



Interfaith Harmony Halifax

Love of the Good & Love of the Neighbour



Halifax, CANADA Report

2016 Theme: Peace and Friendship

2016 was the third year for Halifax to celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week. We are happy to see the growth in this initiative, as each year relationships, sponsorships, events, and other elements expand and deepen, including the following in 2016:

- Proclamations from both the [City of Halifax](#) and [Province of Nova Scotia](#) to annually promote and celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week.
- Over 30 '[Declarations of Interfaith Peace and Friendship](#)' from local, provincial, national and international organizations.
- Increase of five new sponsors, bringing our total number to 12.



Hosts of Sacred Spaces gather to share and learn

In addition, we were delighted to deepen our relationships with 10 faith communities by holding a meeting with their representatives in October 2015. The purpose of the meeting was for education and networking, specifically to:

- Raise awareness of WIHW, and how it is celebrated locally and worldwide
- Explore together how to become better hosts to those visiting our sacred spaces during World Interfaith Harmony Week.

Who is Interfaith Harmony Halifax?

A Halifax team whose purpose is to promote the vision of WIHW. We represent diverse community partners, cultures, ages, skills and abilities, along with diverse faiths and good will. The team meets monthly throughout the year to plan, de-brief, report, envision, deepen and expand. This year, along with planning for WIHW 2016, we clarified our name and purpose, developed a new website, and worked to strengthen our team and community network.

Elements of 2016:

1. [Interfaith Engagement Certificate Program](#)
2. [Meeting Our Neighbours: Visits to Sacred Spaces](#)
3. [Celebration of Interfaith Harmony](#)
4. [Proclamation of World Interfaith Harmony Week from the Province of Nova Scotia](#) – *NEW in 2016*
5. [Proclamation of World Interfaith Harmony Week from the City of Halifax](#) – *NEW in 2016*
6. [Declarations of Interfaith Peace and Friendship](#) (over 30 to date) – *NEW in 2016*
Including, [Hon. Geoff Regan Speaker The House of Commons, Parliament of Canada](#) – *NEW in 2016*

1. Interfaith Engagement Certificate Program



Participants of the Interfaith Engagement Program

An intensive week-long experiential engagement with the people, places, and practices of world religions. This year 35 people participated from government, health, education, immigration services, and religion. Along with diverse cultures and ages, the participants represent a diverse range of religious, spiritual, and secular beliefs. To receive a certificate, they are required to participate in a session before and after

WIHW; visit at least three out of 12 'sacred spaces', plus one interfaith celebration; keep a reflective journal during the week and share learning with others

2. Meeting Our Neighbours: Visits to Sacred Spaces



Opportunities to visit sacred spaces in Halifax to observe, meet, and engage with diverse faith communities. The following 11 communities participated: Aboriginal, Baha'i, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh and Unitarian Universalist. During the visits, guests were warmly welcomed, received an introduction to WIHW, participated in a spiritual practice traditional to that community, and then shared in a time of socializing and refreshments.

3. Celebration of Interfaith Harmony

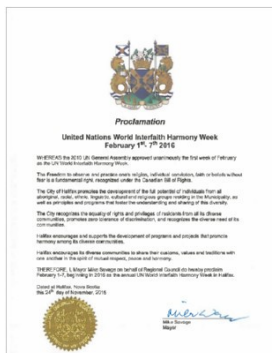


Representatives from 11 Faith Groups

Bringing together approximately 200 people from diverse faiths and good will, we celebrated 'peace and friendship' through song, music, prayers, images, chants, spoken word, proclamations and declarations, as well as socializing, refreshments and displays. A highlight was to have the Mount President, Mayor of Halifax, Deputy Premier of Nova Scotia present, along with other dignitaries. Another highlight was to have representatives from all eleven communities who hosted 'Visits to Sacred Spaces' participate as we all read the 'declaration of interfaith peace and friendship'. The 'Wall of Declarations', displayed for the first time, was of special interest to all gathered.

4+5. Proclamation of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week **NEW**

The Mayor of [Halifax and City Council](#) were invited to proclaim the first week of February as the annual World Interfaith Harmony Week in Halifax. They immediately agreed and offered further support by participating in the Celebration of Interfaith Harmony. In addition, we were delighted the Premier of the [Province of Nova Scotia](#) also Proclaimed February 1st to February 7th United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week.



City of Halifax Proclamation, Members of City Council & NS Legislature with Mount President, Nova Scotia Proclamation

6. Declaration of Interfaith Peace and Friendship **NEW**

Inspired by WIHW, the 2015 Parliament of Religions, and our own deep desire for peace and harmony in the world, we developed a 'Declaration of Interfaith Peace and Friendship', which we invited organizations to endorse with their logo and signature.



Wall of Declaration at the Celebration



Declaration from the Hon. Geoff Regan, Speaker
The House of Commons, Parliament of Canada

Over 30 declarations have been received to date from local, regional, national and international organizations representing education, media, government, business, diverse faiths, as well as community groups involved in compassion, peace, interfaith and contemplative work.

The **Appendix** lists participating organizations.

Ongoing: We will continue to gather declarations throughout the year and display them online. This is an excellent way to raise awareness about WIHW, give groups an easy way to participate, and help to expand and strengthen our network.

TESTIMONIALS

Interfaith Engagement Program and Visits to Sacred Spaces:

“I think that the interfaith program is to allow people to experience rich practice from the roots of religion. I would recommend this program for anyone who wants to see religion in a different way and have another perspective. Overall there was a peaceful and accepting atmosphere, although we knew we all had different views. I wish that I can do that again next year.”

-Zainab Al-habibi, Mount St. Vincent University student in Child & Youth Studies

Interfaith Celebration:

“Special thanks to all those who helped and my greetings of peace to all friends who participated today. It was just wonderful and heart warming.”

-Jamal Badawi, Professor Emeritus, member, Nova Scotia Imam Council, and Chaplain, Dalhousie Multifaith Centre

Halifax Proclamation:

“A momentous event for our small but mighty city. Very worthy of this place. Well done all.”

-Judy Johnson, Director, Brahma Kumaris Centre, Halifax

Declaration of Interfaith Peace & Friendship:

“We at the Parliament of the World’s Religions most definitely want to be publicly included in your observance of UNWIHW in the way you have made possible.”

-Larry Greenfield, President, Parliament of the World’s Religions

“We would love to be a part of it!”

-Zareen Qureshi, Program Manager, Charter for Compassion Pakistan

REFERENCES:

Mike Savage, Mayor of Halifax

Dr. Ramona Lumpkin, President and Vice-Chancellor, Mount St. Vincent University

Dr. Jamal Badawi, Professor Emeritus, Saint Mary's University; Chaplain, Dalhousie Multifaith Centre, and member, Nova Scotia Imam Council

Debbie Nicholson, Former Coordinator, World Religion Day, and World Interfaith Harmony Week, Halifax

RESOURCES

Interfaith Harmony Halifax

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Interfaith Harmony Halifax Links

- <http://ihhalifax.ca>
- <https://twitter.com/ihhalifax>
- <https://www.facebook.com/UNWorldInterfaithHarmony>

Media Links

- CTV News: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=799885>
- Chronicle Herald:
<http://thechronicleherald.ca/artslife/1339378-locals-celebrate-world-interfaith-harmony-week>
- TouchBase Magazine: <http://www.touchbaseonline.ca/?p=4338>
- Mormon News Room:
<http://www.mormonnewsroom.ca/article/world-interfaith-harmony-week-in-halifax-celebrates-diversity>

With gratitude to our sponsors:

Mount St. Vincent University; Mount St. Vincent University Student Union; Mount Interfaith Peace and Friendship Centre; Touch BASE; Dalhousie Multifaith Centre; Halifax Shambhala Centre;

Waves of Compassion; Baha'i Community of Halifax; Lutheran Campus Ministry; Halifax Presbytery of the United Church of Canada; Alba Nuadh Druid Arts of Nova Scotia; Vedanta Ashram Society

