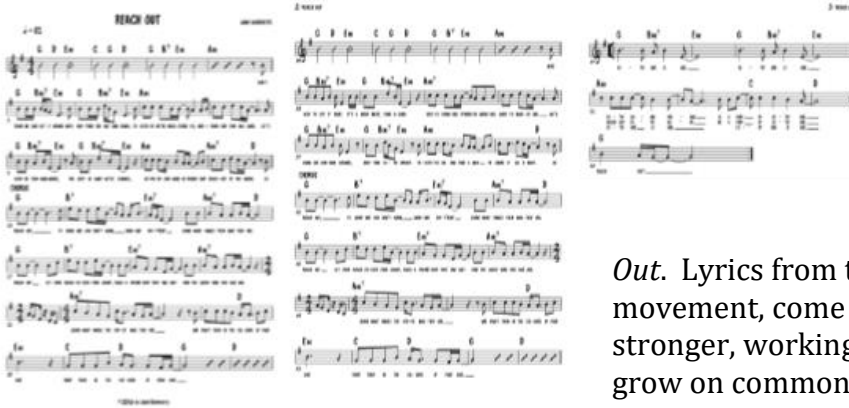
For the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row, The City of Toronto officially recognized World Interfaith Harmony Week. Mayor John Tory stated that “Toronto respects and accepts all religions, faiths and beliefs that make up our diverse communities”.

Yasmin Ratansi, Member of Parliament, Don Valley East, and a founding member of our Steering Committee, recognized World Interfaith Harmony Week in Parliament.

[click on images throughout this report]

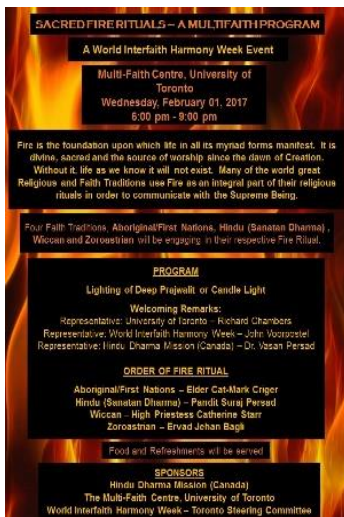


## Wednesday, February 1



**New Song, *Reach Out*, is Launched** No Fixed Address, the St. Philips Lutheran Church House Band from Etobicoke, launched an original song and video entitled *Reach*

*Out*. Lyrics from the song include "It's a movement, come along, voices growing stronger, working hard to make us one. We'll grow on common ground..." With musical contributions from Halifax, Nova Scotia and St. Petersburg, Florida, the song became an international collaboration.



**Sacred Fire Ritual – A Multifaith Program** Many religions and faith traditions use fire as an integral part of their rituals. Four faith traditions – Aboriginal/First Nations, Hindu (Sanatan Dharma), Wiccan and Zoroastrian shared aspects of their Sacred Fire ceremonies with guests at the University of Toronto’s Multi-Faith Centre. One of the themes that emerged during the evening was the importance of teaching these rituals from one generation to the next.



Left: Pandit Suraj Persad begins the Hindu fire ritual with his grandchildren. Right: Participants are invited to make offerings to the fire.

Left: Catherine Starr, Wiccan High Priestess, dedicated her fire ritual to Goddess Brigid. Middle: Ervad Nozer Kotwal & Ervad Jehan Bagli making offerings to the Zoroastrian fire ritual. Right: Aboriginal Elder Cat-Mark Criger shared stories of the importance of fire to Indigenous peoples.



## Thursday, February 2

*Mysticism then and now*  
**Judaism, Hinduism & Islam**  
*in Word & Song*

Aviva Chernick  
 Jewish Devotional Singer & Musician

Rabbi Tina Greenberg  
 Congregation Darchei Noam

Dr. Rudheendranath Doobay  
 Voice of the Vedic Cultural Sabha

Vishnu Mandir Choir

Azim Shamshiev  
 Intercultural Dialogue Institute GTA

Murat Kucuk  
 Traditional Sufi Instrumentalist

Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017  
 8:45 Registration  
 7:15 Program begins

**CONGREGATION DARCHEI NOAM**

864 Sheppard Ave. W.  
 North York, ON, M2N 2T5  
 info@darcheinom.ca

Pre-registration is encouraged: <http://www.darcheinom.ca/event/mysticism> | Phone: (416) 633 4783

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

WISDOM MANDIR

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE INSTITUTE

Darchei Noam  
 Jewish Devotional Synagogue  
 קהילת דרכי נועם

**Mysticism Then and Now** Throughout the ages and across cultures, many people have felt a deeper sense of reality and have sought to immerse themselves in what they experience as the absolute or the divine. Over 200 guests enjoyed an evening of interfaith, experiential exploration of mysticism through word, song and music. Guests learned about beliefs and practices involved in the mystical journey in Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.



Aviva Chernick, Jewish Devotional Singer

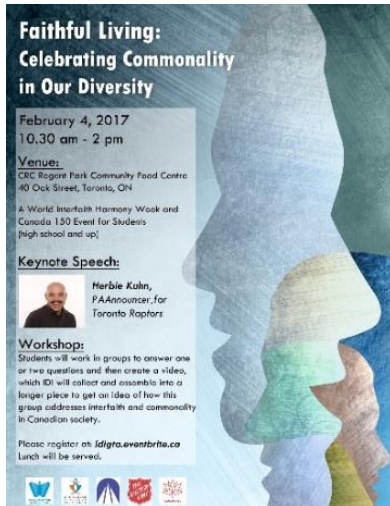


The Vishnu Mandir Choir



Murat Kucuk, Selman Ayduz & Abdullah Ayyildiz with Whirling Dervish, Farzad Attarjafari

## Saturday, February 4




**Faithful Living:  
Celebrating Commonality  
in Our Diversity**

February 4, 2017  
10:30 am - 2 pm

**Venue:**  
CRC Regent Park Community Food Centre  
40 Oak Street, Toronto, ON


A World Interfaith Harmony Week and  
Canada 150 Event for Students  
(high school and up)

**Keynote Speech:**

 **Herbie Kuhn,**  
FA Announcer for  
Toronto Raptors

**Workshop:**  
Students will work in groups to answer one  
or two questions and then create a video,  
which IRI will collect and assemble into a  
larger piece to get an idea of how this  
group addresses interfaith and commonality  
in Canadian society.

Please register on [idigital.eventbrite.ca](http://idigital.eventbrite.ca)  
Lunch will be served.



### Faithful Living: Celebrating Commonality in Our Diversity

This youth focused event explored what faith meant to each person and how their experience of it differed from their home of origin to living in Toronto. They also discussed the need for young people to better understand their faith even if they themselves were not living in a faithful way. A video is currently in production and will be posted online soon.



**LIVE MUSIC**

**3rd Annual Evening of  
Interfaith Performing Arts**

Saturday February 4  
Doors open 6:30 pm  
\$5 per person / family

Noor Cultural Centre  
123 Wynford Drive  
North York





**An Evening of Interfaith Performing Arts** For the third year, the Toronto Steering Committee presented this concert with performances ranging from a contemporary dance piece titled *Wrestling* inspired by a Christian song called *Prayer*; [Sufi/Qawali songs in praise of the creator](#); Japanese taiko drumming, a symbol of community and bringing people together; the [Humanness Song](#); Kathak, a North Indian Classical Dance and a Muslim musician singing original Canadian folksongs.



Some of the performers who generously donated their time and talent to celebrate peace and harmony.

Top row: Baha'i Chorale, Japanese Taiko drummers, No Fixed Address

Bottom row: Munni & Afzal Subhani, Brother Shabaz, Kathak Bandi, The Two Vivians

Sunday, February 5



**Words with Gods** Presented by [WACC - Global](#) and the [International Diaspora Film Festival](#), this public screening included a panel discussion. The film is a series of nine beautifully captured short films each with the theme of faith and spirituality and the individual connection with the divine.

The panel discussion was moderated by Philip Lee - Writer, Editor and Director of Programs at WACC with panelists Tracey Erin Smith - Founder of SoulOTheater Company, Shahram Tabe - Director of the International Diaspora Film Festival and Areej Rashid - Development Coordinator at WACC and Masters Student at the University of Toronto's Muslim Chaplaincy Program.

Sri Chinmoy Meditation Center  
1085 Bathurst Street Toronto On P1 547-344-0935 e-mail shivaramgi@yahoo.com

World Interfaith Harmony Week  
**Invocation of Peace**  
**Sunday February 5, 2017**  
**2.00 pm at Annapurna**

invitation and attachment to all TAIC members  
**The program is open to the  
Public**

Sri Chinmoy Meditation Centre hosts an event during  
the World Interfaith Harmony Week on  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2017, 2.00 PM AT ANNAPURNA**  
**1085 BATHURST STREET (SOUTH OF DUPONT STREET).**

**Invocation of Peace** A multi-faith program of prayers, chants, singing and other traditional faith based presentations.

## Monday, February 6

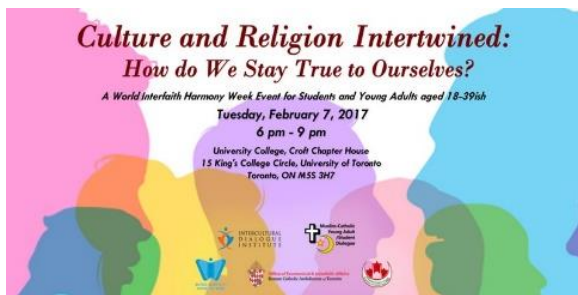


**Spiritual Dialogue Circle** For the fourth consecutive year, this multi-faith Circle was proud to participate in World Interfaith Harmony Week. Since 2009, the Circle has been encouraging a culture of encounter and is an excellent opportunity to engage with Toronto's diverse communities. On this occasion, participants engaged in respectful dialogue exploring what it means to *Reach Out* to each other on a day-to-day basis.



Some of the participants representing Agnostic, Baha'i, Christian, Humanist, Interfaith, Spiritually Independent and Unitarian communities.

## Tuesday, February 7



### **Culture and Religion Intertwined: How do we Stay True to Ourselves?**

An "experts" panel explored *How do Culture and Religion influence and interact with each other (with respect to the Jewish, Catholic and Islamic faith traditions)?* A "young adult" panel examined *How do we share the joys and overcome the challenges that arise from the*

*influences and interactions between culture and religion? How do we continue to live out our faiths to the fullest, be ourselves, and grow as persons of faith?*

In [Salt+Light Media's article](#), Sebastian Gomes reported "A major point of emphasis in the discussion was the positive and unique pluralist reality that exists in Canada. Because of its size relative to its tiny population, its history of complementarity between French and English cultures, its openness to immigrants, and its geographic location, Nasir called it "one of the last outposts of real multiculturalism in the world.""

## Standing in Solidarity with the Canadian Muslim Community



In response to the attack on worshippers at the [Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec](#) on January 29<sup>th</sup>, faith communities came together to stand in solidarity with our Canadian Muslim community. Several vigils were held during World Interfaith Harmony Week demonstrating that we stand shoulder to shoulder with the Muslim community against extremism. As people of faith and goodwill, we recommit ourselves to doing our part to promote respect, harmony and compassion among all cultures and faiths.

Friday, February 3: **Prayers for Peace**

[Islington United Church](#) and the [Arab Community Centre of Toronto](#) (ACCT) hosted a service in remembrance of those killed and injured.

Saturday, February 4: **Memorial Service for the Victims of the Quebec City Mosque Massacre**

Community leaders, partners and elected officials joined in this memorial program hosted by [TARIQ Islamic Centre](#).



Sunday, February 5: **A Gathering in Solidarity with the Muslim Community**

Hosted by Mosaic Interfaith which was founded in 1980 and is made up of congregations representing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.



Sunday, February 5: **UN Interfaith Harmony Week Sunday Service**

The Church of Scientology hosted this service that included a special tribute for the St. Foy, Quebec victims and families as well as guest speaker Imam Habeeb Alli.



Monday, February 6: **Multi-Faith Vigil for Healing and Peace**

Faith traditions came together to pray for the victims and families of Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec. Hosted by [Metropolitan United Church](#) and Toronto Area Interfaith Council (TAIC).

As we look toward the future, the ideals and principles of World Interfaith Harmony Week must spread beyond the first week of February. We must continuously *Reach Out* to diverse communities throughout the year to collaborate, learn and actively stand for a world characterized by peace, social justice and a sustainable environment.

In peace, harmony and respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Singh', written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Reverend Michelle Singh, Interfaith Minister, [michelle@michellesingh.com](mailto:michelle@michellesingh.com)  
Co-Chair, Toronto Steering Committee, World Interfaith Harmony Week

John Voorpostel | Yasmin Ratansi | Pastor Tuula van Gaasbeek | Sid Ikeda |  
Pandit Suraj Persad | Daniel Schild | Jackie Kovacks | Tim Hackborn |

