



December 2015 Interfaith Center of New York E-Announcements

In this Issue:

Message from ICNY Executive Director	ICNY's Interfaith Matters Blog	ICNY Co-Sponsored & Featured Events	Other Events	Upcoming Holidays & Observances
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Message from ICNY Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Peace and greetings to you.

The final months of 2015 have been tumultuous for many people. [ICNY's statement about the Paris attacks](#) joined similar statements and expressions of grief from people of all nationalities, races, ethnicities and religions. ICNY held [a press conference](#) at the Muslim American Society Youth Center with the Islamic Leadership Council of New York and Sikh, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, and other Muslim Representatives. ICNY friend Imam Shamsi Ali introduced us to the largest Muslim organization in the world, Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia, currently responsible for [a video explaining Islam and condemning Isis](#). For more information about this group, see [this NewYork Times article](#).

Closer to home we were sad to learn of a possible hate crime directed toward the Hindu members of the community in which forty flags were burned outside homes in Woodhaven NY. [Information about a vigil](#) on December 4th is below.

Our partner Daisy Kahn at the Women's Islamic Initiative for Spirituality and Equality (WISE) shared her Thanksgiving with Syrian, Afghan, and Somalian refugees in the New York Area. If you or your congregation wish to welcome refugees to New York, contact the [Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees](#) or one of the below Manhattan-based resettlement agencies.

NY-HIAS-12: HIAS New York
Address: 333 Seventh Avenue 16th floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 212-967-4100 Fax: 212-967-4442

NY-IRC-01: International Rescue Committee New York Resettlement

Address: 263 West 38th Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10018
Phone: 212-377-4728 Fax: 212-377-4729

NY-USCCB-03: Catholic Charities Community Services
Address: 80 Maiden Lane, 13th Floor
New York, NY 10038
Phone: 212-419-3724 Fax: 212-688-4178

At this time of thanksgiving and giving, we are grateful that you have made our work possible. The Interfaith Center of New York's work is dependent upon your contributions on #GivingTuesday and at other times over this holiday season and year round.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation before December 31, 2015.
Thank you again for your great generosity.

Best Wishes,

Rev. Chloe Breyer
Executive Director
The Interfaith Center of New York

P.S. Watch your email inbox later this month for a special, uplifting podcast episode featuring Theo and Phyllis Harris, stars of the Off-Broadway musical "Alive 55+ and Kickin'," discussing life after incarceration and the redemptive power of music.

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Back to Top 



Basking in the Warm Glow of Giving



by Ellen Greeley, ICNY Development Director

No doubt you have already received a multitude of appeals from worthwhile organizations asking for end of year donations. We too are not alone in making a similar request, but when considering which organizations to donate your hard-earned dollars, consider this – The Interfaith Center of New York is only but a handful of organizations that makes New York City more livable for you, your family and friends by overcoming prejudice, violence, and misunderstanding by activating the power of the city's grassroots religious and civic leaders and their communities.

Thanks to you, The Interfaith Center sponsors purposeful programs and events which aim to integrate religious minority communities into the mainstream of urban life breaking down societal barriers. Take for instance; this year the Interfaith Center brought together child care workers and Muslim leaders in a series of borough wide training sessions with the aim to recruit prospective Muslim families to open their homes to embrace Muslim children needing temporary residency or adoption.

In another example, the Interfaith Center engages faith-based volunteers to provide genuine one-on-one contact with formerly incarcerated persons before they meet with their parole officers. It may look to a bystander like the volunteer is simply giving a hot cup of coffee to a parolee, but in effect, the volunteer is helping the parolee reduce his social isolation built up by the many years spent behind bars.

When domestic and international terrorism strike, the Interfaith Center joins with diverse faith leaders to respond in unison condemning such inhumane acts as it did in November when it co-sponsored an interfaith press conference with the Islamic Leadership Council of New York which featured Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other religious leaders.

If this is a cause you can believe in we ask that you make a tax-deductible donation by writing a check payable to The Interfaith Center of New York, click on the donate button below or at www.interfaithcenter.org or call me at 212-870-3511. We can also help arrange for small, reoccurring gifts throughout the year should one large gift not fit your budget. We promise you that such acts of kindness will be followed by a warm glow—a sure sign of the spirited season.

Mail checks to:

The Interfaith Center of New York
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 540
NY, NY 10115

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Back to Top 

ICNY Co-Sponsored & Featured Events



Friday Rally in Response to Anti-Hindu Hate Crime in Queens



Join Sadhana for the #WeAreOne Rally

Date: Friday, December 4

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Corner of 89th Avenue and 80th Street, Woodhaven, Queens

During Thanksgiving weekend, 40 jhandi flags were burned in the front yard of a local Hindu home. Jhandi flags are an emblematic identifier of many Indo-Caribbean homes, and this crime can be seen as an attack against not just Hindus, but Indo-Caribbeans at large. [Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus](#) leads this gathering to take a stand for peace and harmony in the Hindu community and a stand against hatred and bigotry.

Vasudaiva Kutumbakam
The whole world is one family.

All are welcome. #WeAreOne

Partners (list in formation): Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Caribbean Equality Project, Hindu American Foundation, Jahajee Sisters, Lakshmee Singh of Let's Talk with Lakshmee, Richard S. David of Community Board 9, Richmond Hill Economic Development Council, The Interfaith Center of New York

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Back to Top 

Other Events



If you have an upcoming event that you think ICNY's audience might like to know about, please notify us by [filling out this event form](#). We will try to include events in future bulletins.

#MyUnion: Rally Wednesday with Workers and Community Against Luxury Condominiums in Union Seminary's Quad!

Date: Wednesday, December 2

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Union Theological Seminary (3041 Broadway), New York, 10027

Join the Union community along with workers from the Laborers Local 79 and area clergy to challenge the administration's plan to make the grounds of Union Theological Seminary the new frontier of gentrification in Harlem by building luxury condominiums in the middle of campus, and using anti-union developers to do so. We will deliver [this Open Letter](#) to the administration and Board of Trustees demanding an immediate halt to these plans.

Harlem has already seen the mass displacement of black, Latino, poor and working people. For a seminary that claims social justice in its brand and mission, it is unconscionable for Union Theological Seminary to build a development that will be an enclave for the wealthy. It is an even greater injustice that the Union administration is using a developer that has a record of hiring non-union contractors with labor law violations, worker safety violations and dangerous working conditions. Gentrification is gentrification whether it is done by a corporation, a non-profit university or even a seminary. We need total transparency from the administration and Board of Trustees as to why these plans were kept secret for so long and how their decisions were made, what alternatives were considered and why they were rejected. Without transparency, there is no accountability.

Muslim & Jewish Women Leadership Conference



Date: December 6

Location: Princeton University

Several hundred women will gather at Princeton University on December 6 for the 2015 Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Leadership Conference!

At the conference, participants will be able to:

- Meet other Muslim and Jewish women from throughout the United States
- Learn from the Muslim and Jewish women who are changing the dynamics between Muslims and Jews
- Share best practices on Muslim-Jewish dialogue and relationship development
- Participate in workshops facilitated by the leaders in interfaith dialogue
- Learn how to become an advocate of building relationships between Muslims and Jews and how to fight together to stop anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment

The 2015 conference will be co-sponsored by the Princeton University Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, the Center for Jewish Life, the Muslim Life Program and the Foundation of Ethnic Understanding (FFEU) Women's Weekend of Twinning. To register, contact Olitzky at 609-306-1221 or sheryl@sosspeace.org.

T'ruah's Human Rights Shabbat 2015



Human Rights Shabbat is a T'ruah initiative to educate Jewish communities about the intersection of Jewish values and universal human rights. T'ruah's Human Rights Shabbat celebrates International Human Rights Day, December 10. In 2015, T'ruah's Human Rights Shabbat is December 11-12, with the alternate date of December 4-5 or whatever date is best for your community. [Sign up now](#), then figure out what you'll do to celebrate in the fall. Please contact Rabbi Lev Meirowitz Nelson, lmnelson@truah.org, with any questions. Current and past Human Rights Shabbat materials are available [here](#).

Back to Top 

ADL Calendar of Observances



DECEMBER 2015

December 1	WORLD AIDS DAY International day of action on HIV and AIDS.
December 3	INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS Raises awareness about persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
December 7–14	CHANUKAH • Jewish Eight-day "Festival of Lights", celebrating the rededication of the Temple to the service of God in 164 BCE. Commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek King, Antiochus, who sought to suppress freedom of worship.
December 8	BODHI DAY • Buddhist Also known as <i>Rohatsu</i> , it observes the spiritual awakening (bodhi) of founder Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, ca. 596 BCE. Celebrated on the eighth day either of December or the 12th month of the lunar calendar.
December 10	HUMAN RIGHTS DAY On this day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
December 12	OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE • Christian Celebrates the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (by her title, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico and the Americas) before Juan Diego, an indigenous convert to Roman Catholicism, on the Mexican hill of Tepeyac in 1531.
December 15	BILL OF RIGHTS DAY Commemorates the signing into law of the ten original amendments of the United States Constitution in 1791.
December 21	WINTER SOLSTICE In the northern hemisphere, the shortest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of winter.
December 21	MAWLID AL-NABI (Also known as MILAD AL-NABI) • Islamic (Sunni) The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
December 25	CHRISTMAS • Western Christian Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
December 26	MAWLID AL-NABI (Also known as MILAD AL-NABI) • Islamic (Shi'a) The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
December 26–January 1, 2016	KWANZAA A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and its continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" means "first fruits (of the harvest)" in Swahili.
December 29	WOUNDED KNEE DAY On December 29, 1890 more than 200 Lakota Sioux were massacred by U.S. troops at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.

The complete ADL Calendar of Observances for 2016 is available [here](#).

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Back to Top 