



FESTIVAL of FAITHS
CENTER for INTERFAITH RELATIONS

World Interfaith Harmony Week EVENT REPORT

Event: 2014 Festival of Faiths
Title: *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*
Date: May 13 – 18, 2014
Location: Louisville, Kentucky USA

Many Faiths. One Heart. Common Action.

The Center for Interfaith Relations is honored to submit for consideration of the 2015 World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize, the 2014 Festival of Faiths, *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*. Included in this report are background information on the Center for Interfaith Relations and the Festival of Faiths, as well as specific highlights and impacts from the 2014 festival. We have also included supporting materials such as videos, photos, festival print materials and testimonials.

Background: *Center for Interfaith Relations and Festival of Faiths*

The Center for Interfaith Relations (CIR) is a nonsectarian 501(c)(3) organization based in Louisville, Kentucky and dedicated to promoting and supporting interfaith understanding, cooperation and action. Louisville, Kentucky is a community rich in cultural and religious diversity, including members of the Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Indigenous and Baha'i faith traditions. CIR's signature program is the annual Festival of Faiths, celebrating twenty years in 2015. The festival is a five-day event that raises awareness around the importance of breaking down spiritual, cultural, economic and political barriers to address issues of common concern throughout the local community and in relation to the world. The mission of the Festival of Faiths is to celebrate our diversity, express gratitude for our unity, and strengthen the role of faith in society through common action.

2014 Festival of Faiths: *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*

The 2014 Festival of Faiths, *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*, explored the sacred and interconnected relationships that we have with ourselves, each other and all life on earth. The festival took place May 13 through 18 at Actors Theatre of Louisville.

The 2014 Festival of Faiths began with an Opening Interfaith Prayer Service titled *A Call to Prayer*. Nearly four hundred people gathered to celebrate and honor the diversity of Louisville's rich faith traditions. The interfaith service was held at Louisville's historic Cathedral of the Assumption. To witness and experience the message of love, harmony and unity expressed through our programming, please take a moment to view a short video compilation of the [opening service](#).

The following are impacts and highlights from *Sacred Earth Sacred Self*:

- The May 2014 Festival of Faiths sold approximately 4,000 tickets.
- The festival featured internationally renowned scholars, faith leaders, and leadership from organizations actively engaged in efforts to address some of our world's most critical environmental issues (See 2014 Festival Catalogue for speaker list and bios).
- The festival was offered live through high-definition internet streaming allowing us to double our audience over the course of the week, and expanding our reach, real-time, to include a global audience.
- Over the last six months, the festival's YouTube channel has received over 125,000 views with audiences in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands. The average video viewing session was 16 minutes.
- The 2014 Festival of Faiths was a zero-waste event, collecting and diverting 875 pounds of compostable materials and 225 pounds of recyclable material from the landfill (see attached infographic).
- CIR transitioned to a 100% solar-powered, carbon-free web hosting company.
- All Festival publications and materials were printed on 100% post-consumer waste, 100% recycled, processed chlorine-free paper, saving 71 million BTU's of energy, 38,744 gallons of water, 3,899 lbs of solid waste, 22,846 lbs of CO2 and 23 tons of wood compared with 2013 (see attached infographic).
- CIR hosted meals and receptions during the Festival featuring 100% locally sourced food.
- CIR initiatives garnered interest from local, national and international media outlets with more than 30 instances of festival news in regional, national and international media outlets.

2015 Festival of Faiths: *Sacred Journeys and the Legacy of Thomas Merton*

The Center for Interfaith Relations is hosting our twentieth annual Festival of Faiths, May 12 – 17, 2015. The theme of the 2015 Festival of Faiths is *Sacred Journeys and the Legacy of Thomas Merton*. Thomas Merton (1915 – 1968) – poet, hermit, author, activist and interfaith pioneer – continues to teach and inspire millions who are embarking on their own spiritual journeys. Merton's legacy informs the vision of the Center for Interfaith Relations and guides our efforts to promote and support interfaith understanding, cooperation and action on a local and global level. *Sacred Journeys* is a celebration inspired by the life and legacy of Thomas Merton. This five-day event will include music, spoken word poetry, film, theatre, photography and dialogue with internationally renowned spiritual leaders, teachers and practitioners.

On January 31, 2015, the Center for Interfaith Relations hosted a special interfaith event to announce the 2015 Festival of Faiths theme, and honor the 100th anniversary of Thomas Merton's birth. The event was free and open to the public and featured a screening of Morgan Atkinson's new film, *The Many Storeys and Last Days of Thomas Merton*, as well as a press event with community, civic and faith leaders. Nearly a

thousand people attended the event held at the Brown Theatre in Louisville, Kentucky to celebrate the life and legacy of Thomas Merton. For more information on the 2015 Festival of Faiths, please visit our website, www.festivaloffaiths.org.

Supporting Materials:

Websites:

- [Center for Interfaith Relations](http://www.centerforinterfaithrelations.org) (www.centerforinterfaithrelations.org)
- [Festival of Faiths](http://www.festivaloffaiths.org) (www.festivaloffaiths.org)

Video and Photo Links:

- [2014 Festival of Faiths Interfaith Prayer Service: Call to Prayer](#) (highlights video)
- [2014 Festival of Faiths Video](#) (Highlights video)
- [2014 Festival of Faiths Online Photo Gallery](#)
- [Festival of Faiths YouTube Channel](#)
- [Thomas Merton Centenary Celebration – January 31, 2015 Online Photo Gallery](#)

Festival Resources:

- 2014 Festival of Faiths Catalogue (PDF Attachment)
- 2014 Festival of Faiths Environmental Infographic (PDF Attachment)

Testimonials:

- Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, Religions for Peace (PDF Attachment)
- [2014 Festival of Faiths Press](#)