

In Commemoration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023 *Multi-Religious Prayer for Peace and Compassion*

Tuesday, 7 February 2023, 8:30-9:30AM EST

(please click for your local time)

Introduction and Background

Through the centuries, religious communities have been called upon to enact their beliefs and practices into justice for all. Today, this concept of action, solidarity and compassion remains very relevant, even more so in these politically chaotic times.

This year, 2023, with war raging in the Ukraine, with Haiti on the verge of collapse, with women under consistent threat in Afghanistan, with the continued violence in Syria, with forced migration in and out of Latin America, and with a climate crises that is affecting us all, the need for prayer for peace and compassionate action is paramount to both the missions of *Religions for Peace*, to The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, and to our very survival. Hence, on the occasion of the World Interfaith Harmony Week, *Religions for Peace* and The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations are organising a global interfaith prayer for peace and compassionate actions.

Event

On 7 February 2023, the final day of the Interfaith Harmony Week, *Religions for Peace* and The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations will hold a hybrid, one-hour event that will both offer prayers for peace from various religious traditions, with age, geography and gender diversity and also focus on a call to compassionate action. These shared reflections will thus motivate further empathetic reactions to the world we currently live in.

Agenda

- **8:30-8:31AM** – Moment of Silence
- **8:31-8:40AM – Welcome and Opening Remarks**
 - **Prof. Azza Karam**, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*
 - **Ms. Julia Grindon-Welch**, Co-Chair, Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations
- **8:40-9:28AM – Prayers and Reflections Offered by Religious and Indigenous Leaders**
- **Facilitator: Rev. Doyeon Park**, Won Buddhism Representative to the United Nations
 - **Priestess Beatriz Schulthess**, President, Indigenous Peoples Ancestral Spiritual Council and Honorary President, *Religions for Peace*
 - **Dr. Vinu Aram**, President, Shanti Ashram; Co-Moderator, *Religions for Peace*
 - **Rabbi Amirit Rosen**, Rabbi of Kehilat Moreshet Avraham, Jerusalem
 - **Rev. Kosho Niwano**, President-Designate, Risho Kosei-Kai and Co-Moderator, *Religions for Peace*
 - **Bishop Dr. Munib Younan**, Bishop Emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and Honorary President, *Religions for Peace*

- **Musical Interlude**
 - **Reverend Stina Tysk**, Global Networking Coordinator, World Student Christian Federation- Europe and Member of the International Youth Committee for *Religions for Peace*
 - **Rev. Sr. Agatha Ogochukwu Chikelue**, Nun of the Daughters of Mother Mary of Mercy and Co-Chair of the Nigerian & African Women of Faith Networks and Chair of the *Religions for Peace* International Women’s Coordinating Committee
 - **Sheikh Juan Suquillo**, Co-Founder and Director of the first Islamic Center of Ecuador and Imam of the Masjid “Assalam”
 - **Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh**, Chairman, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha and Co-President and Trustee, *Religions for Peace*
 - **Mr. Carl Murrell**, United States Baha’i Principle Representative to the United Nations
- **9:28-9:30AM – Closing Remarks**
 - **Prof. Azza Karam**, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*

Organisers

The **Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations** is composed of the representatives of national and international organizations that define their work as religious, spiritual or ethical in nature and are accredited to the UN. The Committee of Religious NGOs meets regularly to share information and insights about the complex issues and events at the UN. The Committee’s focus is two-fold. It serves as a forum to inform and educate our constituencies about the global challenges of our time, and the constructive role that the UN can play in addressing those issues. It also serves as a forum for exchanging and promoting shared religious and ethical values in the deliberations of the world organization.

Religions for Peace is where the world’s religious communities join together to ensure that all people enjoy peace, harmony, and prosperity. We see the world’s challenges and understand they can benefit from an interfaith, innovative, and inclusive response. Our more than 90 national and 6 regional Interreligious Councils, or “IRCs,” bring together, not only the vast influence and resources of all faith traditions, but also their spiritual commitment to achieve solutions that leave no one behind. *Religions for Peace’s* global movement is distinguished by its global leadership, Interreligious Councils, and interfaith women and youth networks, which are working at local, national, regional and global levels as changemakers. They respond to challenges – everything from violence and discrimination to environmental degradation – with bold solutions.

About Interfaith Harmony Week

With the theme *Building bridges across boundaries*, **World Interfaith Harmony Week** is an annual event observed during the first week of February, after the UN General Assembly designation in 2010. The General Assembly pointed out that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and established World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith. Recognizing the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions to enhance mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people, the General Assembly encourages all States to spread the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world’s churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, on a voluntary basis and according to their own religious traditions or convictions.