

2023 UNITED NATIONS WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

From Inner Peace to Interpersonal Harmony: Benefiting Our Community in the Post-Pandemic Era

Aim: To foster a better understanding of interfaith values and practices, build friendships among people from diverse religious backgrounds, and promote interfaith harmony in the community.

Date: Thursday, February 2nd, 2023

Time: 10:00 am to 2:30 pm (Central Time Zone, Texas, USA)

Venue: The Lyceum of First Lutheran Church (2415 Winnie St., Galveston, TX, USA), and Zoom Platform

Sponsors: First Lutheran Church, Rotary Club of Galveston Foundation, Galveston Ministerial Alliance, and International Buddhist Progress Society (IBPS)-Dallas

Agenda

09:30 am-10:00 am Registration

10:00 am-10:15 am Opening---*Reverend* Richard Rhoades, Pastor of First Lutheran Church

10:15 am-10:45 am Keynote---*Reverend* Dr. Thomas Colyandro, Orthodox Priest

10:45 am-11:00 am Coffee time with light refreshments & mingle

11:00 am-12:15 pm Panel 1---Interfaith discussion: from seeking inner peace, facilitating interpersonal and family harmonies, to reaching community harmony in the post-pandemic era

- Moderator: *Reverend* Richard Rhoades, Pastor of First Lutheran Church, Galveston
- Judaism: *Rabbi* Peter Kessler, Congregation B'Nai Israel, Galveston
- Lutheran: *Reverend* Michael Rinehart, Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, Houston
- Islam: *Imam* Dr. Muhammad N. Haq, American Society for Islamic Awareness; Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies, University of Houston
- Serbian Orthodox: *Reverend* Dr. Thomas Colyandro, Orthodox Priest
- Hinduism (online): Mr. Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary, Hindu Council at the United Kingdom
- Buddhism: *Venerable* Dr. Miaolung Shih, Dharma Teacher, IBPS Dallas; Member of Parliament World's Religions; American Academy of Religion; NGO Committee on Status of Women, New York

12:15 pm-1:00 pm Working lunch (provided)

1:00 pm-2:00 pm Panel 2---The success and challenges of achieving interfaith harmony: how do we live harmoniously with different religions in the post-pandemic era

- Moderator: *Reverend* Dr. Thomas Colyandro, Orthodox Priest
- Buddhism (video): Dr. Bee Scherer, Chair of the Buddhist Studies Department and *Rector* of the Buddhist Seminary, Free University (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), The Netherlands
- Christianity: *Reverend* Dr. Duane Larson, the retired president of Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa; Lecturer of Religious Studies, University of Houston
- Islam: *Imam* Dr. Muhammad N. Haq, American Society for Islamic Awareness; Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies, University of Houston
- Confucianism and Buddhism (online): Dr. Kenneth W. Holloway, Levenson Chair and Associate Professor, Department of History, Florida Atlantic University

2:00 pm-2:30 pm Closing---*Reverend* Richard Rhoades and *Venerable* Dr. Miaolung Shih