



December 2016 Interfaith Center of New York Newsletter

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Message from ICNY Interim Executive Director

Dear Friends,

At times, in my darker moments, it seems like American political life has been entirely transformed since ICNY's last monthly newsletter, which was sent out just days before the presidential election. A national registry for Muslims? A deportation force for DREAMers? Stripping citizenship from flag-burners? Um . . . excuse me? Have we all gone through the alt-right rabbit hole?

But in the weeks since the election, in my brighter moments, I have been reminded of the enduring vitality of our grassroots, multicultural democracy. On November 14th, speaking at a [conference on religious pluralism](#) co-sponsored by Kingsborough Community College, ICNY, and others, Rabbi Yehuda Sarna called upon interfaith leaders throughout the country to work with mayors and civic officials, building local structures of resistance to xenophobia. And on November 21st, in a [public address at Cooper Union](#), Mayor Bill de Blasio reminded all New Yorkers of the enduring values of inclusion and respect at the heart of New York's civic life, and told us simply: "This is who we are. Nothing is going to change that. The results of an election don't change who we are. . . . We are 8.5 million strong, and we ain't changing. We are always New York." Can we get an Amen somebody?

In this context, ICNY is particularly proud of our work with secular civic officials and institutions -- weaving a respect for religious diversity into the day-to-day life of the city we love. On November 17th, for example, we worked with partners in the New York City Police Department to convene an interfaith dialogue on "Public Safety in Today's Multi-Faith New York," which included a screening of ICNY's new [religious diversity training video](#) for NYPD officers. Through partnerships like these, we will

ensure that New York remains a “sanctuary city” in the deepest sense of the term -- a place of refuge, security, and spiritual sustenance for every member of our beloved community.

ICNY is planning to continue this work in the coming months, by exploring the theme of “Interfaith Leadership under the Trump Administration” in this spring’s Rabbi Marshall Meyer Retreat for Social Justice. How, we will ask, can New York’s religious and civic leaders best respond to the President-Elect’s xenophobic rhetoric and policy agenda? Stay tuned for details about this important conversation.

Closer to home, the past few weeks have also seen changes here at ICNY. We are deeply sorry to say goodbye to our fantastic Director of Operations, Elly Mason-Murray, but we’re also excited for Elly’s new opportunities -- and jealous of her easy commute! ICNY is now seeking a new Operations Manager, and we hope you will share this [job description](#) with any strong candidates in your own community or professional network. And finally, you may have noted that our Executive Director, The Rev. Chloe Breyer, is not writing the preamble to this month’s newsletter. Chloe will be on leave for the next two months, making progress on her doctoral dissertation in Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary. I’m sure you will all join us in wishing the future Rev. Dr. Breyer a productive sabbatical, and I hope you’ll help us keep the lights on until she returns. Please [click here to contribute](#) to ICNY’s ongoing annual appeal, and help us defend the vibrant religious diversity of New York.

Best Wishes,



Dr. Henry Goldschmidt
Interim Executive Director
Director of Programs
The Interfaith Center of New York

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ICNY Co-Sponsored & Featured Events



Hate Free Zone: Love and Protect Each Other



Date: Friday, December 2

Time: 5:30 pm

Location: Diversity Plaza at corner of 74th St & 37th Rd in Jackson Heights

In a time of uncertainty and attacks on our communities, join us in Queens for a press conference and rally to show our love and pledge to defend each other. For more information, contact DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving) at 718.205-3036 or info@drumnyc.org. [A flyer is available here.](#)

Exhibit Opening: Poetic Voices of the Muslim World



Date: Thursday, December 15

Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: City Lore, 56 East 1st Street, New York, NY 10003

Developed by City Lore and Poets House, Poetic Voices of the Muslim World highlights poetic traditions from four major language areas—Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu—and introduces poetry from Asia, Africa, and diaspora communities in the U.S. The exhibition also features artwork by the late, acclaimed Pakistani artist Samina Quraeshi, whose work drew on Arabic and Urdu calligraphy and Sufi poetry, as well as artwork by K-12 students whose teachers participated in City Lore's related summer institute, Understanding Muslim Cultures through the Arts. Exhibit runs December 15, 2016 - April 9, 2017. [Click here for more information.](#)

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Other Events



See Broadway's 1st A Cappella Musical! Tickets from \$69*



A new musical about that time in your life when your career is a work in progress, your love life makes you question life, and your friends are your family. IN TRANSIT, a funny and poignant new Broadway musical, follows the intertwined lives of 11 New Yorkers faced with the challenges of city life. With a groundbreaking a cappella score by a team including the creators of *Pitch Perfect* and *Frozen*, IN TRANSIT takes you on a journey with people hoping to catch the express train to their dreams—including the stops they make along the way. Modern yet timeless, IN TRANSIT is a story about all of us, set to music that will stay with you long after the ride is over.

With a book, music and lyrics by Academy Award® winner Kristen Anderson-Lopez (*Frozen*), James-Allen Ford, Russ Kaplan and Sara Wordsworth and vocal arrangements by Deke Sharon (*Pitch Perfect*, “The Sing-Off”), IN TRANSIT is directed and choreographed by three-time Tony Award® winner Kathleen Marshall (*Anything Goes*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*). [Click here for more information](#).

[As a valued member of the Interfaith Center's network, you can see IN TRANSIT for as low as \\$69*. Click here to purchase](#)

*Restrictions apply.

**Vigil at Gracie Mansion Demanding that
the Mayor Close Rikers and Build Community**



Date: Sunday, December 4

Time: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Location:

3:30 Meet at Charles Schurz Park, corner of East 86th St & East End Ave.

March from park to Gracie Mansion

East 86th St & East End Ave. (Inside the Park)

4-5 speeches by faith leaders and singing

Close to 4,5,6 subway line

Join faith-based leaders from NYC in demanding that Mayor Bill de Blasio start the process to close Rikers Jail. Steps must be continued to reduce the number of people detained at Rikers, where 80% of the 7,500 people are detained there without being convicted. In addition, 41% of the people detained have mental health issues that could be better served through other approaches. We need to break the political gridlock and achieve real solutions that are guided by the directly impacted communities. [Click here for more info.](#)

FEAST: Yoruba Project by The Royal Court Theatre and The Young Vic



Date: Monday, Dec. 12

Time: 6:30 pm Reading & Discussion

Location: The Martin E. Segal Theater Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016

The Segal Center presents a staged reading of FEAST, a theatrical exploration with vibrant music and dazzling dance of the magnificent, cross-continental Yoruba culture. Directed by Awoye Timpo. Followed by a discussion with Elyse Dodgson, International Director, The Royal Court Theatre and others. [Click here for more info.](#)

We Thirst for Justice- Multi-Faith Celebration



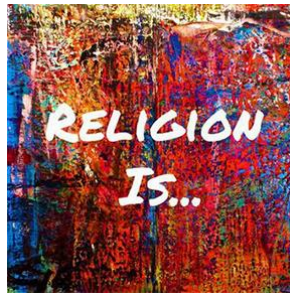
Date: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day January 16th 2017

Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Location: The Bates House in Frank Melville Park, 1 Bates Rd. Setauket NY 11733

Bringing together people of different faiths and backgrounds to celebrate our vision for a socially just future. Event will include creating a collaborative piece of art, live music and culturally diverse food. Call 631-240-3471 for additional information or [click here](#).

New online course from the Woolf Institute, Cambridge: Religion Is...



Application closes January 16th, 2017

This 12-week course will provide participants with an introduction to the Abrahamic religions. It will provide an understanding of the beliefs that underpin these religions. The course will allow anyone who has a thirst for knowledge to discover narratives and stories and to reflect on key events and historical moments. It will help participants understand how each religion has changed over time and in different places. The course will also show how religion contributes to, and is influenced by, society in the 21st century. The closing date for applications is January 16th, 2017. The course begins on February 6th, 2017. The course fee is £275 (approx. \$330). A limited number of scholarships are available. [Click here for more info and to apply](#).

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.

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ADL Calendar of Observances



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

DECEMBER 2016

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 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	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 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 17	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 21	WINTER SOLSTICE In the northern hemisphere, the shortest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of winter.
December 25	CHRISTMAS • Western Christian Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
December 25– January 1	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 26– January 1, 2017	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.

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