



# INTERFAITH CENTER OF NEW YORK

## January 2016 Interfaith Center of New York E-Announcements

In this Issue:

<a href="#"><u>Message from ICNY Executive Director</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>ICNY Upcoming Events</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Other Events</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Upcoming Holidays &amp; Observances</u></a>
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### Message from ICNY Executive Director

Dear Friends,

A very Happy New Year to you. Many blessings for a peaceful and productive 2016.

We ended last year a number of reassuring interfaith initiatives to fight hate and anti-Muslim bias that had been stirred up over the Fall. We were glad to be a part of two multi-faith rallies at City Hall denouncing hate speech and crimes against Muslims. They included a Faith Leaders Rally to Denounce Crimes Against Muslims and [Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's interfaith rally](#) in response to Donald Trump's divisive rhetoric.

Currently, a controversial [proposal](#) by two Muslim woman Asra Q. Nomani and Hala Arafa suggesting that their fellow Muslim women ought not to wear the hijab underscores the current relevance of former ICNY Director of Community Development Sarah Sayeed's Aug. 20, 2009 Reuters article titled "[Out of Our Hair and Away from our Pants](#)".

Thankfully, statements on this subject proliferated and ICNY was one of the 40 organizations that signed [an open letter on anti-Muslim bigotry and religious freedom](#) that ran in the Washington Post on December 21. We also assisted in a [Muslim-Franciscan statement](#) by the Franciscan Action Network in the tradition of St. Francis and his peaceful encounter with the Sultan of Egypt. Twenty Westchester synagogues offer [letter of support](#) to Muslim Americans and ICNY's Board and Staff members. Sister Aisha and Iman Boukadoum spoke on ABC7's "[Here and Now](#)" program. ICNY also participated in a panel at the United Nations hosted by the Organization of Islamic Countries on countering Islamophobia.



*The Rev. Chloe Breyer, Sally Kider (US Federation for Middle East Peace), and Sister Aisha Al-Adawiya (Women in Islam), at OIC's UN Panel on countering Islamophobia*

ICNY's education programs are particularly relevant in this current climate and we encourage you to reach out to teachers you know nationwide who might be interested in applying for our National Endowment for the Humanities [Summer Institute](#) with Union Theological Seminary. It is about teaching religious diversity in the context of the city. In [this letter](#) we also include teacher resources for talking with students about Islamophobia.

Thank you again for your support and involvement with ICNY over the past year and we look forward to doing this work together as we move forward.

Best Wishes,

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

P.S. Watch your email inbox later this month for our next podcast episode featuring Dr. Uma Mysorekar of the Hindu Temple Society of North America.

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Back to Top [↑](#)



**Religious Worlds of New York:  
Teaching the Everyday Life of American Religious Diversity**



### Now Accepting Applications from Teachers!

ICNY is delighted to announce the 2016 *Religious Worlds of New York* summer institute for teachers. K-12 teachers nationwide are invited to apply for a three week program (with a generous stipend) that will help them teach more effectively about American religious diversity.

The *Religious Worlds* institute is a project of ICNY and Union Theological Seminary, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. It will bring 25 teachers from throughout the United States to New York City, to work with leading scholars of religion, meet with diverse religious leaders, visit local houses of worship, and explore the religious life of the city. In the current climate of religious bigotry and extremism, America's K-12 teachers can play an important role in promoting interfaith understanding. The *Religious Worlds* institute gives teachers the tools they need to build a more inclusive society.

We hope you'll apply! Past participants describe the institute as "my best professional development experience ever" and "one of the best learning experiences of my life" ([click here for more evaluations](#)). Don't miss this extraordinary opportunity to explore the religious worlds of New York.

The institute will meet from **July 11 - 29, 2016** at Union Theological Seminary, in the Manhattan neighborhood of Morningside Heights. All participants will receive a **\$2,700 stipend** to help pay their travel, housing, and living expenses for the duration of the institute. **Applications are due by March 1.** For detailed information and application instructions, please visit [www.religiousworldsnyc.org](http://www.religiousworldsnyc.org).

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### *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.*

### **The Lost Connection - Rekindling Our Relationship with God**



Date: Sunday, January 17

Time: 3:15 pm

Location: Al-Husseini Center, 48-67 58th Street, Woodside, NY 11377

Join us for an interfaith dialogue and dinner where we discuss spirituality in different faiths. All are welcome - please RSVP by January 12th at <http://sijny.org/new/interfaith>.

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### **2016 Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE Count)**



On Monday January 25, 2016, the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) will conduct its annual Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE), a HUD-mandated citywide community volunteer effort to count each chronically homeless person living in public spaces across the five boroughs during the coldest time of the year. The HOPE Count is an opportunity to get involved in New York City's effort to reduce chronic street homelessness.

The Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE Count) has registered more than 1,600 volunteers in advance of the January 25th event. However, we are in urgent need of volunteers to work from each of the following sites:

- Brooklyn's PS 100 in Coney Island
- Brooklyn's PS 102 in Bay Ridge
- Brooklyn's PS 257 in Williamsburg
- Queens' PS 20 in Flushing
- Queens' PS 65 in Ozone Park
- Staten Island's CYO-MIV Community Center

Use [www.nyc.gov/hope](http://www.nyc.gov/hope) to access the Volunteer Registration web site. Select NYC Service as the referral source!

We are calling on YOU, our fellow New Yorkers, to help us canvass parks, subways, and other public spaces to estimate the number of people who find themselves living on the street. Thousands of volunteers are needed to make the HOPE Count a success. Last year, a record 3,500 New Yorkers participated in the count; we are hoping to recruit as many or more this year.

Just one night of your time will help us collect vital information for our outreach teams to help homeless people move off the streets and into a more stable, safe environment as they set out on a path for a better life. DHS teams work tirelessly every day to engage and assist these individuals and combat street homelessness across the city. They use HOPE information to improve their outreach during winter and beyond.

Through HOPE and other initiatives, including a new commitment to expand supportive housing, expanded street teams, and more specialized programs to bring street homeless people into safe and appropriate indoor spaces, the City is bringing hope to people who have been homeless, and guiding their journey back home.

Please [register](#) now to join the HOPE Count.

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## 2016 Russell Berrie Fellowship



On behalf of the Russell Berrie Foundation, Institute of International Education (IIE) is pleased to announce the 2016 Russell Berrie Fellowship Program, a timely initiative at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum). Along with the establishment of an Annual Lecture Series on Interreligious Studies, the goal of the Fellowship Program is to build bridges between Christian, Jewish, and other religious traditions by providing the next generation of religious leaders with a comprehensive understanding of and dedication to interfaith issues. The deadline for applications is **Friday, March 11, 2016**. For more information visit: <http://www.ii.org/Programs/Russell-Berrie-Fellowship-in-Interreligious-Studies>.

Back to Top 

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**The Rev. Chloe Breyer designated as  
Ambassador to The Parliament of the World's Religions**



In the 2015 Parliament held in Salt Lake City, The Rev. Breyer joined distinguished speakers Karen Armstrong, Catherine Orsborn, Muang Zarni, et al, to discuss topics such as income inequality, the role of religious leaders in preventing genocide, and grassroots initiatives to counter Islamophobia.

Now as we look toward 2016, The Rev. Breyer has been asked to continue her involvement with the Parliament by serving as an ambassador, a select opportunity for The Rev. Breyer to promote the mission and values of the Parliament in cultivating harmony and fostering engagement to achieve a just, peaceful & sustainable world.

ICNY is pleased and proud to have its executive director serving as an ambassador to the Parliament, and anticipate the advancements that will come of this collaboration in preparation of the next Parliament, targeted for 2017.

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[Back to Top](#) 

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*ADL Calendar of Observances*



## JANUARY 2016

January 1	<b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b> The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, commonly used for civil dating purposes.
January 1	<b>TEMPLE DAY • Buddhist</b> Many Buddhists of all traditions pay their respects and pray for good fortune for the new year at the temple.
January 5	<b>GURU GOBIND SINGH JI'S BIRTHDAY • Sikh</b> Guru Gobind Singh was the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs who initiated the Sikhs as the Khalsa (the pure ones) and is known as the Father of the Khalsa.
January 6	<b>EPIPHANY • Christian</b> Known as <i>Theophany</i> in Eastern Christianity, it celebrates the manifestation of Jesus as Christ. In addition, the Western Church associates Epiphany with the journey of the Magi to the infant Jesus, and the Eastern Church with the baptism of Jesus by John.
January 6	<b>CHRISTMAS • Armenian Orthodox Christian</b> Armenian Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on Epiphany, except for Armenians living in Israel, who celebrate Christmas on January 19th.
January 7	<b>CHRISTMAS • Eastern Christian</b> Most Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches based on their use of the Julian rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar.
January 14	<b>MAKAR SANKRANTI • Hindu</b> Seasonal celebration recognizing the increasing length of days.
January 17	<b>WORLD RELIGION DAY • Bahá'í</b> Observance to proclaim the oneness of religion and the belief that world religion will unify the peoples of the earth.
January 18	<b>DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S BIRTHDAY</b> The birthday of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is celebrated on the third Monday in January.
January 24–27	<b>MAHAYANA NEW YEAR • Buddhist</b> In Mahayana countries the New Year starts on the first full moon day in January.
January 25	<b>TU B'SHVAT • Jewish</b> New Year's Day for Trees, and traditionally the first of the year for tithing fruit of trees. Now a day for environmental awareness and action, such as tree planting.
January 27	<b>UN HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY</b> Annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945.

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

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