



Interfaith Harmony Halifax

**Joining Hands in Turbulent Times  
Report for Interfaith Harmony Halifax  
Feb 1-9, 2025**





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## Message from the Co-Chairs

Our theme this year was--Joining hands in troubled times.

We reached out and were joined in partnership by people of goodwill from seventeen spiritual communities. We continued to explore electronic media, giving interviews on radio and television, seeking out new avenues of advertising and updating our website multiple times a day.

Our Interfaith Engagement Program guided people to explore the ways of their neighbours. We sourced new blood for the program and advertised on multiple media.

This year, we began with our multifaith celebration, rather than ending with it. We were greeted and smudged by a Mi'kmaq representative, followed by a joyous sharing of music, dance, art and more, from representatives of ten traditions. Afterwards, we met with the many attendees to share our thoughts and experiences over refreshments.

Beginning the same evening, and for the next ten days, sixteen open door events were held around the city, with sacred communities welcoming strangers to their celebrations or holding educational sessions.

The first week of February, in Halifax, is a time of winter intensifying. Because of this, some rescheduling and some cancelations took place. In recognition of this issue, many of our partners held their events virtually, as well as live, which increased attendance.

The troubled state of the world did not touch us much, as we celebrated World Interfaith Harmony Week. Open doors were accompanied by open hearts. Let the warmth of the many welcomes nourish and foster openness between us, in this troubled world of fear, anger and contention. Joining hands is the cure for the ills we breed for each other and ourselves.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, community leadership and participants for a wonderful IHH Week.

John Wrightman & Joanna Mirsky Wexler

Co- Chairs, Interfaith Harmony Halifax



Interfaith Harmony Halifax

### **2025 participating communities**

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
  - Ummah Masjid (Sunni Islam)
- Maritime Bhangra Dancers (Sikh Society)
  - Hindu Vedanta Ashram Society
- Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)
  - Shambala Buddhist Centre
    - Baha'i Community
    - Brahma Kumaris Society
- Shaar Shalom Congregation (Jewish, Conservative)
  - Beth Israel Synagogue, (Jewish, Orthodox)
    - The Atlantic School of Theology
  - Earth Spirit Society of Nova Scotia.
    - Fung Koy Lok Taoist Society
  - St. David's Presbyterian Church
    - Temple of Witchcraft
    - Agnostic Community
- Mi'kmaq Community of Nova Scotia



Interfaith Harmony Halifax

## **Report from IHH Sacred Spaces Committee for February 2025**

The theme adopted by Interfaith Harmony Halifax for WIHW2025 was “Joining Hands in Turbulent Times”. Several common ideals became apparent among the groups: the importance of seeking and showing love, light, peace and unity, and sharing our food and hospitality with others.

There were a total of 16 Sacred Spaces participating in various ways in Halifax Nova Scotia for World Interfaith Harmony Week 2025. Most faith communities, if not all, welcome visitors at any time of the year. During World Interfaith Harmony Week, communities welcome those visiting by announcing that it is World Interfaith Harmony Week. Interfaith Harmony Halifax advertises/promotes visits to those specific communities. Several communities held in-person events: Ummah Mosque, the Shambhala Centre (Buddhist), the Halifax Baha’i Community, Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism, Sound Bath (Rezound Meditative Music Group) and the Spiritual Coalition on Climate Action Nova Scotia (SCOCANS). The Atlantic School of Theology, Brahma Kumaris, Beth Israel Synagogue (Orthodox Judaism), the Earth Spirit Society of Nova Scotia, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Universalist Unitarian Community of Halifax held hybrid events (in-person and online). Shaar Shalom Congregation (Conservative Judaism) held an online event. Vedanta Ashram Society (Hindu) was forced to cancel due to weather. Our Opening Celebration, at the Halifax Central Library, included representation from the following groups: The Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre (represented by Bradley Knockwood), St. David’s Presbyterian Church Choir, Vedanta Ashram Society and Maritime Bhangra Group (Sikh). Even with typical, inclement weather, several hundred people attended our various events.

## Communications

Interfaith Harmony Halifax connects with local communities through:

- Participating spiritual communities - Individual communities are able to publicize through their social media, email advertising, announcements as well as in the weeks leading up to the events.
- We increased the level of social media activity leading up to WIH week on Facebook and Instagram, with many communities putting out special invitations to events.
- TV Interview - <https://www.ctvnews.ca/atlantic/nova-scotia/article/interfaith-harmony-halifax-showcases-citys-culture-diversity/>
- Radio Interview - <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-37-mainstreet-ns/clip/16125253-interfaith-harmony-week-begins-saturday-february-1st>
- <https://www.instagram.com/halifaxharmony/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/UNWorldInterfaithHarmony>
- <https://interfaithharmonyhfx.org/>

*IHH organizational Team members Rachana Samtaney, Joanna Mirsky Wexler and John Wrightman in a CBC Radio interview for Mainstreet with Jeff Douglas (right) Joanna Mirsky Wexler and Rachana Samtaney on CTV Morning Live (Below)*





Interfaith Harmony Halifax

## Interfaith Engagement Program

A classic program of IHH, the Interfaith Engagement Program (IEP) is an opportunity for community members to deepen their experience. Participants join a cohort, where they begin with an orientation and round table discussion of the nine day Sacred Sessions events to come: what are we hoping to get out of this? How do we open our hearts and minds to the theme, Joining hands in turbulent times.

They are given a “passport” – a physical name tag identifying them as a participant, and are asked to commit to attending 5 sacred spaces or events throughout the week. After IHH week is over, they return together for a debrief and discussion of the week. In sharing what they have experienced as a group, they not only gain more from the week itself, but also the chance to build strong relationships with members of other spiritual participants.

Co-Facilitators this year were Ben Robins and Daniel MacKay. This year the IEP was hosted in the Ummah Masjid and Community Center.



# New Initiative: Partnership with the Spiritual Coalition on Climate Action Nova Scotia (SCOCANS)

Join the Spiritual Coalition on Climate Action Nova Scotia (SCOCANS) and the Ecology Action Centre for a conversation panel about faith and climate action. SCOCANS is a volunteer run interfaith group in collaboration with the Ecology Action Centre's Energy & Climate Team dedicated to advocacy for the environment and social justice.

SCOCANS members meet several times a year, supporting climate justice through actions such as letter writing campaigns, joining rallies, and more and is always looking for new members

THE SPIRITUAL COALITION  
ON CLIMATE ACTION IN NOVA SCOTIA  
INVITES YOU TO

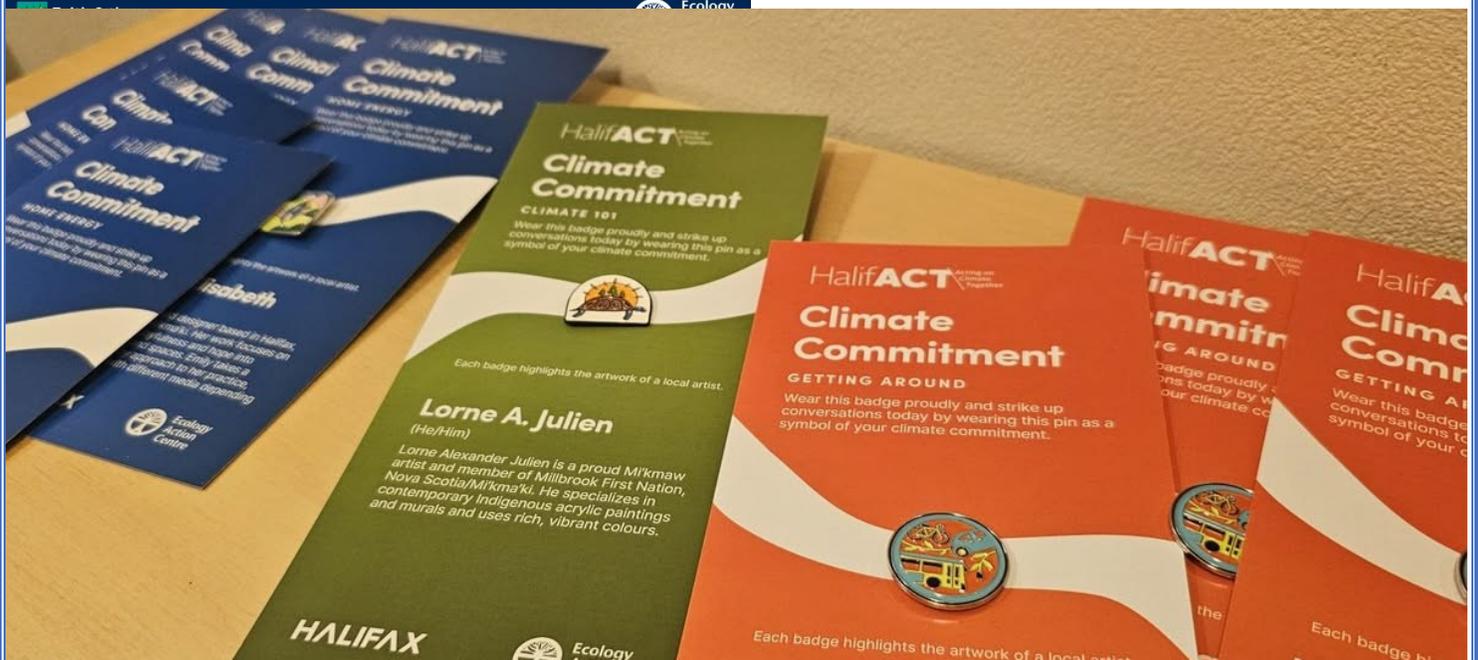
## Joining Hands in Turbulent Times

A conversation on  
faith and climate action

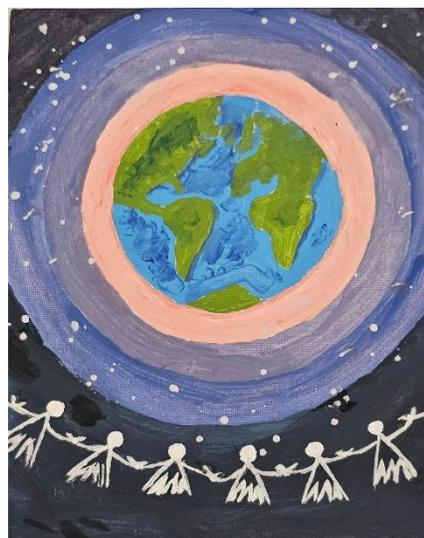
Wednesday, Feb. 5, 5 - 7 p.m.

Ecology Action Centre  
2705 Fern Lane, Halifax B3K 4L3

This free, in-person event is part  
of Interfaith Harmony Week  
[interfaithharmonyhfx.org](http://interfaithharmonyhfx.org)



# New Initiative for 2025: Interfaith Painting Workshop



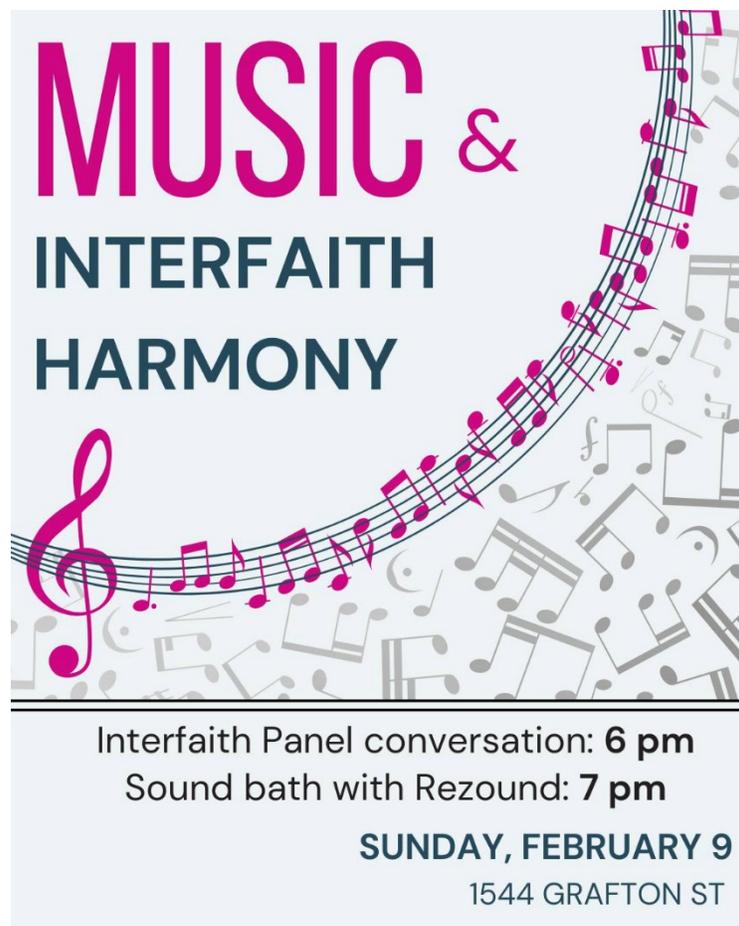
Inspired by our theme, *Joining Hands in Turbulent Times*, a local artist led us in a group painting activity on a snowy evening, hosted in the Shaar Shalom space. Artist Tania Kulichenko designed an image of the Earth alongside small figures holding hands like paper dolls, each representing a variety of faith and spiritual communities. We had 15 people register for this free event, although storm conditions led to a smaller gathering. It was a great success though, as folks from many communities had time to meet, join together in a meaningful activity, and have a chance to begin new friendships.



# Music and Faith discussion panel and Rezound meditation

6 pm Multifaith panel conversation on the role music plays in various traditions  
7 pm Meditation and Sound bath with [Rezound](#)  
St David's Church, 1544 Grafton Street, Halifax

Rezound offers a non-denominational open mediation at St. David's in downtown Kijipuktuk/Halifax. This sound bath of improvised, live-sampled and spontaneously arranged ambient music invites attendees to a space of self-reflection, contemplation, meditation, emotional release, and prayer of any kind. Attendees can sink into the rich tones of live chant, overtone singing, throat singing, percussion and found objects, blended with electronics against the backdrop of immersive projection visuals.



**MUSIC &  
INTERFAITH  
HARMONY**

Interfaith Panel conversation: **6 pm**  
Sound bath with Rezound: **7 pm**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9**  
1544 GRAFTON ST



Interfaith Harmony Halifax

## **Celebration!**

**Our 2025 Celebration was wonderful and warm, with more than 200 people attending between 2 – 4 pm, despite the storm outside.**

**We had beautiful expressions of faith, spirituality and culture from 11 different communities, and people of all ages participated together.**

**The afternoon was a mix of blessings, music, dance, Tai Chi and performance, but also a wonderful chance to get to know each other.**

**The Halifax Public Library was a key sponsor and partnered with us to Provincial and municipal representatives joined us in welcoming all of our communities.**

## **Celebration schedule**

- Welcome, and land acknowledgement
- Smudging by Indigenous community
- Hindu dance
- Spirit Song Pagan Choir
- Muslim community prayer reading
- Rezound musical meditation (agnostic community)
- Universalist Unitarian Community Band
- Saint David's Choir (Presbyterian Church of Saint David)
- Songs from the Jewish Community (Shaar Shalom)
- Fung Koy Lok Taoist Society- Tai Chi Demonstration (and group participation)
- Ba'Hai community painters
- Hindu youth choir
- Sing Along to Dave Gunning's "These Hands"
- Maritime Bhangra Dancing- performance and group dancing with the Sikh Community

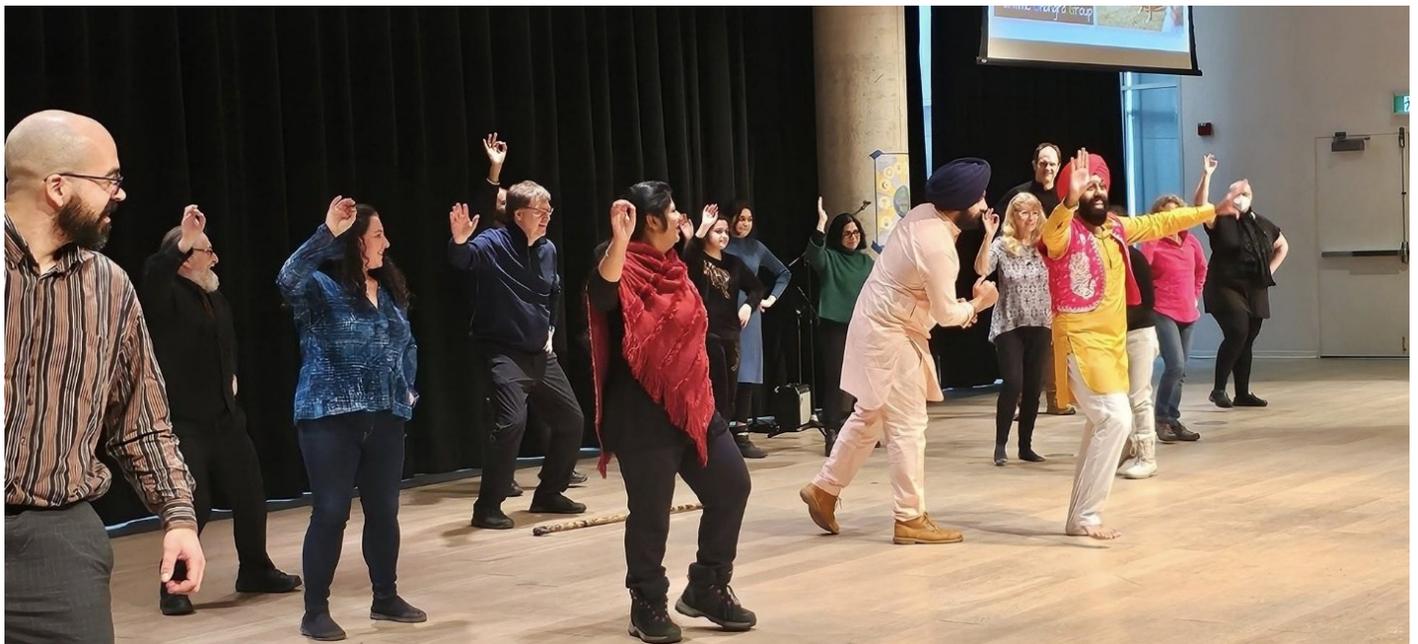
## Celebration Highlights: A gallery



*Dance: Vedanta Ashram Society*



*Tai Chi presentation with audience participation: Fong Loy Kok Institute of Taoism*



*Maritime Bhangra Dancers welcome others to try*



*Vedanta Ashram Society Youth Choir*



*Ba'Hai artist Debbie Mosher with Joanna & Rachana*

*Bradley Knockwood from Abegweit First Nation does a welcome and smudging for the room and for all who wish personal blessings (right)*

*Ortal Kernerman sings songs from the Jewish Community*



*Vedanta Ashram Society youth choir*



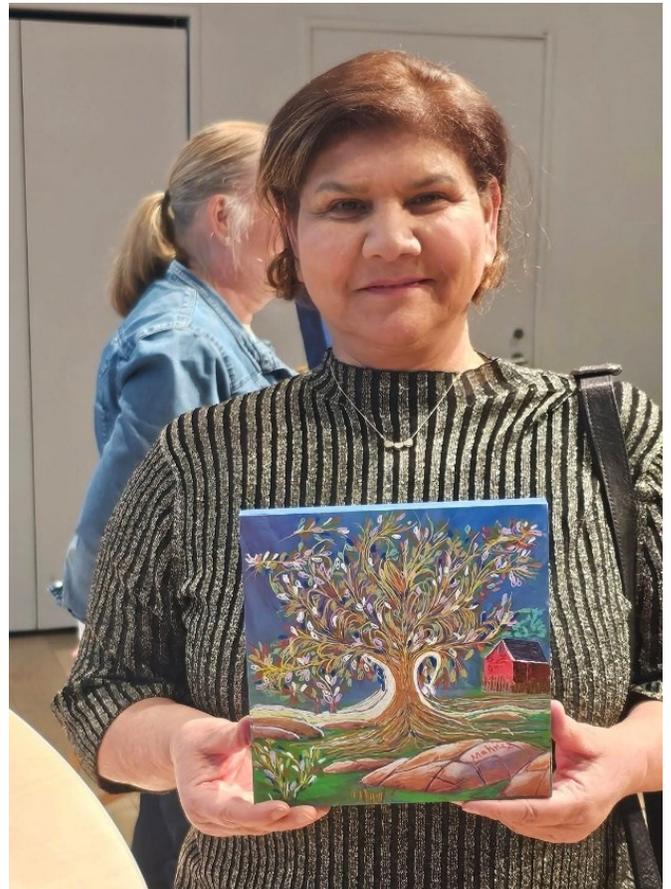
A special thank you to MLA Iain Rankin and City Councilor Nancy Hartling for their support of Interfaith Harmony Halifax week, and all of our communities!





*Boaz Wexler and Joanna Mirsky Wexler lead everyone in singing Dave Gunning's "These Hands", inspired by this year's theme, Joining Hands in Turbulent Times. (Left)*

*Ba'Hai painter Mahnaz Roshan displays the painting done live during the Celebration (below)*





*The Celebration ended with a joyous dance with the Maritime Bhangra Dancers*



*Beautiful Harmonies from two special choirs, Spirit Song Pagan Choir (above) and the Saint David's Choir of the Presbyterian Church of Saint David, led by Simon Blake (below)*





Schedule of events:

Thursday, February 6

- 1-3pm **Interfaith Harmony Engagement Session**  
Round table discussion of the nine day *Sacred Sessions* events to come: what are we hoping to get out of this? How do we open our hearts and minds to the theme, *Joining hands in turbulent times*?  
**At:** Gate A, Ummah Masjid, 2510 St Matthias St

Saturday, February 1

- 1:00pm **Interfaith Harmony Engagement Session**  
Round table discussion of the nine day *Sacred Sessions* events to come: what are we hoping to get out of this? How do we open our hearts and minds to the theme, *Joining hands in turbulent times*?  
**At:** Same as the Celebration: Halifax Central Public Library
- 2pm – **World Interfaith Harmony Week Celebration**  
4pm Join us for songs, readings, dance, art... and snacks! from faith communities across HRM in celebration of our spiritual diversity. All are welcome. Registration is not required for this event.  
**At:** Halifax Central Public Library
- 6:30pm **Earth-Spirit Society of Nova Scotia** hosts **Temple of Witchcraft for Imbolc**  
Please join local Temple of Witchcraft initiates during Interfaith Harmony Week, as we celebrate the turning of the Wheel, for our in-person Imbolc ritual and celebration. With the growing light, the goddess stirs in her winter slumber. This is a time when we can think about what “seeds” to plant in order to bring to fruition that which we desire in the coming spring. Chairs will be provided for seating and we will not be using incense in case anyone has scent sensitivities. We kindly ask that attendees silence their cellphones during ritual and, hold off on taking pictures of the altar until after the ritual is complete.  
Doors open at 6:30; there will be displays from local Pagan groups. Ritual begins at 7:00.  
Wear comfortable and festive clothing – we will!  
**At:** The UU Church, 5500 Inglis Street  
Website: [essns.org](http://essns.org)

Sunday, February 2

10:30am **Universalist Unitarian Community of Halifax Service**

Our community includes people with a variety of beliefs and traditions, united in our commitment to open minds, open hearts, and celebrating the many ways of being human and living a meaningful life. We will honour Groundhog Day by exploring our relationship with second chances. After the service, join a discussion of what UU parenting can look like (all welcome, with a special invitation to parents of children and youth. Babysitting is available).

**At:** 5500 Inglis St

Website: [uuch.ca](http://uuch.ca)

12:30- **Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism Introduction to Taoist practice**

3:00pm Participants are invited to observe or join in Taoist/Confucian chanting and Taoist Tai Chi® practice

**At:** Halifax Independent School, 3331 Connaught Ave

Website: [taoist.org](http://taoist.org)

8:00pm **Earth Spirit Society of Nova Scotia e-Imbolc**

ESSNS invites you to join us on zoom as we celebrate the turning of the Wheel, for our e-Imbolc ritual and celebration, and stay afterward to meet us.

**At:** Online: [Zoom. The link is here.](#) e-Doors open at 8:00pm, the Ritual begins at 8:15.

Website: [essns.org](http://essns.org)

Monday, February 3

7:00pm **Brahma Kumaris Meditation & Social**

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization is the largest women-led spiritual organization in the world. With over 10,000 centers in 120 countries, we teach the meditation practice of Raja Yoga to connect to the core of peace within and to the Divine peace. Join us for an evening exploring the unique aspects of the Brahma Kumaris faith community. This is an open house evening for those who would like to have a 'taster' of the sacred space and philosophy of the Brahma Kumaris.

Afterwards, join us in person for a cup of chai and taste treat as we celebrate this year's theme of Joining hands in turbulent times.

**At:** 1 Cedarbrae Lane (Also online) 😊 [here's the Zoom link](#), password *yogapower*

Tuesday, February 4

7:00pm **Shambhala Centre Introduction to Meditation**

**At:** 1084 Tower Rd

Wednesday, February 5

5:00pm – **Ecology Action Centre Conversation: Faith and Climate Action**

7:00pm Join the Spiritual Coalition on Climate Action Nova Scotia (SCOCANS) and the Ecology Action Centre for a conversation panel about faith and climate action. SCOCANS is a volunteer run interfaith group in collaboration with the Ecology Action Centre's Energy & Climate Team dedicated to advocacy for the environment and social justice. SCOCANS members meet several times a year, supporting climate justice through actions such as letter writing campaigns, joining rallies, and more and is always looking for new members. Light snacks will be provided

**At:** Ecology Action Centre, 2705 Fern Lane.

Thursday, February 6

noon **Atlantic School of Theology Service**

The Atlantic School of Theology, like Interfaith Harmony Halifax itself, brings together multiple traditions, to combine the benefits of going deeply into one tradition with the benefits of cross-pollination and mutual appreciation. In this service we honour the journey of getting to know a god of many names.

AST is a Christian school of theology, with three founding parties: Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Church of Canada. It is affiliated with Saint Mary's University. A student team is preparing and leading the service. The guest speaker is Ben Robins, minister of the Universalist Unitarian Community of Halifax.

Join the service in the chapel, just down the street and on the right, at 660 Francklyn Street or online: [here's the Zoom link.](#)

7:00pm **Shaar Shalom Congregation (Conservative Judaism) Learning Session**

**At:** Online: [here's the Zoom link.](#)

Socials: [Website](#); [Facebook](#)

Saturday, February 8

2pm to **Bahá'í Community of Halifax production of the *Life of Táhirih***

4pm With digitized performances by local artists, *Life of Táhirih* shows the inspirational life of Táhirih through art, music and drama. The piece informs us of the historical context of the beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith and, in an artful and entertaining way, a key principle of the Bahá'í Faith: the equality of women and men.

Note: While there is no graphic detail, near the end of the 45 minute production, the martyrdom of Táhirih is discussed. This may be disturbing to smaller or more sensitive children. They would be welcome to leave the room to enjoy other parts of the Woodlawn Library. The production may be long for some children.

**At:** The Woodlawn Public Library Auditorium, 31 Eisener Blvd, Dartmouth.

Website: [halifaxbahai.org](http://halifaxbahai.org)

4pm – **Ummah Mosque Interfaith & Multicultural Festival**

8pm The Ummah Masjid is having an Interfaith & Multicultural Festival and inviting you on a journey of discovery! Partake in our Multicultural Cuisine Buffet, Mosque tour, Interfaith

dialogue, cultural art, free books & more!

**At:** 2510 St Matthias St

Sunday, February 9

10:30am **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Worship Service**

The service will be conducted by a lay member of the congregation; we will participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (some of other faiths may call it *Communion*): a tray of bread and another of water will be passed to attendees; you're welcome to partake but are under no obligation to do so.

**At:** 205 Lacewood Dr; there is parking behind the building and wheelchair access at both west and east entrances.

Also online: [Zoom link here.](#)

11:30am CANCELLED DUE to Weather: **Halifax Hindu Temple Vedanta Ashram Society Sunday Puja**

[Here's their description of the puja](#)

**At:** 6420 Young St

2-4pm **RESCHEDULED: Painting Workshop**

This has been rescheduled to tomorrow.

6:00pm **RESCHEDULED: Multifaith panel on music roles and traditions**

This panel is rescheduled to Saturday, February 15. See its entry below.

7:00pm- **Rezound Meditative Music Group Sound Bath**

8:00pm Rezound offers a non-denominational open mediation at St. David's in downtown Kijipuktuk/Halifax. This sound bath of improvised, live-sampled and spontaneously arranged ambient music invites attendees to a space of self-reflection, contemplation, meditation, emotional release, and prayer of any kind. Attendees can sink into the rich tones of live chant, overtone singing, throat singing, percussion and found objects, blended with electronics against the backdrop of immersive projection visuals.

**At:** St. David's, 1544 Grafton St.

Socials: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)

Monday, February 10

6-8pm **Interfaith Painting Workshop**

Come get artsy with us "Paint Night style"! A local artist will lead us in a painting activity along our theme: *Joining Hands In Turbulent Times*

Free. Family friendly. Space is limited, [Registration is required in advance – use this form.](#)

**At:** Shaar Shalom. We'll send you the address when you register.

Thursday, February 13

The Engagement Session has been moved to Zoom.

1-3pm **Interfaith Harmony Engagement Session**

Round table sharing of what we just experienced, what struck us, what stuck with us, what became part of us, what we're taking with us, what made us laugh, what made us think.

How did we do *Joining hands in turbulent times*?

Light refreshments will be provided.

**At: Online only. [Zoom link here.](#)**

**[Please register if you can.](#)**

6-8pm Evening Session of the above; same zoom link; again, please register.

Saturday, February 15

7:00pm **Multifaith panel on music roles and traditions**

**At: St. David's, 1544 Grafton St.**

# Sponsors



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