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A Newsletter of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable

THE ROUNDTABLE



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Advent Season

Advent in the Christian calendar begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas day and ends on Christmas Eve. The word Advent comes from the Latin which means “coming” or “arrival.”

During earlier times, Advent was a season marked by penitence and the avoidance of public pleasures, but over the years the Season of Advent has taken on a much more joyous character—one of hope and anticipation. This change in emphasis has been reflected in the liturgical colors used historically.

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Cheers from the Chair *Welcome to our first issue!*

Yes. “Cheers” to all of you that help with all the faith cooperation efforts in this Great State of Utah. And “Cheers” to all the efforts of our Executive Director Rev. Ivan Candese, Wendy Stovall, Elaine Emmi and Leslie Dorius-Jones for getting our first Interfaith Roundtable newsletter off the ground.

There are many more Cheers to be given, too numerous for this newsletter, ranging from those involved with our hosting the North American Interfaith Network Convention last summer, our ongoing Interfaith Musical Tribute Committee, our New Interfaith MONTH Committee, our new Education Committee, our New Peace Initiative Chair as well as our many new Board members from various faiths. And I must mention Brian Farr specifically, because if it was not for him, I would not be who I am today.

We are growing and we are needed. The Roundtable is the substitute for mountains and walls that once protected people. It is peace, love and understanding that is the new protection for people. And understanding requires that religions and

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SLIR Chair Alan Bachman at the Utah State Capitol

Welcome >>>

Cheers from the Chair / *Continued*



faiths no longer be insular, but come out and meet each other person to person. Simply reading about other faiths is not enough.

The religions and major belief systems of the world are not the problem with the world today. The problem today is that many do not follow the primary principles of their own faith or belief system.

Just like a gold mine, our life affirming faiths and belief systems take a little bit of work to find all the gold nuggets. But they are there for those willing to enter the mine and explore. And it is amazing how many of those gold nuggets are similar in concept, while taking many forms and languages.

It is no accident that Christians are lighting their trees, that Jews are lighting their Menorah (which in many ways is like a tree), and that Hindus are celebrating the

Festival of Lights; all during these darkest days of the year.

As my good friend Rabbi Zippel has said, and I will paraphrase, we cannot remove darkness by becoming “darkness removers,” we can only remove darkness by light. Once light fills a room, all the darkness is gone. Whether it is my Jewish friend Orit whose name means “light” or my Muslim friend Noor whose name means “light,” I hope we all during this season try our best to see the light in everyone.

Most if not all faiths require their members to love others. The Roundtable provides that opportunity. And as a result of being part of the Interfaith Roundtable, one strengthens their own belief system.

Faith Cooperation (Interfaith) is not about losing one's own faith or weakening it. Faith Cooperation is about strengthening our own identities as we learn to respect and love the diversity of all creation.

Once again, I welcome all of you to our newsletter, I welcome all the new faiths and belief systems that join our Faith Cooperation efforts, and I look forward to the many articles in the newsletters that further our mission of love, peace and understanding.

Lots of Love and Blessings,
Alan Scott Bachman
Chair, SLIR

Advent Season / *Continued*



The primary color was purple, reflecting the penitential nature of the season with only the third Sunday using pink or rose as a sign of rejoicing and anticipation, awaiting the birth of Christ.

There are two popular symbols that have commonly been used during the Advent season. One is the Advent wreath and the other is the Advent calendar. The Advent wreath is circular in design, made from evergreen with four candles around the edges and one candle in the middle.

The four candles around the wreath are either purple or blue, with the middle candle being pink. Each Sunday one of the candles around the circle is lit followed by a short scripture reading, and prayer. Each Sunday previous candles are relit with an additional one also lit.

The pink candle is lit on the third or fourth Sunday according to different churches and traditions.

The light of the candles is an important symbol of the season for Christians, reflecting the belief that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into darkness to bring newness, life, and hope.

The Advent calendar, the second popular symbol of Advent has been used for more than 150 years. The origin of the calendar started in Germany in the 19th century using different methods of counting down the days to the celebration of Christmas. Today Advent calendars come in different forms, the most popular ones consisting of miniature colored pictures, or little doors that open on each day containing small treasures such as wooden toys or candy.

Contributed by Rev. Ivan Cendese

NAIN Connect 2010

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable co-sponsored the North American Interfaith Network Conference in Salt Lake City from July 25 -27.



Prior to the start of the conference optional events were available for the participants, such as attending the live international broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle choir and a sneak preview of the new documentary “The Asian and Abrahamic Religions: A Divine Encounter in America.”



The opening session was hosted at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple where the participants heard the “One Voice Children’s Choir” directed by Masa Fukuda. The session began with welcomes from Alan Bachman, Chair of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, and Bettina Gray, Chair of the North American Interfaith Network, NAIN. Rev. Dr. Stephen and Rev. Abigail Albert helped everyone get acquainted through a game of identifying someone by their shoes. Afterwards everyone enjoyed a wonderful Japanese buffet.

The keynote address was given by Doug Johnston, Director /Founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy and author of several books. The topic was Faith-based Diplomacy: Bridging the Religious Divide. The next session was a panel led by Grove Harris on Digging Deep: Personal and religious motivations for Interfaith work, and how they can help us hone outreach strategy. She invited five people from different traditions to give their views and then opened up for all to join in.

Jan Saeed, of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and a Baha’i moderated the afternoon session on the Golden Rule Project and how it could benefit local

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Hanukkah

Or Chanukkah, comes this year on December 1st when we light the first candle of the festival of light and freedom. For the Jewish peoples of past centuries it celebrated for them the miracle of having one small vial of dedicated olive oil last not one but eight days to light the great menorah. This after the miracle of banishing the enemy after a hard won fight and cleansing the temple of idolatry. It also celebrated the freedom to observe their religions and again connect with God. Nowadays, we eat foods like potato latkes and donuts fried in oil, play a game with dreidels or small tops, and, in the case of small children, the giving of small gifts of chocolate coins. The festival lasts eight days.

Contributed by Leslie Dorius-Jones



ask the Roundtable >>>

Q: How can I become involved?

A: Visit us at www.interfaithroundtable.org

February is Interfaith Month with the theme “Many Faiths, One Family”

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable will present the 2011 Interfaith Musical Tribute on Sunday, February 20th, at the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. For a complete list of events during February visit: www.interfaithroundtable.org



Gifts of Love from Global Artisans

This year give unique *Gifts of Love*: empowering refugees through entrepreneurial activities. Global Artisans is a division of Pathways to Self Sufficiency.

Dec 11 & 18

People’s Market-Holiday Market at Trolley Square, 367 S 700 E
12noon to 8pm

final thoughts...

Winter Solstice:

Falling as it does on the shortest day of the year when the Sun is at its lowest point on the horizon, it was a time of reflection on the part of the Celts and Vikings, and other ancient peoples to contemplate the cycle of life and entreat the Sun to make its rebirth and return so that the earth could continue its cycle of fertility and growth and abundance under the life giving rays of that sun. The celebrations were to also banish the darkness and coldness of that time of life. Mistletoe, Holly, bonfires and other rituals connected the peoples to the earth, the sky and each other. This year it falls on December 21st.



NAIN Connect 2010 / Continued

interfaith organizations. After the break-out sessions NAIN held their annual General Meeting followed by a social hour and dinner catered by Bombay House. After dinner the program continued with presentations from six of the NAIN Scholarship recipients who spoke on “Young Adult Perspectives: The Interfaith Movement 2010 and Beyond.”

Tuesday’s sessions were held at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building and began with Brian Farr (previous SLIR Chair) welcoming the participants.

The morning devotions were offered by Ric Sharette who sang for us, and then Indra Neeaglameggham offered some words of devotion from the Hindu Faith. Catherine Stokes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints also offered some words of devotion.

At the conclusion of the break-outs participants made their way to the Jewish Community Center to enjoy a social hour followed by dinner, music and conclusion of the conference.

Contributed by Wendy Stovall



**Increasing Harmony and Understanding
in our Communities**

Find us at
www.interfaithroundtable.org