



**INTERFAITH  
PATHS TO PEACE**  
*Together, working for peace*

## ***World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert***

February 6, 2016

Saint Paul United Methodist Church  
Louisville, Kentucky

### **Short Description**

An inter-religious and intercultural music and dialogue concert to promote global unity and peace, dedicated to local refugees.

### **Event Description**

For the 2016 World Interfaith Harmony Week, Interfaith Paths to Peace hosted its inaugural World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert in honor of Louisville's refugee community on February 6, 2016. This inaugural event promoted global peace and unity through an evening of inter-religious and intercultural music and dialogue. This event had an attendance of nearly 300 individuals from a variety of religious, socio-economic, and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

The World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert was led by the renowned Louisville-based jazz pianist and community peacemaker Harry Pickens and featured a diverse array of authentic music from eight different religions. Featured musicians included Tibetan Buddhist Monks from the Drepung Gomang Center for Engaging Compassion, Syrian Musician Sipan Mzorie, Cantor David Lipp from the Congregation Adath Jeshurun, Sunder Iyer of the Hindu Temple of Kentucky, Persian Rumi Singer Massoud Farokhi Louie, Classical Pianist Nada Loutfi – a Lebanese-Hungarian Christian, Baha'i Musician Judy Parsley, and Soprano Victoria Gaar.

Interfaith Paths to Peace partnered with 12 organizations for this event, including Kentucky Refugee Ministries, the University of Louisville, the Iroquois Free Public Library, American Turkish Friendship Association, Habitat for Humanity, and Bellarmine University. Notably, the event was housed at St. Paul United Methodist Church, marking this event as the first partnership with a Methodist congregation. This collaboration will continue next year as St. Paul's has offered to host this event again in 2017.

The General Assembly established World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith; so too did the Interfaith Paths to Peace's World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert seek to create an evening of symbolic and literal harmony in our community. By bringing together members of all different faiths, this concert was a celebration and a testament to the power of music and dialogue to foster harmony, cooperation, and understanding. From the musicians on stage to the community in attendance, this event demonstrated that the remedy for the violence and hate justified through religion must and will come from the world's religions themselves.

Demonstrating our commitment to nurturing a culture of peace, Interfaith Paths to Peace extended an invitation to all local refugees and their families to attend this concert. This year, we were excited to welcome 45 refugees with diverse nationalities including Somalia, Iraq, Syria, and Burma. These special guests were able to attend the concert free of charge

and were given special recognition during the concert.

Given the current political and social climate in the United States, in which many states are refusing to admit refugees out of fear and ignorance, we view it as critically important that the new refugees feel that our community is more than just a refuge. Rather, we hope they feel that Louisville is a home in which they can begin a new life of peace and harmony. In dedicating the inaugural World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert to the refugees in our community, we were able to affirm that religion holds the potential to be the foundation for facilitating world peace.

The World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert concluded with an originally composed song by Harry Pickens entitled "We Are One America." Pickens wrote this song the day after 9/11 in order to foster unity, peace, and love in our nation and our world. The room was invited to stand and sing this song with the Baptist Karen Youth Choir. This choir was composed of 33 youth refugees from Burma, half were born in refugee camps in Thailand. Together the room joined in harmony of heart, intention, and presence saying:

*We are one America  
Each life now intertwined  
You and I, America*

*No more by fear confined  
Let us now fulfill the promise that the time for war shall cease  
Joining every heart, America  
May we lead this world to peace*

With the words of love and peace on their lips and hearts, the attendees of the World Interfaith Harmony Peace Concert left the event with the charge to carry the peace torch and to spread the message of interfaith harmony, cooperation for peace and goodwill in to their churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship.

Click on the following link to view media coverage of the event:  
<http://www.wave3.com/story/31159699/music-faiths-celebrated>

Event brochure included here:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1v4fepb2c4bbbqg/Concert%20Program%202016.pdf?dl=0>

### **About Interfaith Paths to Peace**

Established in 1996 in Louisville Kentucky, USA, the non-profit NGO Interfaith Paths to Peace has been serving the community for two decades with a mission of promoting interfaith understanding and peacemaking. We do so through three key three paths: Annual Series Programs, Community Peacemaking Programs, and Educational Programs. Interfaith Paths to Peace partners with over 200 organizations at local, national and international levels, with recent partnerships with the Tehran Pace Museum and the Hiroshima Peace Museum. In the Louisville and Southern Indiana, we reach over 250 thousand people annually through more than 20 weekly, monthly, and quarterly events. To learn more about Interfaith Paths to Peace and our mission of bringing our community together by promoting interfaith understanding and peacemaking, visit:  
[www.paths2peace.org](http://www.paths2peace.org).

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