**Report no. 3: The Official Opening of UN WIFHW**

**within the first week of February**

**UN World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023**

Arranged by Cross-Cultural Ministry of Kolding Deanery in cooperation

with the office of Migrant Cooperation and Encounter

with other Religions of Haderslev Diocese

February 5, 2023 at 1 to 5 pm

Venue: Simon Peters Church and Fellowship Hall

**Reflection:**

Started with a church service with Elizabeth Padillo Olesen giving the reflection on the Workers on the Vineyard, relating the parable to the start of UN WIFHW. We are all called to be workers for peace and harmony in our one world.

**Total number of participants 84.**

**Welcome by a toast of fruit drinks:** All participants were asked to get hold of a glass of drinks and while holding their glasses, they were welcomed by Rev. Michael Markussen, declaring the opening of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023 in the first week in February.

**Table of cakes and fruits:** 12 women participants came with cakes as coordinated by Jårliny Spence Swanlake. The cake bringers with diversity of their cakes represented 14 countries of origin from: Sri Lanka, Liberia, Poland, Congo, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Bahamas, England, and Zambia, Denmark. Each one was invited each to come forward and present their cake and why such a cake was prepared for the event. It was informative and touching when one of them, Andrua Bank from Sudan, pointed out that she prepared the cake which reminded her of her time at the refugee camp in Sudan. Jårliny Spence Swanlake Petersen thanked them for their labor of love. It was also her intention to put together the recipes of the cakes, and to make it available to families who might want to try them in their own kitchen.

**Historical background, its significance and Reading and Signing of the Declaration of Support for FN World Interfaith Harmony Week.**

Presentation on the historical background of FN World Inter Faith Harmony Week and the reading of the Support of Declaration in Danish and English by Elizabeth Padillo Olesen

Reading of the document on our support declaration of UN World InterFaith Harmony Week, followed by Signing the document as signing of the “covenant”. The document was written both in Danish and English Languages to declare support for UN World Interfaith Harmony Week in February. The local document is in Engligh and Danish languages.

**Conversations in small groups:**

Conversations in small groups: What are concrete expressions of Love of God and love of neighbor. Blank paper on tolerance was also displayed on tables, requesting those ,who had not done it earlier, to draw or write their thoughts on tolerance . There was also given the possibility for others, who were not present during the Musical Brunch Fellowship, to try on sharing symbols of religions they know and their meanings and test themselves how many other religious symbols they know and what the symbols stand for. It was amazing to see people using their telephones or iPhone in making their actual research.

It further gave each one time to ask personal questions. What is your name? Where do you live? How are you? How long have you been in Denmark?

**Reading of the Declaration of Support**

Signing of the covenant, those who joined declared their support for UN WIFHW in two declarations, written in Danish and English languages.

Two songs were chosen to sing together: “What a Wonderful World” of George Douglas, and “If we could consider each other a neighbor a friend or a brother “ accompanied by the musician, Ejvind Amorsen.

The meeting extended even beyond the planned time. People spent time talking with each other.

**The impact of this meeting:**

1.People are open to share their resources, like cakes, and spend time to prepare them when they are invited to do so.

2. Marking an event and making it as opening, joined by groups and peoples throughout the world, makes the day special. During that first week in February, we were not alone but joined in by people all over the world to celebrate the importance and value of this worldwide event to work for peace and harmony.

3. The event enabled people to talk with each other, exchange addresses or telephone numbers.

4.The story behind the ratification of the resolution started by King Abdullah 11 from Jordan was shared during the church service for the Danish congregation and for the International Congregation. It was a proud moment for the Muslim participants that a leader, who share with their Islam religion, has something to do with the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week with the realization of WIFHW.

**Enclosures:**

1. Program of the summarized events to mark the UN WIHW 2023

2. The intro poster as info material, being distributed (What is WIHW)

3. The Document on Declaration of Support in Danish and in English

4. Photos of the cakes and the serving…

5. Photos on the event