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Main Faith Festivals in January 2022

- 5: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh)
- 6: Epiphany (Christian)
- 12: Birthday of Swami Vivekananda (Hindu)
- 13/14: Pongal (Hindu)
- 16: Shinran Memorial Day (Buddhist)
- 17: Tu B'Shevat (Jewish)
- 25: Honen Memorial Day (Buddhist)
- 30: Jashn-e Sadeh (Zoroastrian)

For a description of the festivals please visit: [Religious Festivals](https://www.surreyfaithlinks.org.uk/religious-festivals)

"Every morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most."

(The Buddha)

Plenty of events took place during Interfaith Week this year in Surrey, some of which you can read about in this newsletter and interfaith forums are busy planning their events for 2022. The uncertainty makes it difficult to plan events but we have got through it last year and we can do it again this year!

Wishing you a very happy Christmas to all those celebrating, season's greetings to all and Happy New Year.

Kawther Hashmi

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Multi Faith Prayer Vigil

40 people joined us at our Interfaith Week Prayer Vigil in the Peace Garden on Saturday 20th November at 3pm, as we remembered and celebrated everyone whose lives had been affected by the pandemic. Included were those who had passed away, those who gave us incredible service and as we continue to look to the future.

Short prayers were said from Simon Trick of the Baha'i faith, Bishop Andrew Watson of the Christian faith Dr Syed Naqvi from the Muslim faith and Keith Scott from the Quaker faith. Unfortunately our Buddhist, Jewish and Hindu friends were unable to join us on the day. Everyone present placed an LED candle in remembrance of a loved one which was led by the High Sherriff of

Surrey, Julie Llewellyn. The Mayor of Woking, Liam Lyons opened the ceremony with positive comments. The Lord Lieutenant gave closing remarks and laid a wreath.



Tea, Coffee and Hot Chocolate was provided from a vintage van by Mel's Marvellous Cakes so we gathered afterwards for a hot drink and a chat.

You can watch a recording of the event by clicking on the link [here](#).

Interfaith Service

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum (GGIFF) were very happy to have a face-to-face indoor meeting for their annual Multi-faith event at St. Nicolas in Guildford and to welcome a good number of supporters from past times. The theme this year was 'Humanity's Awakening - Rebuilding Communities'.



With so many pressing concerns including Climate Change, Mental Health, the Pandemic, Refugees, Wars and Famine it was left to each of the speakers to choose the main focus of their presentation, and we enjoyed informed and uplifting talks from six Faith traditions, ending with a closing prayer: 'A prayer for our earth' by Pope Francis read by the Mayor of Godalming, Councillor Mike Steele.

Two of our regular speakers had to travel at short Notice, but we welcomed 3 new speakers this year including Buddhist Elizabeth Mpyosi from Care4Calais, Dany Varghese - South India Catholics Chaplain at Surrey University and his wife Athila-Rose, who sang a Keralan Hymn, and Salem Sabur - Mental Health Outreach Officer with Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum. Ray Wicksman, Bibhas Neogi & Mandisa Nkana-Taylor shared insights from the Jewish, Hindu & Bahá'í Scriptures. It was very evident that each of these Faiths are inspired by the same Source and that 'we have more in common than divides us...'

In her closing comments Rev. Sheena Gabriel said that GGIFF would like more people to join our Core Group, meeting bi-monthly throughout the year, to help plan our Public Events, and several people put their names forward.

£80 was donated for Guildford Action. Watch the recordings of the speakers [here](#)

Reported by: Carolyn Neogi, Baha'i representative of GGIFF

Christian Muslim Forum



The Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson hosted the Christian Muslim Forum on Thursday 25th November. Christian and Muslim leaders gave updates on interfaith activities and the main focus of the meeting was climate change and how faith communities can play a positive role. There were theological discussions from the Christian and Islamic perspective on stewardship followed by practical suggestions.

The Diocese of Guildford have set a target to be carbon neutral by 2030, churches are re-using, recycling, and reducing waste as well as considering more sustainable forms of heating and reducing carbon emissions. One of the suggestions were to install electric charging points in the church car parks.

Little Amal

Cardinal Vincent Nichols led a service of prayer and reflection having welcomed 'Little Amal' to Westminster Cathedral. Amal is a 3.5 metre-tall puppet of a 10-year old unaccompanied Syrian refugee whose journey



across Europe, from the Turkey-Syria border to Manchester, is intended to highlight the plight of unaccompanied child migrants and the dangers they face.

Reflecting on the occasion Cardinal Vincent said: "The message is very simple... that people who are desperate for almost whatever reason, but certainly as a result of violence, persecution or absolute poverty.

They are our brothers and sisters... And as Christians, in them, we are invited to see the person of Jesus. We have to let that rumble around in our hearts, our minds and in our conscience and say, "Can we not do better for these brothers and sisters of ours?" [Click here](#) to find out more.

Read The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton's most recent [Refugee Crisis Newsletter](#) to find out what the Diocese is doing to help migrants and refugees.

Multicultural/translated social media posts for Flu vaccine and Covid-19 booster

[Click here](#) for multicultural/translated social media statics for the winter vaccination public facing campaign: Boost Your Immunity This Winter with the flu vaccine and COVID-19 Booster.

New COVID-19 regulations in England Update from Interfaith Network UK

First, while the NHS COVID pass will become mandatory for entry into venues where large crowds gather, this requirement will not apply to our places of worship. Communal Worship, Weddings, Funerals and other ceremonies to mark key life events will all be exempt. Receptions which take place after such events, such as Wedding receptions, will need to comply with the new requirement but only where 500 or more people are involved in indoor venues.

Second, the legal requirement to wear face masks in certain public indoor venues will be extended to our places of worship and some other public spaces. However, there are exemptions for those leading a service or giving a reading, and there is a reasonable excuse exemption which allows people to remove a face covering whilst singing if they wish to do so. Exemptions for those unable to wear masks, again familiar from earlier this year, will also be provided."

IFN digital 'surgeries'

IFN is continuing to offer member Local Inter Faith Organisations one to one 'surgeries' for half an hour to talk through different aspects of digital communications from the strategic side to specifics of using Zoom, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you would like to book a half hour session with Ashley Beck please email him at Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk



Did you see that coming?

A fantastic video from Surrey Police on the warning signs for Child Exploitation, please [watch here](#) and share to make people aware.

Stress and Mental Health at Work

Employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it.

Find out more about what stress is, what can cause stress, the signs of stress, examples of how to do a stress risk assessment and much more help and support for workers at the Health and Safety Executive website:

[Stress at work - HSE](#)



Surrey County Council launches Climate Change Delivery Plan at Symposium

On Wednesday 24th November Surrey County Council launched their Climate Change Delivery Plan at the Surrey Hills AONB Climate Change and Biodiversity Symposium, following the plan's approval by Cabinet last month.



The event, hosted at the University of Surrey, was chaired by Radio 4 and BBC Broadcaster Jim Al Khalili and featured keynote speaker Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England.

During the event, Tim Oliver spoke about the need to take action on climate change and Surrey's commitment to be net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030 and as a county by 2050.

Tim Oliver said, "Climate Change is the topic of our generation and it's essential we take action to protect the environment for future generations in Surrey."

Marisa Heath, who was also on the panel debate, spoke about the recently published Climate Change Delivery Plan and the need to work closely with partners and other organisations to achieve the goals.

Throughout the afternoon and evening, a number of talks and workshop were held to discuss creative solutions to our climate and biodiversity crisis.

The evening event, which was also live-streamed online, included a panel debate with national and regional experts on the impact of climate change. There was also an opportunity for the audience, both in person and online, to put questions to the panel. During the event, Surrey County Council showed a video on their Climate Change Delivery Plan, which you can [watch here](#)

You can keep up to date with the climate change team by signing up to their newsletter [here](#). It will include regular updates, funding opportunities and upcoming events from across the community.

For more information about what the Council are doing to tackle climate change and what you can do to help, please visit their [website here](#).

Climate conversations

Do you want to talk with others about climate change, but you're not quite sure how? Please visit the website for more information:

[climate conversations - Sustainable St Albans](#)



Apply for free mobile connectivity to support your charity

If you're a charity that needs support for digital inclusion programmes, you can apply for free Vodafone SIMs, each loaded with 20GB data plus unlimited calls and texts to be used over 6 months. You can use these however you like - for example, to help stay in touch with service users, or deliver training to people in need.

Find out more [here](#)

Cold Weather Preparations

Keep Warm Keep Well leaflet

This leaflet provides advice on staying warm over the winter and checking on neighbours and relatives who may be vulnerable during cold weather, in order to reduce illness and deaths. Materials will continue to be available online to help local organisations communicate with the public.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-warm-keep-well-leaflet-gives-advice-on-staying-healthy-in-cold-weather>

E-learning on helping people living in cold homes

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/cold-homes/>

A new bereavement service launches in East Surrey

Bereavement Advice & Support Redhill, Reigate Area (BASRRA) service launched on Monday, 1st November 2021.

BASRRA offers a listening ear, advice and signposting to adults who have been bereaved, and is a community organisation for the local Redhill/Reigate area, which is run by trained volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please contact admin@basrra.org.

For further information, please visit their website, Facebook, call 01444 391183 or email admin@basrra.org

Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum Newsletter

Find out the latest from Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum [here](#)

If you would like to receive the newsletter, please [click here](#)



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Household Support Grant Funding

The Department of Work and Pensions announced a Household Support Grant of £500 million to be allocated across the UK. Surrey County Council has been allocated £5.3m to help those most vulnerable residents who are struggling financially. The funding has been provided to help with food, energy bills, water and other essentials.

Criteria for allocation is that 50% of the funding needs to be allocated to those families most in financial need with households with children under 19 as at 31 March 2022. At this stage funding has already been allocated to those families whose children are entitled to benefits-related Free School Meals with a £15 supermarket voucher for use over the October half term. Surrey County Council are reviewing whether this can be extended further to other upcoming school holidays this winter and spring. More information here [Surrey County Council to continue providing vulnerable families with supermarket food vouchers over October half term | Surrey News \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

In 2022 the Surrey Community Foundation application rounds will be themed:

[Young People](#) – supporting the range of challenges faced by young people.

The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 25th April 2022.

Successful projects will receive funding in July/August.

[Wellbeing](#) – Advance people's wellbeing, physical and mental health and safety.

The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 25th July 2022.

Successful projects will receive funding in October/November.

[Equity & Inclusion](#) – Reduce disadvantage and increase access to services, strengthen community cohesion and build social capacity.

The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 10th October 2022.

Successful applicants will receive funding in January/February 2023.

Better Care Fund grant programme

The Mid-Surrey LJCg recently gave approval for a Better Care Fund grant programme to support the LJCg small grants to address community solutions. The fund is for VCFS organisations who support people resident or registered with a GP in Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Banstead and East Elmbridge. It will fund existing schemes which wish to increase or add to the service already funded, or new schemes or pilot projects related to the outcomes framework detailed within the application documents.

The grant programme is now live and the application details can be found at [Healthy Surrey - Surrey Downs Better Care Fund Grant Programme](#).

Applications can be made for a maximum of up to £50,000

The deadline for applications is 5pm Monday 3 January.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum Events 2022

Some dates for you to pencil in your dairies for 2022:

My Judaism, differences among Jews—Wednesday 9th February at the North West Surrey Synagogue, 7.00 pm (refreshments) for 7.30 pm start.

My Islam, differences among Muslims. May (date TBC), 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start.

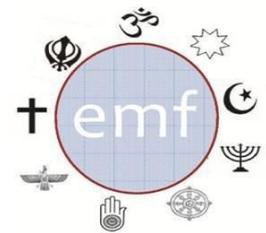
EMF AGM, Tuesday 21st June, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start

Visit to the Peace Garden (Woking) and Brookwood Cemetery. Tuesday 13th September

My Christianity, differences among Christians. Wednesday 16th November, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start at St John's Church, Walton-on-Thames

Further updates to follow in the next newsletter. For more information please contact: Kawther Hashmi, Secretary, Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum

E: KawtherH@smef.org.uk | M: 07827 974792



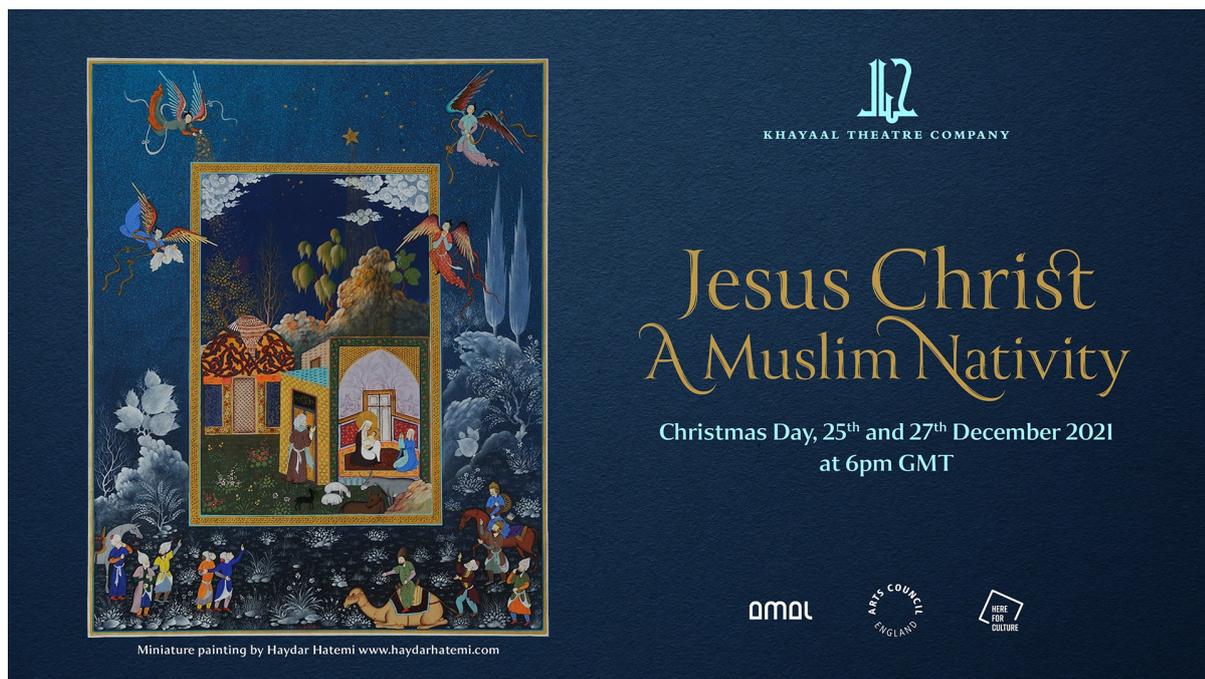
The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton have organised their annual Justice & Peace Assembly which will take place in-person on Saturday 15 January 2022, 9.30am to 2pm at St Francis' School, Southgate Drive, Crawley, RH10 6RP.

This year's event 'To A Safer Shore?' focusses on the considerable difficulties and challenges faced by individuals and families of all ages who are

compelled to leave their homes and seek safety - and longed for sanctuary - in countries that can be considerable distances from their homes.



Speakers this year include Canon Rob Esdaile who will provide insight on Pope Francis' [Encyclical Fratelli Tutti](#), Aidan Cantwell, from the [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) who will explore current legislation in the UK and how best we can respond, and John Paul de Quay, from the [Ecological Conversion Group](#), who will examine the links between the plight of refugees and climate crisis. [Click here](#) to secure you place.



25th December, 6pm GMT | 1pm EST | £5 per household - [TICKETS](#)

27th December, 6pm GMT | 1pm EST | £5 per household - [TICKETS](#)

22nd December, 7pm | Join us live in person at Left-Bank, Leeds, UK - [TICKETS](#)

A dark night. The kingdom of a cruel king. In a sacred temple, a woman preparing for worship lights a lamp only to be startled by a much brighter light. An angel conveys the heavenly news of a blessed child. Jesus, peace be upon him.

A reverent and atmospherically rich performance of the story of the prophet known as the Spirit of God follows, from his miraculous birth to his glorious ascension to heaven.

Khayaal's Christmas storytelling offering presents an episodic account of the life of Jesus interspersed with his teachings from the Qur'an and the Bible based on traditional Islamic and Christian sources. Performance by Eleanor Martin. Running time 40mins. Following the performance, there will be a Q&A conversation for those who wish to participate.

All proceeds go to registered charities Luton Foodbank and Khayaal Theatre.

Film adaptation commissioned by The Compass Network at Norton Rose Fulbright 2020.

Miniature painting promotional image by Haydar Hatemi <https://www.haydarhatemi.com/>



Surrey Family Learning offer FREE online courses for parents, grandparents and carers who live in Surrey. New courses can be found here:

[Supporting Parents](#)

Woking Debates Programme 2022

15 January: **What is gender? Does it need to affect how we relate to each other?**

19 February: **Local Democracy: Is it working?**

12 March: **Disunited kingdom: How much longer will the UK hold together?**

23 April: **Do we have an effective welfare state?**

21 May: **'The Bundle'**, a play by Journeymen Theatre about immigration

18 June: **Does military intervention work?**

The debates will take place at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG

10.30 am Refreshments for 11.00 am start till 12.30 pm. Entrance is free, donations welcome.

This is the tenth year of the debates. Started by Woking Action for Peace, they are organised with the support of several local groups to encourage active participation in our community by looking at underlying issues facing us. We believe that together we can find ways forward to a more equal, peaceful and united world.

The Woking debates are organised by: Woking Action for Peace, Surrey Faith Links, Woking Environment Action, Woking People of Faith, Woking Soroptimists and Woking Quakers.

For more information please contact: Keith Scott: 01483 824980 | keithsc_2000@yahoo.com

For more information please visit: www.wokingdebates.com and/or follow on Facebook



SMEF Reflection and Devotional Meetings

Since the beginning of the Pandemic SMEF's Bahá'í Trustee, Hayet Shahrezaey, has hosted weekly SMEF Reflection and Devotional meetings for all SMEF member groups, meeting every Wednesday at 11.00a.m. on Zoom. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82043959919?pwd=dE8zZE9OZUtoTXFocGtKbFFxTjQ1QT09>

Meeting ID: 820 4395 9919 | Passcode: 686479

For more information please contact: hayetaskri@hotmail.com

Live Streaming of Religious Services:

A Church Near you: https://www.achurchnearyou.com/live-stream/?tags=Live_stream

Diocese of Arundel and Brighton: <https://www.dabnet.org/>

Surrey Muslim Association: <http://www.surreymuslims.org/Resources/>

Join Wat Phra Dhammakaya Buddhist Temple in daily meditation: <https://www.facebook.com/DMCtvLondon/>

Surrey Faith Links, Surrey Ethnic Minority Forum

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