Welcome to the 15th Annual
Interreligious Prayer Service
For Peace and Justice
Celebrating World Interfaith Harmony

The India Center of Westchester
116 South Central Ave.
Elmsford, New York
February 2, 2019
3:00 PM





Service Planner: Charles S. Chesnavage, PhD Dr. Sudhir Vaidya, M.D.

Statement of Purpose and Welcome

Charles S. Chesnavage, PhD, Service Planner

Proclamations and Recognition of Guests

Dr. Sudhir Vaidya, India Center of Westchester

Opening Prayer

Unitarian Universalist Prayer Rev. Meredith Garmon, Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation White Plains, NY

Source of healing and wholeness we call by many names,

ALL: Ground us in gratitude.

May we find our way back from the brink of anger or fear to a foundation of thanksgiving and gladness and praise.

All: Praise be for diversity.

Different people have different experiences of the world.
We have different stories we tell to make sense of our world.
Some stories about reality feature a creative force that knows and desires.
Other stories depict the forces of the universe creating and destroying without anything that could be compared to knowledge, intentionality, or purpose; and beauty, awe, and majesty-compelling reverence are the products, rather than the source, of unfolding creation.

Still other stories tell of a creative force that metaphorically rather than literally has knowledge and desires.

We have different senses of what's out there.

All: Of course we do.

We've had different experiences, shaped by different cultures and traditions.

We've admired and respected different elders, heroes, and saints, so how could we not have different stories about the grounding of this reality we all share?

Let us seek not to minimize real difference – let us seek to celebrate it. We pray that our hearts grow better able to celebrate the fact of diversity among us.



History of the Service

The first Ecumenical and Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace and Justice to Celebrate the Week of Christian Unity took place on January 18, 2005, at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Williamsburg, New York. I initiated the service as Director of Liturgy to celebrate the holiday and dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and to Celebrate Christian Unity Week by inviting the world religions to pray. After the first five years at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel the service moved to different locations.

6th Service 2010: Unification Theological Seminary, (UTS) New York

7th Service 2011: St. Francis Xavier was the first service after the United Nations declared the first week of February World Interfaith Harmony Week.

8th Service 2012: UTS, New York

9th Service 2013: Monastery Church of the Sacred Heart, Yonkers, NY

10th Service 2014: Ethical Culture Society of Westchester, White Plains, NY

11th Service 2015: Mamoroneck United Methodist Church

12th Service 2016: The Community Unitariann Universalist Congregation in White Plains, NY.

13th Service 2017: Shinnyo-en Buddhist Temple, White Plains, NY.

14th Service 2018: Bet Am Shalom Synagogue, White Plains, NY.

15th Service 2019: The India Center of Westchester

16th Service 2010: ???

See you next year!

All: Ground us in gratitude.

We also use words differently.

We speak of the same things with different words, and use the same words for different things.

Teach us not to feel shame or blame, or evoke forlorn images of Babel's tower, but to delight in and learn from each other's creativity, each other's different modes of expression, the new poetry offered us by unfamiliar traditions -- for new poetry may open our hearts to new depths of connection to the sacred that is beyond all words.

Thank you, thank you, for the riches of expression our diverse traditions offer us all.

All: Ground us in gratitude.

Ground us also in hope, for we know the path ahead is not easy. There is much in all our traditions that is neither about a sense of what's out there or in here, nor about a sense of how to speak of it. It's just about: "What side are you on? Whose team are you on?" We love and are nurtured in the communities of our own. Let us hope not to dissolve all boundaries of identity. Let us hope to uphold our differences while building understanding, maintain our distinctions while cooperating for peace, sustain our separate identities while recognizing participation in a greater unity that transcends the very boundaries we also need.

All: Ground us in that hope, that we may find the strength to make it so.

All: Amen.

Sacred Moment of Silent Reflection and Prayer from the Quaker/Society of Friends Tradition Joyce Schroeder, Purchase Friends Meeting

When we try to express communion with God in words, we rapidly reach the end of our capacities. A period of silence to listen to the voice of God deep within, is essential to discovering the heart of prayer. The prayer of the present moment, becoming one with your breathe, is the universal prayer of all religious traditions. For it is the act of breathing that unites all of humanity.

We invite everyone to enter into 2 minutes of silence and solitude wrapped in gratitude.

Listen and Silent are spelled with the same letters.

Zen Buddhist Prayer Seth Zuihō Segal

Karaniya Metta (Lovingkindness) Sutta

This is what should be accomplished by one who is wise, Who seems the good and has obtained peace.

Let one be strenuous, upright, and sincere,
Without pride, easily contented, and joyous.
Let one not be submerged by the things of this world.
Let one not take upon oneself the burden of riches.
Let one's senses be controlled.
Let one be wise, but not puffed up and
Let one not desire great possessions even for one's family.
Let one do nothing that is mean, or that the wise would reprove.

May all beings be happy.

May they be joyous and live in safety.

All living beings, whether weak or strong,
In high or middle or low realms of existence,
Small or great, visible or invisible,
Near or far, born or yet to be born,
May all beings be happy.

Let no one deceive another nor despise any being in any state. Let none by anger or hatred wish harm to another. Even as a mother at risk of her life Watches over and protects her only child, So with a boundless mind should one cherish all living things, Suffusing love over the entire world, Above, below, and all around, without limit. So let one cultivate an infinite good will toward the whole world.

Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, During all one's waking hours, Let one practice the Way with gratitude.

Not holding fixed views, Endowed with insight, Freed from sense appetites, One who achieves the Way Will be freed from the duality of birth and death. **Dr. Remi Alapo:** Director of the Institute for Peace and Transformational Leadership. She is the U.S. country representative of the Global Education for All Initiative (GEFAI), an organization working for Peace with the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), a Global Interreligious Ambassador for the GEFAI in Nigeria, an Interfaith Ambassador for World Yogi Community as well as founding member of World Interfaith Alliance. www.peaceandleadership.org

Suman Jain: The India Center of Westchester

Jatinder Singh and Family: NYS licensed Associate Real Estate broker and active participant in this event and other interfaith events representing the Sikh community.

Geoffrey D. Smith: is a life long pacifistst, refused induction during the Vietnam War, and a participant in the "No Drones Tour". He is a member of the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester.

Reverend Qalvy Grainzvolt: is a native New Yorker and the youngest ordained Shinnyo-en Buddhist minister in North America. He currently serves as a representative of the Shinnyo-en Buddhist order in the United Nations as well as in interfaith circles in the east coast and beyond. Qalvy is also the assistant secretary of Religions for Peace USA, one of the largest and most broadly-based interfaith forums in the United States. Shinnyo-en has a temple in White Plains, and a meditation center in New York city.

Reverend Dr. John Krysko, D. Min.: Interfaith Ministerr of Fellowship of All Faiths Ministry

George Stonefish: is a lifelong resident of New York City, and known as a native singer, dancer, artist and speaker. Most recently he spoke at the United Nations. He has worked for the American Indian Community House thoughout his life in various capacities, from organizing Native Communities to sitting on the Board of Directors for numerous years.

Charles S. Chesnavage, PhD, Service Planner: Currently Adjunct Professor of Religious Education at Unification Theological Seminary, and Mercy College, Bronx Campus, Graduate of Fordham University Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education. His dissertation research on interreligious prayer is entitled: Principles From Inculturation as a Key to Interreligious Prayer: Being Religiously Revelatory and Educative in a Diverse World." (2016). Available via ProQuest LLC, 2017, or author at cchuck60@aol.com.

In Thanksgiving for all those who participated in the Service

The Hospitality of The India Center of Westchester and those who helped with the planning: Siddhartha Basu, and Amita Ajmera.

Dr. Sudhir Vaidya: is a life member of the India Center of Westchester and and a Physician at the Burke Rehabilitation Hospital and an Associate Professor in Family and Community Medicine at New York Medical College and an Associate Professor in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Meredith Garmon: Minister of Community Unitarian Church at White Plains, NY since 2013. A life-long Unitarian Universalist, Rev. Garmon holds Masters' degrees in communication studies and philosophy, and a PhD in government from the University of Virginia. He completed his theological studies at the Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary in 2003 and was ordained a UU minister in 2004. He previously served congregations in Texas and Florida.

Joyce Schroeder: has been a member of Purchase Friends Meeting for the past 22 years. She is a cancer survivor and serves on the Board of Trustees for the Friends Publishing Corporation and on the General Committee for Friends Committee of National Legislation.

Seth Zuihō Segall, Ph.D. is a Zen Buddhist priest with White Plains Zen. He is a retired member of the Yale School of Medicine clinical faculty and the former Director of Psychology at Waterbury Hospital. He is the author of Encountering Buddhism: Western Psychology and Buddhist Teachings (SUNY Press, 2003). Dr. Segall is the science writer for the Mindfulness Research Monthly and volunteers as a chaplain associate at White Plains Hospital. His blog, The Existential Buddhist, can be found at: www.existentialbuddhist.com.

Ron Schwartz: colleague of Chuck at Cardinal Hayes High School

Fr. John P. Martin, M.M.: A Maryknoll Missionary priest who has dedicated his life to cross-cultural and inter-religious living. He lived 25 years in Mexico dedicated to pastoral ministry and 10 years in Bangladesh and India dedicated to living and sharing with Muslim and Hindu believers. He is presently doing writing so as to share the fruits of these years with others. Be well, stay happy, keep smiling and spread Them around and around.

Ola Nosseir: Founder of Our Common Beliefs, and Owner of The Arabic Sound Game. (First time Participant and Attendee)

Angela Anderson: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, New Rochelle, NY.

Vivvian Bergenthal: Baha'i Faith Community of Westchester, Connecticut, and New York City.

Subha Sundaram: The India Center of Westchester

Universal Prayers for Peace and Justice

Jewish Prayer for Peace Ron Schwartz

The Shehecheyanu

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha o lam Shecheyanu-v'ki manu-v'hee gee yanu Laz-mahn hazeh

We praise you, most Divine, Ruler of the Universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, And brought us to this joyous occasion.

A Prayer by Rabbi Harold Kushner

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges and bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations.

Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows,

Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.

Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly.

So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color.

Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness, so that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors.

And let the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors.

Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty.

And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

Amen



Christian Prayer Fr. John P. Martin Maryknoll Missionary

Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be known as the Children of God. But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To those who strike you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from those who take away your cloak, do not withhold your coat as well. Give to everyone who begs from you, and of those who take away your goods, do not ask them again. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Matthew 5:9, 39





Muslim Prayer for Peace

Ola Nosseir, OCB@ourcommonbeliefs.com Founder of Our Common Beliefs, www.ourcommonbeliefs.com

> Verse about Light Surah (Chapter) Al-Nur 24, Verse 35

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.

Surah Al-Hujurat, 49 (The Private Chambers), Verse 10

The believers are one BROTHERHOOD, so make PEACE with your brethren.

Closing Statements

Sign of Peace

May we offer one another a sign of peace, Shalom, Shanti, Salam, Sat Nam, a greeting of peace, or a greeting of Namaste, (The Divine in me bows to the Divine in you), Namu Shinnyo (to be one with your true nature) or any other words of peace.

Closing Song: "Let there be peace on earth."

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Father, we are family.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take, let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Please join us for some refreshments.

"We have inherited a large house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together—black and white,
Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew,
Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Hindu—
a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Nobel Peace Prize Lecture, 1964

A Prayer for One People John Krysko Pastor All-Faiths Grace Church

- Psalm 91:1: "He that dwelth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty".
- Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do."
 - Hebrews: 16-19: 16 "Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding.17 God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. 18 So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us.19 This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary."

Native American Honoring Song George Stonefish

Turtle Island

- The symbol for North America, also referred to as Mother Earth, is a turtle.
- The Turtle is considered to be one of the oldest most sacred symbols for many Aboriginal peoples. They believe that North America was created on the back of a turtle.



Surah Al-Hujurat, 49, (The Private Chambers), Verse 13

O Humankind! We have created you of a male and female, and We made you into races and tribes that you might KNOW each other. The most noble and honorable of you in the sight of God are those of you who are most conscientious. And God is omniscient, (all knowing), fully Aware.

Surah Rahman, 55, (The Most Gracious and Blessed One)

God has created us and made this BEAUTIFUL world for us. We are benefitting from all of GOD'S creation such as the sun, moon, sky, clouds, rain, air, grasslands, animals, plants, trees, rivers, oceans, and countless other bounties of the of the natural world! After realizing all this abundance, how can any sensible person be anything but thankful to God?



The Quaker Peace Testimony
Declaration of Friends to Charles II, 1660
Joyce Schroeder, Purchase Friends Meeting

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons,, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of the world."



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Book of Mormon 2 Nephi 25:23-26

Angela Anderson Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, New Rochelle, NY

- 23: For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.
- 24: And, not withstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled.
- 25: For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead to us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments.
- 26: And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for the remission of their sins.



Baha'i Faith Community Vivian Bergenthal Baha'i Faith Community of Westchester, Connecticut and New York

O Thus kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thous hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all They servants, and all mankind are sheltered Beneath They Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God! Thou are kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, Conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and Faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations One, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

Sikh Prayer for Peace Jatinder Singh and Family

"O God in your Name, shower your blessings on everyone."



Humanist Statement Geoffry D. Smith Ethical Culture Society of Westchester

This is a Call to the Living

This is a call to the living, To those who refuse to make peace with evil, With the suffering and the waste of the world. This is a call to the human, not the perfect, To those who know their own prejudices, Who have no intention of becoming prisoners of their own limitations. This is a call to those who remember the dreams of their youth, Who know what it means to share food and shelter, The care of children and those who are troubled, To reach beyond barriers of the past Bringing people to communion. This is a call to the never ending spirit Of the common man, his essential decency and integrity, His unending capacity to suffer and endure, To face death and destruction and to rise again And build from the ruins of life. This is the greatest call of all The call to a faith in people.

— Algernon Black



Jain Prayer: Om Namo Ari Hantanam
-- Navkar Mantra (Anuradha Paudwal)
Suman Jain: India Center of Westchester

Om Namo Ari Hantanam-I bow down to Arihanta
Om Namo Siddhanam-I bow down to Sidda
Om Namo Ayariyanam-I bow down to Acharya
Om Namo Uvajjhayanam-I bow down to Upadhyaya
Namo Loe Savva-sahunam-I bow down to Sadhu and Sadhvi
Eso Pancha Namukkaro-These five bowings down.
Savva-pavapannasano-Destroy all sins.
Mangalanam Cha Savvesim-Amongst all that is auspicious.
Padhamam Havai Mangalam-The Navkar Mantra is the foremost.

Repeat

The Navkar Mantra is the most important mantra in Jainism and can be recited at any time. While reciting the Navkar Mantra, we are bowing down with respect to Arihantas (souls who have reached the state of non-attachment towards worldly process), Siddhas (liberated souls), Ächäryäs (heads of sadhus and sadhvis), Upädhyäyas (those who teach scriptures to sadhus and sadhvis), Sädhus (monks, who have voluntarily given up social, economical and family relationships) and Sädhvis (nuns, who have voluntarily given up social, economical and family relationships). Collectively, they are called Panch Parmesthi (five supreme spiritual people). In this mantra we worship their virtues rather than worshipping any one particular person; therefore, this Mantra is not named after Lord Mahavir, Lord Parshvanath or Adinath, etc. When we recite Navkar Mantra it, also reminds us that, we need to be like them. This mantra is also called Namaskär or Namokär Mantra because we are bowing down.



Background Information About the Jain Religion

Jains are committed to living by three major teachings: 1. Ahimsa, Non-Violence, meaning Reverence for all life, all forms of life, and thus Jains are strict vegetarians and/or vegans; also they are not conscripted into the Indian army because it is known that Jains will not be willing to kill anyone; (It is Jain Philosophy which was a major influence on Gandhi and his practice of Non-Violence.) 2. Anekantavada, seeing from multiple points of view, since truth is relative and more angles through which one sees, the less likely to be rigid, judgmental, or myopic; and, 3. Aparigraha, Non-Possisiveness, since truly we cannot own anything permanently so instead Jainism suggests that we think of objects as things we use and take care of, but do not possess or get too attached to.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind. O God! Establish the Most Great Peace. Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence. Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

Baha'i Prayer by Abdu'l-Bahá

The Baha'i Faith is a world religion founded in the mid 1800's by Baha'u'llah, a title meaning "Glory of God." The aim of the Baha'i Faith is to unite the human race. The Baha'i Faith is dedicated to World Peace, Equality of Women and Men, and Universal Education. Cooperation between Science and Religion in the Individual's Search of Truth, Spreading Hope, Joy, and a Positive Vision of Humanity's Future.



Hindu Prayer for Peace Subha Sundaram India Center of Westchester

Svasti prajaabyah paripaalayantaam May people be happy, May they be protected Nyaayena maargena mahim mahishaah May the kings righteously rule the earth gobrahmane bhya shubha mastu nityam May there be welfare for animals and teachers at all times Lokah samastaa sukhino bhavantu May all people be happy kaale varsatu parjanyah May it rain at the proper times. prithvi sasya shaalini May the earth be full of crops and grain deshoyam kshobha rahitah May this country be free from famine Bhraahmanaa santu nirbhayaah May men of contemplation be free from fear. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Buddhist Prayer for Peace

Rev. Qalvy Grainzvolt Leader of Shinnyo-En Buddhist Temple, White Plains, NY

- A reading of an excerpt by Her Holiness Shinso Ito, the spiritual Head of Shinnyo Buddhism, from her New Year's address to all members of our global congregation.
- Followed by a concluding recitation of two sacred core Shinnyo-en mantras: "The Goreiju"* (recited 3 times by representative clergy) and the "Jojusan"**: *Namu Shinnyo* (recited five times by all who wish to join).



The Shinnyo-en symbol (a buddhist dharma wheel with a lotus flower blossoming at its core)

This symbol represents the belief that with buddha-centered mindful and altruistic living, awakening can be achieved in this very world full of challenges. It is said that a lotus flower has its roots in muddy water but that above the surface, a pristine flower blooms. In a similar way, making efforts toward peace in a world characterized by the duality of both peace and chaos, it is through encountering the joys and challenges of persevering through that process that will nourish a flower of enlightenment in the here and now.

World Interfaith Alliance Sufi Interfaith Prayer for Peace and Harmony

Dr. Remi Alapo Director of the Institute for Peace and Transformational Leadership

Most gracious Lord, Master, Messiah and Saviour of humanity, we greet Thee in all humility. Thou art the First Cause and the Last Effect, the Divine Light and the Spirit of Guidance, Alpha and Omega. Thy Light is in all forms, Thy Love in all beings; in a loving mother, in a kind father, in an innocent child, in a helpful friend, in an inspiring teacher.

Allow us to recognize Thee I n all Thy holy names and forms; as Rama, as Krishna, as Shiva, as Buddha. Let us know Thee as Abraham, as Solomon, as Zarathustra, as Moses, as Jesus, as Mohammed, and in many other names and forms, known and unknown to the world.

We adore Thy past. Thy Presence deeply enlightens our being, and we look for Thy blessings in the future. O Messenger, Christ, Nabi, the Rasul of God!

Thou whose heart constantly reaches upwards, Thou comest on earth with the Message, as a dove from above when dharma decayeth, and speakest the word that is put into Thy mouth, as the light filleth the crescent moon.

Let the star of the Divine Light shining in Thy heart be reflected in the hearts of Thy devotees.

May the Message of God reach far and wide, illuminating and making the whole humanity as one single Family in the Parenthood of God.

Amen.