



"The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them."
 (Swami Vivekananda)

Interfaith week is coming up in November; if you would like to organise an event and need some support please contact me. Also, remember to register your event on the Interfaith Week website: www.interfaithweek.org

Thank you

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Freedom to Share our Faith

How important is the freedom to share our faith? And how can two missionary faiths, Islam and Christianity, co-exist in today's world, and even support one another in promoting the freedom to speak and to change one's mind about ultimate questions, what has aptly been called 'soul freedom'? For many years now, Guildford Diocese has run an annual Summer School, and 2015 was no exception. Taking its cue from the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, this year's event was boldly titled, Finding Freedom, with a series of twenty sessions exploring the historic Biblical vision of freedom and its implications for our contemporary world.

One of the most popular sessions took the form of a conversation between Kauser Akhtar, Surrey Faith Links Adviser and Phil Simpson, an ordained minister based in Woking, which it was my privilege to convene. Kauser will no doubt need no introduction to readers, but Phil brought to the conversation many years of experience of working with the Church Mission Society to support Christian mission in the Middle East and Central Asia.

From my own non-expert perspective, what struck me most in Kauser's address was her courage in challenging those voices we hear in the mainstream which argue that Islam does not permit 'soul freedom'. Basing her argument on key



Main Faith Festivals in August 2015

- ◆ 15th—Feast of the Assumption (Christianity)
- ◆ 29th—Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)

texts, treaties and the example of the Prophet, she sought to show that a true engagement with Islamic tradition shows that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (Qur'an, 2:256). She presented Islamic 'Dawa' as an invitation to be issued and entered into freely, never imposed.

Phil for his part pointed to Jesus Christ's teaching on the 'Great Commandment' – to love God and neighbour – and the 'Great Commission' – to make disciples or learners in the way of Jesus. A Christian understanding of sharing faith, he said, should begin with grace, 'We are simply beggars showing other beggars where to find bread' (to paraphrase the late Indian theologian DT Niles). Drawing on the call of God to Abraham to be a blessing to all peoples (Genesis 12.1-3), Phil shared with us the recently drafted Christian-Muslim Forum 10 Commandments for Ethical Witness.

(http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/Ethical_Guidelines_for_Witnessv10.pdf)

A brief time of textual study enabled participants to consider the arguments for themselves, and the ready questions revealed a hunger to go deeper into a vast and important subject for which we had perhaps too little time. However, the Diocesan Discipleship, Vocation and Ministry Team is seeking to support further conversations of this kind, in partnership with others of good will – watch this space.

Revd Matt Prior, Adult Discipleship Adviser, and co-organiser of Summer School 2015.

Buddhist Lantern Floating Festival July 2015

I had the pleasure to be invited to represent the Southeast England faiths Forum at a Buddhist Shinnyo Lantern Floating Festival in the grounds of the Buddhist temple in a former country manor house at Long Ditton near Surbiton on Saturday evening 25 July 2015.

A few quotes from the programme:

"A Moment to Remember your Light ... Originating in the ancient Japanese Buddhist custom of remembering our friends and loved ones ... a ceremony not only to contemplate our own lives ... but also to encourage those living today to find ways to create peace and hope for ourselves and others. ... You are invited to [write] a personal message or prayer of remembrance, friendship and hope for the future ..."

I was welcomed at the entrance to the grounds and taken to a guest room inside the temple (the whole manor house is deemed to be the temple, not just the Main Altar Room with its image or statue of the Buddha lying in Nirvana, and a separate Shinnyo Room which I was later shown upstairs) where food and drink was available for guests. But the main activities were in the grounds out the back where everyone created their own lantern with equipment provided, including an electronic candle to switch on inside and your own message written on a plastic rectangular wrapping put over the outside.

Music and chanting took place late afternoon. Then as dusk was falling there was a more formal ceremony of chanting of sutras and mantras, and someone played a shakuhachi, a traditional Japanese bamboo flute, and people queued in turn to float their lanterns from a small floating platform at the edge of the lake.

H. Trevor Jones, SEEFF Treasurer



WHAT IS SHINNYO LANTERN FLOATING?

Originating in the ancient Japanese Buddhist custom of remembering our friends and loved ones who have passed away, the floating of lit lanterns traditionally offer a moment to express our gratitude to them.



Shinnyo lantern floating is a ceremony not only to contemplate our own lives as one link in a chain of countless others who came before us, but also to encourage those living today to find ways to create peace and hope for ourselves and others.

Lanterns are symbols of our own inner light; remembering our potential to empower others and create a hopeful and brighter future.

Offer a light in gratitude for the Past, in appreciation for the Present and with hope towards the Future.

For more information about the Shinnyo-en Buddhist Temple please visit: www.shinnyoenuk.org



Emotional and mental health issues are still amongst the most common health conditions affecting people in the UK. In fact one in four of us will experience some sort of problem of that nature this year! Anxiety and depression are amongst the most common problems and can affect people of all ages and from different cultural backgrounds.

For over 20 years Mary Frances Trust has been working with people who experience any kind of emotional or mental distress to help them get on with their lives again. As the lead for Community Connections Mental Health Services for Mole Valley and Epsom & Ewell, we also provide leadership and co-ordination in the development and delivery of community mental health services in Surrey. Our services include:

- ⇒ Advice and information: Telephone or one to one support with housing, debt and benefits and more.
- ⇒ Groups & activities: Programme of groups and activities and self-help groups for people with anxiety, bi-polar or hoarding disorders as well as a group for carers.
- ⇒ Wellbeing : Exercise classes as well as holistic massages and reflexology therapies
- ⇒ Skills Development: Courses, training and workshops, one to one support to access education, volunteering positions and social activities .
- ⇒ IT Skills Training.
- ⇒ Social and Peer Support: Cafés at The Crescent Centre Leatherhead and at The Brickfield Centre Epsom are open to people with any type of mental health or emotional well being issues.

Potential users can self refer to access any of our services, just give us a ring or complete the form on our website.

Telephone 01372 375400 Website: <http://www.maryfrancestrust.org.uk>

Text 07929 024722 Contact e mail: info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk



Free Report from Faith Action



FaithAction has produced a number of ground-breaking reports that help to understand and highlight the work that faith groups are doing in the public health arena. By collecting stories from members they have been able to show examples of best practice and to identify some of the issues and restrictions that faith groups face – as well as the 'faith-factors' that make what they do unique.

These reports cover the topics of homelessness, alcohol use, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and domestic abuse, and look at how faith groups and organisations can make a difference.

To read the reports please visit: www.faithaction.net/portal/faith-and-health/our-projects/

Faith and Culture in the News

- [United, we can protect our young people from extremists](#)
- [Faith leaders unite to demand rights for migrants](#)
- [The Buddhist and the Neuroscientist](#)
- [Activist who took down Confederate flag drew on her faith and on new civil rights awakening](#)
- [Muslim-Jewish Group Organizes Rally For Equal Employment Opportunities](#)
- [David Cameron: extremist ideology is 'struggle of our generation'](#)
- ["We need inspirational narratives that infuse and enthuse us with the joys of being British."](#)
- [Muslims Raised Over \\$100,000 To Help Rebuild Black Churches In The South](#)
- ['Oldest' Koran fragments found in Birmingham University](#)
- [How The 'Nones' Can Find A Sense Of Community Outside Of Religion](#)
- [At Chattanooga Mosque, Grief Mixes With Fear of Revenge](#)
- [Can you make schools integrate?](#)



New Surrey Information Point website

The new Surrey Information Point (SIP) website contains of thousands of services from small independent care providers to charities and advice services. It is our comprehensive central online resource on local care and support options, helping you to make the right choices about care and support for you and your family.

The new site has a number of new features to make it easier to use. These include:

- An improved search function which knows the difference between a search for a 'care home' and 'home care'
- A spell checker to help find the results you are looking for
- Google translate to support those who don't have English as a first language.

Further developments to SIP are planned in the coming months to improve the website further.

Visit the website to find out more about the great support available in local communities:

<https://www.surreyinformationpoint.org.uk/>



Local information and support for you and your family

Surrey County Council's new Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy

On 23rd June Cabinet approved Surrey County Council's new Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy. The Strategy aligns with the Council's Corporate Strategy and will help to ensure services support all Surrey residents and their staff are healthy, safe and confident about their future. The Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to deliver fair and inclusive services to meet the needs of all Surrey's communities. It also reflects their commitment to be a best practice employer for all our staff and reflect the diversity of Surrey's population.

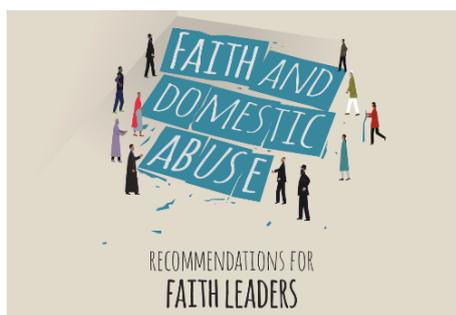
The Strategy sets the following four priorities:

1. Ensure Surrey's children, adults and families are supported and helped to lead more independent lives.
2. Support all children and young people to participate and succeed in education, training and employment.
3. Support preventative actions to reduce health inequalities and increase wellbeing for our communities.
4. Be a local employer of first choice for people from all our diverse communities, particularly for disabled and younger people.

For further information, please visit the following link:

<http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-fairness-and-respect>

Faith and Domestic Abuse



Domestic abuse is part of our society and one of the most unattractive parts. It's not necessarily the easiest conversation topic, or something that we would like to read about – however, it is a part of society that faith communities and particularly faith leaders can do something about.

Faith Action have launched their newest publication, a collection of recommendations for faith leaders in how to deal with domestic abuse in their communities, aimed at starting an oft-neglected but vital conversation.

The recommendations it contains come from a series of interviews held with faith leaders, faith-based organisations, domestic abuse organisations, and many others. Videos of our interviews with faith leaders accompanying the guidance can be found here: [Recommendations for Faith Leaders](#)

For the Direct link to the publication:

http://www.faithaction.net/portal/wp-content/uploads/FaithAction_Faith_and_Domestic_Abuse.pdf

National IFN local inter faith practitioner event London, 30 July



The Inter Faith Network held a day event for local inter faith practitioners on 30 July at the NCVO in London. The event brought people together from across the UK to share experiences; and to discuss ideas, challenges and opportunities.

The event included presentations from local practitioners, discussion, workshops and sharing of good practice about a range of practical issues, and explored groups' thoughts about the future of local inter faith activity. For more information please visit: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Starbucks Youth Action Grants

Starbucks Youth Action Grants of up to £1,000 are available to inspire and empower young people to make a difference in their communities and also available is an additional contribution for youth workers support time. Young people in England, Scotland and Wales aged between 16 and 24 years, who are not in education or employment are eligible to apply. Two young people need to lead the project and engage a further 50 young people throughout the course of the project. The young people will need to have a youth worker/training organisation able to support them throughout the project.

Although the programme is primarily focused on young people not in education or employment, strong applications from other applicants will be considered.

Funding is available for projects that provide a positive benefit to the local community and that look to enhance the young leaders employability and leadership skills.

Applications can now be made and the funding is open to applications until March 2016. These will be considered monthly with the deadlines as follows:

- Round 1 - 3rd August 2015
- Round 2 - 1st September 2015
- Round 3 - 5th October 2015
- Round 4 - 2nd November 2015
- Round 5 - 1st December 2015
- Round 6 - 4th January 2016
- Round 7 - 1st February 2016
- Round 8 - 7th March 2016

More information as well as the application form and budget template, to be submitted with the application, can be found at: <http://www.ukyouth.org/our-work-with-young-people/corporate-responsibility/youth-action#.VaO-3k1ASmF>

Inter Faith Youth Trust Small Grants Programme

Grants of between £200 and £500 are awarded for proposals for inter faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith in understanding and co-operation. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Projects should take place during Inter Faith Week (15-21 November 2015).

Funding is available for the following:

- Learning by children and young people (11-25 years old) from different faiths about different faiths, through social action.
- Co-operation and understanding between faiths which preferably involve young people in planning, running, and evaluating; and which promote equal opportunities.
- Increasing understanding between people of faith and of no faith.

UK based organisations are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to non-statutory organisations. The deadline for applications is 15 September 2015.

For more information please visit: http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/?page_id=8

UPCOMING EVENTS

FLOAT CANDLE-LIT GRAPEFRUIT SKINS ON THE RIVER WEY AT SEND REMEMBER HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI (70TH ANNIVERSARY) SATURDAY 8 AUGUST 2015, 7PM ONWARDS

We are meeting to remember that the only time so far that nuclear bombs have been used in war was in 1945 over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Woking Action for Peace is one of hundreds of groups worldwide campaigning to make the world a safer place by persuading the nuclear powers to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

This unique ceremony will begin as daylight fades. There will be time before this for people to read out a poem or short passage or say a few words. Come and join us at the New Inn, Send GU23 7EN, from 7pm if you would like to have a meal first.

Woking Action for Peace, Contact Mary on 01483 768228 or Allison on 01483 725439

Interfaith Cricket Match

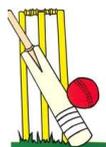
Monday 10th August, 4.30 pm for a 5.00pm start

West Byfleet Recreational Ground, Parvis Road, West Byfleet, Surrey KT14 6LS

Surrey Faith Links is organising an interfaith cricket match; all welcome to attend.

Shah Jahan Mosque vs Diocese of Guildford

Sponsored by Woking Asian Business Forum



Heritage Open Days in Surrey 2015 10th - 13th September 2015

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. Every year in September, buildings of every age, style and function throw open their doors, ranging from castles to factories, town halls to tithe barns, parish churches to Buddhist temples. It is a once-a-year chance to discover hidden architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities which bring to life local history and culture. Free of charge and literally on people's doorstep, Heritage Open Days is an event for everyone, whatever their background, age and ability. Please visit the Heritage Open Days website for a full list of events happening in Surrey: www.heritageopendays.org.uk

The Shah Jahan Mosque

Date: Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September.

Time: 12.30pm - 2.30pm.

Address: Oriental Road, Woking GU22 7BA

The Peace Garden at the Muslim Burial Ground

Date: Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September.

Time: 1.30pm - 3pm.

Address: Monument Road, Maybury GU21 5LW

Exhibition: Leatherhead & India

Leatherhead Community Association,

Leatherhead Institute, 67 High Street,

Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8AH. Saturday and Sunday 10.00 am—4.00 pm

Many churches and other places of worship will be open to visit, please visit:

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

'Discovering the Hospice Labyrinth'

We are inviting groups from within the community to visit the Hospice to learn about the Labyrinth and to experience it for themselves. The visit will include a brief presentation about labyrinths, their history and attributed features, followed by the opportunity to walk the labyrinth, facilitated by our trained labyrinth guides. The visit will take place from 2.30–4.00pm on the 14 September

To book a visit please email Revd Dr Steve Nolan Chaplain
Princess Alice Hospice, West End Lane, Esher Surrey KT10 8NA
t:01372 461806, m: 07793 773072, e: chaplain@pah.org.uk, w: www.pah.org.uk



Trustee Training Workshops

Health and social care lawyers Hempsons are hosting a number of free training workshops for trustees of charities, aiming to provide information on governance and their role in a charity, such as legal duties, conflicts of interests, and decision-making.

Hempsons London, 16th September 2015, 09:45 - 13:00

Hempsons London, 16th September 2015, 14:15 - 17:30

For more information and to register please visit: <http://www.hempsons.co.uk/events/>

Enhancing Practice, Understanding Poverty: A Guildford Perspective

St Saviour's Church, Woodbridge Road, Friday 18th September, 9:30 am—2.30 pm

Although Guildford is generally seen as a wealthy place, there is, unfortunately, poverty across the borough.

A free conference is taking place aimed at 'grassroots' volunteers working in the Guildford area, to inform them of changes on the horizon, such as Universal Credit, and their implications. It is being organised by Guildford Advice Services, a project that promotes collaboration between local advice agencies.

Speakers will include the chief executive of Catalyst, Haydn Morris; Guildford Citizens Advice Centre bureau manager, Joan O'Byrne, and its training and quality of advice manager, Sharon Downs; Jo Cookes and Nicola Bassini, from the Diocese of Guildford's community engagement team; Denise Graves and Jess Hogan-Smith from Voluntary Action South West Surrey; Guildford Borough Council's money advisor Mark Beasley; and representatives from the Surrey Welfare Rights Unit.

There will also be workshops, time for networking and discussion, plenty of literature and information to take away, plus refreshments and lunch.

For delegates, the conference aims to:

- Enhance your skills as volunteers by sharing your experiences with others
- Develop your communication skills
- Give you an awareness of welfare reform and it's likely impact in the Guildford area
- Give you an opportunity to highlight the areas in which you need more support and information and how this can best be delivered to you
- Develop your knowledge of other agencies, and services, in the Guildford area

For more information or to book a place: <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/enhancing-practice-understanding-poverty-a-guildford-perspective-tickets-17065049021>



Do animals have moral rights?

Everyone is welcome!! Do come along and join in



Sunday September 20th 7 for 7.30pm

Daniel Hall, Long Garden Walk, Farnham, GU9 7HX

Humanism assigns great value to human beings but what are our moral obligations towards other animals?

Roger Haines explores a Humanist perspective on Animal Welfare and Animal Liberation and how this might be different from a religious one. He considers questions such as: Does moral philosophy justify the idea of 'Animal Rights'? Do animals know they are conscious? Do they make moral judgements? He will include issues like vivisection, farming, religious slaughter, blood sports, zoos and vegetarianism.

Tea & coffee included. Other drinks available from the Hop Blossom Pub close by. Donation £2 to help costs.

Hosted by **farnhamHUMANISTS**

Enquiries: 01252 723044 www.farnham.humanist.org.uk



International Day of Peace Celebration

Surrey Faith Links and Woking People of Faith organise an annual competition for primary schools in Woking where students are asked to either make a poster, write a poem or story on the theme of 'Peace'. This year the question is: 'How can children help to bring about world peace?'

You are invited to attend the Peace Day Celebration which will take place on Sunday 20th September at 12.00 pm at Mercia Walk, Woking (town centre). The winners will be awarded prizes by the Mayor of Woking, there will also be live entertainment and short sayings of peace from the different faiths.

This is a public event and we would like to encourage everyone to stop by for one hour to express our desire and commitment for peace.



If you would like your school or youth group to participate or for more information please contact either Simon Trick nstricks@yahoo.com or Kauser Akhtar: Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk

The Meeting Room

Drop in centre for homeless, unemployed and socially isolated

Tuesdays, 12:15-15:00, Kings Church, Longmead Road, KT19 9BU

Wednesdays, 11:00—14:00, St Barnabus Church, Temple Road, KT19 8HA

Make new friends, support and advice on homelessness, refreshments and hot lunch.

No charge, all welcome

Living Well in Woking - Monday 28 September – Sunday 4 October 2015

In partnership with Surrey County Council, the NHS and our colleagues at Freedom Leisure Woking Borough Council is hosting a Living Well Week at the end of September 2015. On offer will be a fantastic range of health and wellbeing activities in the Borough to inspire people to have fun, be active, eat well and be more informed about how to stay healthier.

This is a community wide event, open to all public, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations and the business community. More information will be provided between now and September but you're welcome to register your interest or discuss hosting a headline event now by contacting John Maguire, Living & Ageing Well Coordinator, by email john.maguire@woking.gov.uk or telephone 01483 743352.



Guildford & Godalming Interfaith Forum will be having their annual multi-faith event on 15th November to celebrate Interfaith Week. This will take place at St. Nicolas Parish Room, Millmead, Guildford at 3.00p.m.

The Mayors of Guildford & Godalming will both be taking part, as well as members of the Jewish, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh and Bahá'í communities and we look forward to welcoming people of all Faiths for an afternoon of fellowship.

As part of the National Garden Scheme (NGS), The Baron and Baroness Sweerts de Landas Wyborgh will open their beautiful gardens at Dunsborough Park, Ripley, to members of the general public on Saturday 12 September, 2015, between 1pm-5pm. Attendees will have access to 6 acres of beautifully landscaped and formal gardens; and of particular interest at this time of the year, have the added opportunity to view the 40 different varieties of flowering dahlias (including the "hot border" with vibrant autumnal colours). The entrance fee for adults is £6 and children are free. Homemade teas will be provided by volunteers from the Princess Alice Hospice, the proceeds of which will go towards supporting their work. For more information on Dunsborough Park, please visit their website www.dunsboroughpark.com

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum Events

- ⇒ 'What Limits, if any, should there be to Freedom of Speech' - Jewish, Christian and Muslim views followed by refreshments, questions and discussion - Churchgate House, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham, KT11 3EJ at 7 for 7.30pm on Tuesday, 29th September
- ⇒ 'Annual Gala' on Saturday, 21st November at 7 for 7.30pm at the Grenfell Centre, Claremont Fancourt School, Claremont, Cobham, KT11 2JL KT10.



For more information about EMF activities please contact Geoffrey Morris: geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk



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Designed & Edited by:
Kausar Akhtar

A decorative graphic of a pen nib, rendered in red and white, pointing towards the bottom right corner of the page.