



Assembly Hall at Temple Square

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A Newsletter of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable



## *The Sacred Art of Listening*

*Cultivating a Path for Peace*

*"When we understand the power of sacred listening, we become aware that it is a key to communication in our global community."*

– Kay Lindahl



Author Kay Lindahl spoke on "The Sacred Art of Listening: Cultivating a Path for Peace," at Westminster College, September 11, 2012.

In her evening talk, Lindahl pointed out the value of preparing to listen, and the art of becoming a listening presence, two qualities she has emphasized in her recent books. She also explored practices that enhance our capacity to listen, especially to others with opposing viewpoints, which lead to more peaceful ways to resolve our differences.

The event was sponsored by the Roundtable and Westminster's Office of Spiritual Life.

## *Utah Bahá'í Community Celebrates 100th Anniversary*

The Utah Bahá'í Community celebrated the 100th anniversary of leader Abdu'l-Bahá's historical September 1912 visit to Salt Lake City with two evenings of special events.

Visiting author Robert H. Stockman talked about his book, "Abdu'l-Bahá in America," Thursday, September 27, 2012, at the Salt Lake City Main Library. The book is an account of Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States, which solidified the Bahá'í Faith in America, and also examines the faith's relatively unknown imprint on American history.

As son of Bahá'u'lláh, Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Abdu'l-Bahá reinforced his father's teachings by emphasizing the

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## Utah Bahá'í Community Celebrates 100th Anniversary >>> Continued from first page



Utah State Capitol

oneness of humanity and the importance of gender equality, world peace, and economic justice.

During his eight-month visit, Abdu'l-Bahá's met well-known writers, scholars, and politicians throughout the country, including President William H. Taft.

Dr. Stockman's writings on the Bahá'í Faith include the two-volume "The Bahá'í Faith in America," covering years 1892-1912. He is an instructor of religious studies at Chicago's DePaul University.

The evening included a book signing and reception. Around 120 people attended, many of them members of the Bahá'í Faith who traveled to Salt Lake just to be part of this special evening.

The following evening, September 28, the Bahá'í community held a "Community Leader Centennial Celebration Dinner" at the Utah State Capitol. It was an opportunity to thank state and local leaders for their collaborative building efforts with the faith, and acknowledge the leaders' respect for religious diversity.

The dinner program opened with a welcome by the Bahá'í community, followed by the chanting of an Abdu'l-Bahá prayer in Persian, with a translation in English. Next, a letter from Utah Governor Gary Herbert was read congratulating the Bahá'í community on the anniversary of Abdu'l-Bahá's visit. It was followed by a video of historical photos taken during his stay in Salt Lake.



Robert H. Stockman



Felicia Canfield and Shahab Saeed, co-chairs of the event





Chanting of an Abdu'l-Bahá prayer

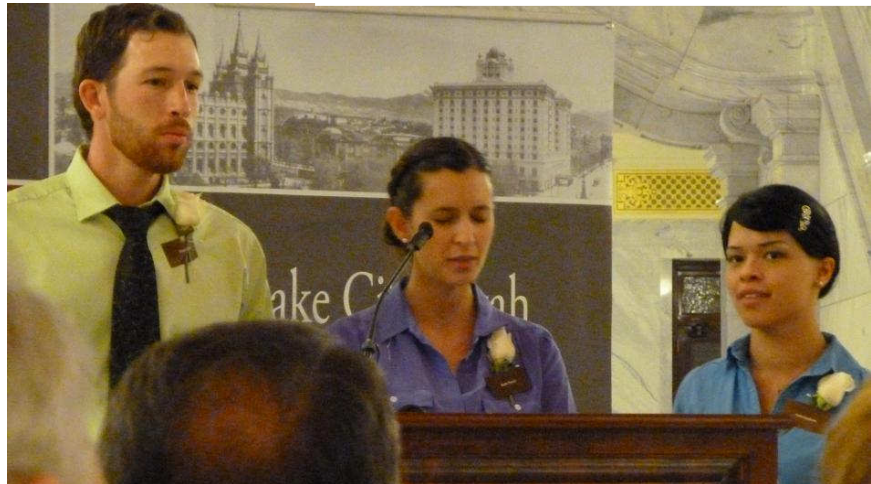


A congratulatory letter from Utah Governor Gary Herbert was read

The program concluded with a short presentation about the Bahá'í-inspired Junior Youth Spiritual Empower Program.

Afterwards, Junior Youth participants escorted guests into the Capitol Rotunda for a Persian meal of appetizers, main course, and pastries. Each guest also received a booklet about Abdu'l-Bahá's Salt Lake visit and Persian candies.

Guests included the Roundtable's Board of Directors; Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, LDS Church; Iqbal Hossain; President, Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake; Most Rev. John C. Wester, Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City; and Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker.



A short presentation about the Bahá'í-inspired Junior Youth Spiritual Empower Program was given

See: Abdu'l-Bahá's journey to the U.S.  
<http://centenary.bahai.us/>

Robert H. Stockman interview  
<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/lifestyle/54936683-80/baha-bah%C3%A1-abdu-faith.html.csp>

## Bullying Prevention in Schools

A jointly sponsored Jewish Family Service – Utah and Roundtable lecture, “Bullying Prevention in Schools,” was given November 14, 2012, at Salt Lake's McGillis School.

Ben Springer, Ph.D., and Jewish Family Service – Utah explored the very timely and important issue of bullying, which affects children of all faiths and cultures

Ben Springer is an award-winning school psychologist and behavior specialist in the Park City School District. He is also a consultant with Spring Forward, a resource for families and schools struggling to man-

age difficult childhood behavior problems and educational difficulties.

As an expert in bullying prevention, social-skills instruction, and school-wide positive behavior supports, Dr. Springer addressed:

- What bullying looks like
- How parents and schools can prevent and respond to bullying
- How to create a safe environment for children
- How to prepare children for the challenge of bullying

The evening's question and answer panel discussion featured Dr. Springer, Melanie Battistone, Ph.D., McGillis School Psychologist and Middle School Director, and Jessica Weeks, a Doctoral student specializing in bullying assessment and interventions.

This was the first of a free, four-part public Lecture Series presented by Jewish Family Service – Utah and the Roundtable, as part of a 2012-2013 community education program.



# First Unitarian Church Green Renovation



Solar panels installed on the roof of the First Unitarian Church in Salt Lake City

The Roundtable's October 2012 luncheon was held at the First Unitarian Church and hosted by Rev. Tom Goldsmith, leader of the Salt Lake congregation for 25 years, and Susan Soleil of Utah Interfaith Power and Light.

During announcements, Salt Lake City Police officers talked about the Homeless Outreach Service Team (HOST), which enables the department to reach participating service providers with one call when people in need are ready and willing to receive assistance. The public may support HOST by making donations at designated HOST parking meters, or by contributing to HOST at any Utah Zions Bank branch ([www.slcpd.com/HOST](http://www.slcpd.com/HOST)).

Judy Wight gave an update on the March 10, 2013 Musical Tribute, and announced that Dave Sharp is the new Musical Tribute Chair. She will continue to support him as co-chair.

Interfaith Month Planning Committee Chair Josie Stone also updated everyone on Interfaith Month events, which now extend into March. She asked Roundtable members to encourage their faiths or organizations to attend the events.

Susan Soleil spoke about the latest UIP&L projects and informed people on how they could get involved. For more information, visit [www.utahipl.org](http://www.utahipl.org).

Tom Goldsmith then talked about his church's collaboration with UIP&L in upgrading the building with the latest solar panels and many other green renovations.

Judy Wight



Susan Soleil



Rev. Tom Goldsmith



# 2012 Cultural and Religious Pluralism Conference

## Salt Lake City Main Library

*The Roundtable was pleased to again participate in this annual event, dedicated to helping make the community aware of new ideas about religion in the modern world.*

This year's conference focused on an understanding of Hindu practice and belief, particularly in the context of Western faith traditions prevalent in the Salt Lake area. It was highlighted by the annual Diwali celebration Saturday afternoon: a festival of lights, music, dance, crafts, and food. It was an extraordinary opportunity to explore the cultural facets of this religious festival first-hand.

The conference began Thursday evening, November 29, with a screening of the film, "India: Love and Devotion," that discussed how devotion regulates daily practices, and looks at religious beliefs in daily Indian life.

A panel discussion about the film followed the screening, and was moderated by Roundtable Board Member Indra Neelameggham. Indra is much a sought-after speaker and panelist on the subjects of Indian culture and Hinduism. Both she and her husband Neale are active in the Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple and India Cultural Center of Utah in South Jordan.



Indra Neelameggham

On Saturday, December 1, Dr. Deepak Sarma presented the keynote address, "Diwali and Its Pluralistic Approach to the Global World."

As Diwali has developed in the Hindu Diaspora, it has become defined as a dispersive prism that permits one to observe the unity in the diversity and the diversity in the unity. Dr. Sarma discussed the history and development of Hinduism(s) with the goal of revealing some of its glorious iridescence.

The panel discussion, "Building a Community of Global Faith," followed the address, and was moderated by Dr. Muriel Schmidt, Director of Religious Studies, University of Utah.

Panelists explored commonalities between traditions that can foster a society in which all traditions and cultures can live in peace and harmony. Participants included Joseph Gill, Sikh Temple of Utah; Dr. Iqbal Hossain, Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake; Father John E. Norman, St. Vincent Parish, Salt Lake City; Dr. Deepak Sarma, Case Western University; Jan Saeed, Office of Spiritual Life, Westminster College; and Dr. Brian Birch, Utah Valley University.

The Diwali Celebration and dinner concluded the three-day event, and featured music and dance from the Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple of Utah, and additional performances by other local cultural and faith groups.

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of each member or member organization. The Roundtable encourages open discussion and dialogue.

## Utah Civility and Community Initiative

The Utah Civility and Community Initiative Advisory Council met January 25, 2013, at the Salt Lake City and County building.

The Utah Civility and Community Initiative is the brainchild of Roundtable member, John Kesler. It began as a grassroots citizens effort in 2009 to commit leaders in Utah to greater civil discourse and behavior. From this came a consensus document, grounded in the Utah Constitution and endorsed by virtually all leading government, educational, media, non-profit, and private bodies in Utah.

The document, "A Call to Civility and Community: Ground Rules for Respectful Public Discourse and Behavior," "call(s) upon the people of Utah to return to fundamental principles that will lead to greater

civility and a new spirit of community," and proposes five ground rules of civic and public engagement:

1. Remember the Importance of Rights and Dignity of Each Individual
2. Responsibly Exercise your Rights While Protecting the Rights of Others
3. Respect Others.
4. Refrain from Incivility.
5. Rekindle Building Community.

The initiative was formally launched in January 2011 and an Advisory Council was created. Council members include Roundtable Chair Alan Bachman, Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, and Utah Lt. Gov. Greg Bell. Among the other Roundtable members who are on the Advisory Council are Noor Ul-Hasan of the Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake; Jane Holt, staff coordina-

tor for the initiative during the first half of 2012; and Karen Hale, Salt Lake City Communications Director and her staff, including Poonam Kumar.

For now, this is the last Advisory Council meeting. In his summary for 2012, which he presented at the meeting, John Kesler wrote that, "(T)he creativity and direction and power of the initiative is due in large part to the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Bell, Mayor Becker and our wonderful Advisory Council."

For complete information about the Utah Civility and Community initiative, please visit <http://www.utahcivility.org/>



## *"The Inn Between"*

### *Cathedral Church of St. Mark Episcopal*

The Roundtable's December 2012 meeting was hosted by the Cathedral Church of St. Mark Episcopal.

Roundtable Chair Alan Bachman welcomed luncheon guests and invited members to make their announcements.

John Nielsen from the LDS Public Affairs asked everyone to join him in welcoming Pamela Atkinson to Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable.

A prayer and blessing was given by Dean Ray Walden of St. Mark's.

Utah Episcopal Bishop Scott B. Hayashi talked about "The Inn Between," a homeless hospice. It was initially envisioned by members from the local faith community who proposed collaboration with Salt Lake's Fourth Street Clinic to address the needs of terminally ill homeless individuals who often die on the streets.

The City and County Housing Authorities are in the progress of identifying suitable housing to implement a homeless hospice pilot program. On December 18, training was held at the clinic for volunteers who could provide this service. For more information contact Debbie Thorpe at [debtorpe@aol.com](mailto:debtorpe@aol.com).

Alan brought to members' attention a teen suicide that had happened recently near



Above: Roundtable Chair Alan Bachman with Linda Hilton of Crossroads Urban Center



Left: Dean Ray Walden

a school. He said that adults need to show by example and teach children about tolerance and respect for others. "If we expect it of our children, then we need to walk the walk, and talk the talk."

Bishop Hayashi commented that he appreciates the Roundtable, saying that its work is much further along than other places in the country where there are similar groups.

As Bishop, he looks at problems coming down the road, and asks himself, "Is it difficult, and how I can get in front of the problem?"

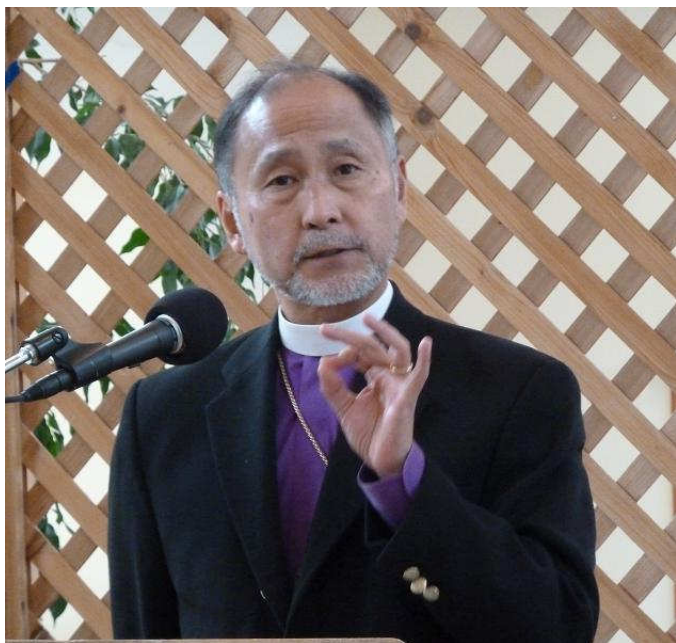
He has been dismayed by a recent survey of people who attend church or synagogue regularly, and their response to the question "Does it make a difference in your life?" Many responded "No," or "not really." He asked, "When does God or a higher power enter into the picture? Some say, 'very little.'"

Bishop Hayashi emphasized that every little thing that we do can make a small difference. "Don't give up. Ask, 'What if?' 'There are examples of opportunities all around us to broker peace and we blow it. Among peoples and leaders, instead of looking for ways of interacting peacefully, we choose war. 'Some examples stand out, however, like the Japanese earthquake and





## *“The Inn Between” >>> Continued*



Bishop Scott B. Hayashi

tsunami of past years. When people were asked to go in and deal with the nuclear disaster, many of the older generation in their 80s volunteered to go instead because they knew it was a death sentence. They reasoned that their lives had been full and lived, whereas younger men still had life and families ahead of them. That was selflessness.” He was also impressed with the honesty level among people who retrieved and returned a high number of items found during the cleanup of the disasters, including money and valuable goods.

He also asked, Given scenarios such as these and Super Storm Sandy, would our country have the same response?

He concluded by saying that we need to adhere to truth and cut out the hype, media spin, and false pride. Each of us has it within us to love God and peace. We can pattern some of our behavior and responses on our faith traditions and principles, then look within ourselves for truth and answers as well.

The meeting closed by thanking St. Mark’s for hosting the meeting and providing a lovely lunch and hospitality. During final announcements, David Sharp was introduced as co-chair of the Tribute Concert Committee. Osman Ahmed was introduced as the new Roundtable representative for the Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake, taking over from Aden Batar.





