

UNWIHW 2025: Event Report

Introduction

Website <https://www.calgaryinterfaithcouncil.org/2025-united-nations-world-interfaith-harmony-week/>

In 2017, the inaugural year of the Calgary Interfaith Council, we participated in the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony week, submitted an event report and were amazed and grateful to receive First Prize. This was a significant support to us as we were emerging as an organization.

Since 2017, we have celebrated UNWIHW every February, including online events during the pandemic. Our participation in this opportunity has become a signature activity for the Calgary Interfaith Council and is one of the ways we actualize our mission:

The Calgary Interfaith Council seeks to build a more just and respectful Calgary through

- *deepening relationships across faith traditions*
- *celebrating diversity*
- *learning from and about each other*

In this report we will share an overview, brief summaries of the eleven events hosted during UNWIHW, photos, videos and media coverage.

Overview

Planning for the UNWIHW 2025 began in August of the previous year. We set up a Coordinating Committee and subcommittees for each of the particular events. The committees are populated with representatives from different faiths so that in our working together we are accomplishing the very goal of UNWIHW.

This year we had some exciting new evolutions. We hosted **8 Faithful Days Midday prayers for a World United**. Prayers were hosted by different faiths. We engaged directly with the issue of racism, **Anti racism through the Lens of Faith** as that is an experience shared by and occurring in different faith communities. Within the framework of UNWIHW we took the opportunity to do some member engagement work and reflect on the work we are doing and how we can improve, **Interfaith in Action**. Finally we made a direct effort to reach out to people under 35 years of age to encourage them to become involved in interfaith work with the **Big Mingle**.

A few events have become standbys. The Interfaith Potluck is always a wonderful opportunity to gather around diverse food and to have conversations about what our faiths have in common and in what ways they are unique. This event always leaves people feeling connected and with greater understanding. The Spoken Word and Choral Concert was particularly dynamic this year, with a visiting Congolese drummer and musician.

We continued to use social media to promote our events. We posted all of our events on Facebook and Instagram as well as through e-news communications with our email lists.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=calgary%20interfaith%20council>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/calgaryinterfaithcouncil/>

Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/@calgaryinterfaithcouncil5892>

[Posters are here](#)

[Photographs](#)

8 Faithful Days: Midday Prayers for a World United

12:00 – 12:30 pm, online

- Wednesday, Jan 29 Imam Soharwardy -Muslim
- Thursday, Jan 30 Rabbi Ilana Krygier- Jewish
- Friday, Jan 31 Jess McNally – Buddhist
- Monday, Feb 3 – Jayashree Bhat – Hindu
- Tuesday, Feb 4 – May Cummings – Bahai
- Wednesday, Feb 5 – Alicia Dykstra – Anglican
- Thursday, Feb 6 -Dr. Harjot Singh – Sikh
- Friday, Feb 7 – Rev. Tony Snow- Indigenous

13 - 20 participants each day. This series introduced the participants to prayers and practices from diverse faith traditions.

Jan. 31: Scriptural Sharing

Friday, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

Faith and Spirituality Centre
MacEwan Students' Centre, Room 487
402 Collegiate Blvd NW

30 participants

Feb 1: Opening Ceremony

Saturday, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Atrium, City Hall

70 participants. The Opening Ceremony featured representatives from all of the world's religions sharing scriptures, prayers, drumming or songs. We had participation from: children, young adults and adults; clergy and lay people; Indigenous and non indigenous. Participants were invited to a ritual of welcome combining the Namaste hand gesture with intentions of welcome and kindness from different traditions.

Feb 2: Interfaith in Action: Shaping a Shared Future

Sunday Feb 2 , 3:30 – 5:30 pm

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ,2021 17 Ave SW

Facilitated by Cam Stewart, formerly with the Alberta Human Rights Commission

24 participants. We took advantage of UNWIHW to do an appreciative inquiry exploration with our members. We used an interview matrix process to check out what we are doing well and what our members want to do more of. The results of this work are already informing our efforts to make CIC more helpful to the community in building bridges of understanding and mutual support.

Feb 2: Courage to Connect Interfaith Potluck

Sunday, 6 – 8:30 pm.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2021 17 Ave SW

Bring a favorite salad, main dish or desserts to share.

50 participants. The participants were guided in a sociometric exercise which grouped them according to personality type and then asked how that might affect their interaction with people of different faiths.

Feb 4: Panel: Interfaith Engagement with Reconciliation

Tuesday, 7 – 8:30 pm

Online or in person, Hillhurst United Church, 1227 Kensington Close NW

Facilitated by Rev. Tony Snow

25 participants. It was very inspiring to see how non settler religions are supporting reconciliation in 2025.

Feb 5: “Anti-racism through the Lens of Faith”

Wednesday, 7 – 9 pm

Action Dignity, 915 33 St NE

Lecture by Dr. Francis Boakaye, ED Action Dignity

20 participants This was the first time the Calgary Interfaith Council has engaged directly with the issue of racism. The presentation by Dr Boakaye and the follow up discussion was just a beginning.

Feb 6: Panel: “Courage to Connect: Navigating Interfaith Marriage” Stories from Four Interfaith Couples.

Thursday, 7 – 9 pm FCJ Centre 219 19 Ave SW

16 participants

Feb 7: The U-35 Big Mingle

Friday, 5:30 – 6:40 pm

BMO Community Room. Main Calgary Public Library

Meet others like you! Under 35s from all faith traditions who share a similar commitment for the harmonious flourishing of our city. Light supper provided.

6 participants. This was a very small group but there was interest in meeting again which was a desired outcome. Our goal is to develop a cohort of adults under 35 who model and provide leadership for interfaith collaborations in Calgary.

Feb 7: Chair of Christian Thought Lecture (The Bentall Lecture in Education and Theology: Teaching Global Religious tradition in Higher Education)

Friday, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Whelan Performance Hall, Main Calgary Public Library

120 participants. There were a number of post secondary students at this event who were engaged around the question of the study of world religions in higher education. This is a live issue as support for non STEM is being cut in universities.

Feb 9: Spoken Word and Concert

Sunday, 2 – 3:30 pm

Scarboro United Church 134 Scarboro Ave SW

100 participants . The highlight of this event was a visiting Congolese drummer with one of the choirs who got everyone singing and dancing.