

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



The Official UN Observance in the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of February



Interfaith  
Scotland

## WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK INTERFAITH SCOTLAND REPORT 2022

### Pilgrimage to Places of Worship: Stories of Hope from Women of Faith



To celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week 2022, Interfaith Scotland partnered with two local interfaith groups that were set up by and for women: Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group and Women of Faith and Community (Glasgow) to organise a pilgrimage to places of worship in Glasgow on 3rd February. The local women's groups planned the event with Interfaith Scotland's staff team, and members of the groups chose the theme 'Stories of Hope from Women of Faith'. For them it was important to learn not just about the key beliefs of different faiths, but about the things about people's faith that inspired them and gave them hope for the future, especially during the difficult years of the pandemic.



Nearly 30 women gathered at the starting point of the pilgrimage, the impressive University of Glasgow Chapel. The University Chaplain Rev Carolyn Kelly spoke movingly about the concept of hope in Christian and Jewish traditions, particularly in the light of the Holocaust.

Participants were then given the opportunity to get to know one another in small groups and talk about their hopes for the day. Before the group of pilgrims headed to the Hindu Mandir via Kelvingrove Park, they were given a presentation by Linda Haggerstone, Honorary Chaplain to the University. Linda shared two poems that she had written for the festival of Imbolc (also known as the feast of St Brigid in Celtic Christian traditions). The festival was taking place on the same day as the pilgrimage. It heralds the beginning of Spring and as we walked through the park we were reminded of our connection to God through his Creation.



At the Hindu Mandir, we were welcomed by Acharyaji (the head priest) and former Board member of Interfaith Scotland, Mrs Madhu Jain. She spoke to us about what it was like to move from India to Glasgow and finding the local Indian community. Building the temple and thus providing a place of worship for the Hindu community helped the transition and it is now an opportunity to teach the next generation about Hinduism and Indian culture.

We proceeded from there to the Central Gurdwara. We were welcomed by a young woman, Gursinder Kaur and taken up to the main shrine. She led us through the history of women's empowerment in Sikhism and sang some prayer songs from their scripture about the equality and value of women. We were then offered a generous lunch in the langar hall.





Our final destination was Garnethill Synagogue. We were welcomed by Fiona Brodie, Trustee of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, and honorary secretary of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities who spoke to us about the many projects undertaken by the Jewish community to assist people during the pandemic. On this cheerful note of community spirit we dispersed, pleased to have been able to meet many friends old and new in person after a long time.



All the talks from the pilgrimage were recorded and are available to view on Interfaith Scotland's YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/GyfSwvZsBFA>