

## **Bay Shore Interfaith Council Announces an Interfaith Program: 'God's October Surprise'**

The Bay Shore Interfaith Council, in conjunction with the nationally recognized Tent of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah organization, will present a multifaceted program of events during the month of October that we invite you to join.

The Tent of Abraham, Hagar, & Sarah is a gathering of Jews, Christians, and Muslims who have been building a 'Tent' of shared spiritual concern for peace, justice, and healing of the earth. Arising from this effort has been a call to take part in 'God's October Surprise'.

This call has been endorsed by the National Council of Churches; the Islamic Society of North America; Pax Christi; The Shalom Center; the Jewish Committee for Isaiah's Vision, an ad hoc group of more than 100 rabbis and other Jewish leaders, echoing Isaiah's call that is read on Yom Kippur morning; ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal and its rabbinic body, Ohalah; the Disciples Justice Action Network; the Northwest Interfaith Movement (Philadelphia) and many others.

- We call on people of all faiths to join Jews and Muslims in a Nationwide Fast for Reflection, Repentance, Reconciliation, and Renewal, from sunrise to sunset on October 13.
- Walk for Justice – October 23, 2005 from 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. at Gardiner County Park. A walk through the park to be followed by a short interfaith service to be led by clergy and leaders of the faith communities present.
- An Evening for Interfaith Dialog – October 24, 2005 from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society. We will break up into small (12 -24 people), diverse groups and share the story of our spiritual journey that has brought us to this peacemaking point in our lives. Individuals will then share prayers or other words from their faith traditions to be examined and practiced together, of course respecting each individual's own faith.
- Connect for a Day program– We encourage our local faith communities to reach out and invite another faith community to visit/host your faith community for a day of sharing traditions.

Hello to all who strive to attain peaceful harmony,

The month of October offers a rare confluence of important religious and spiritual activities that span many faiths. The sacred Muslim lunar month of Ramadan and the sacred Jewish lunar month of Tishrei (which includes the High Holy Days) both begin October 3-4; October 2 is World-wide (Protestant/Orthodox) Communion Sunday and is also Mahatma Gandhi's birthday; and October 4 is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. October 4 to 12 are for Hindus Navarathri (nine nights of spiritual struggle), followed on October 13 by Vijayadashami, the tenth day of spiritual victory. And for Buddhists, Vassa (rainy season of spiritual reflection) ends on October 18 with the full moon day, Pavarana. The Baha'i celebrate the birth of the Bab on October 20, and the Pagans celebrate Samhain better know as Halloween, on October 31.

The Bay Shore Interfaith Council is trying to use this confluence of so many important spiritual celebrations to bring about more meaningful interfaith dialog in our community. Meaningful interfaith dialog leads us to better listen and understand each other, which can only lead us to be better people. We are organizing a Walk for Justice and an Evening of Interfaith Dialog in our community and joining the call from the Tent of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah organization to join with our Jewish and Muslim friends and neighbors in a nationwide Fast for Reflection, Repentance, Reconciliation, and Renewal, from sunrise to sunset on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

We are asking that all people of all faith traditions join in the Fast for Reflection, Repentance, Reconciliation, and Renewal on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. We ask that you share the call to action on the following page with your faith community and encourage their participation.

We are organizing a Walk for Justice in Gardiner County Park on Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> starting at 3:30 pm. We will walk the trails of the park together, enjoying the beauty and tranquility of the park grounds while reflecting on the issues discussed in the Call to Action on the next page. We will finish our walk and gather on the great lawn at 4:15 pm. At this time we will ask the participating faith community leaders to say a few words of prayer or wisdom from their respective faiths to the gathered walkers. Please encourage your faith community to join us. This event will be rain or shine. The park is located on Montauk Highway just ½ mile east of Robert Moses Parkway.

We will follow up this event with an Evening of Interfaith Dialog on Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, to be held at the Unitarian Universalist Society located at 28 Brentwood Rd, just south of Union Blvd. We will start the evening with a light buffet dinner at 6:30 pm and break up into small discussion groups. Each group will be made up of people from diverse backgrounds and gender. We will each share the story of our spiritual journey that has brought us to this peacemaking point in our lives. Individuals will then share prayers or other words from their faith traditions to be examined, and practiced together, while respecting each participant's own faith and doctrines. When choosing words to share, we suggest choosing words that will not put people in an uncomfortable position of having to say something that may be considered unacceptable in their faith tradition. We hope that these small groups will continue their discussions on various topics at various times, in various places, throughout the year.

Connect for a Day program— We encourage you and your faith community to reach out and invite another faith community to visit/host your faith community for a day of sharing traditions. We have included a list of many local faith communities on the back of the Call to Action sheet.

If you wish to join us for any of these events, please contact Stu Napear at (516) 983-1507 or [swnapear@hotmail.com](mailto:swnapear@hotmail.com)

Thank you  
Stuart Napear, Chairperson  
Bay Shore Interfaith Council

### **Call to Action**

At just the moment of history when religious conflicts have reemerged bearing lethal dangers for each other and our planet, God has given our spiritual and religious traditions a gift of time:

During October 2005, a rare confluence of sacred moments in many different traditions invites us to eat together, walk together, learn together, pray alongside each other, listen to each other, and work together for peace, justice, human rights, and the healing of our wounded earth.

The sacred Muslim lunar month of Ramadan and the sacred Jewish lunar month of Tishrei (which includes the High Holy Days) both begin October 3-4; October 4 is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi; and October 2 is World-wide (Protestant/ Orthodox) Communion Sunday. (For other sacred times that appear in October, see note 1 below.) The confluence of these four sacred seasons will recur in 2006 and 2007.

We could do much during these sacred times to heal our nation and the world. As one unifying moment of our prayer and effort —

We call on all communities of faith and ethics to observe a Nationwide Fast for Reflection, Repentance, Reconciliation, and Renewal, from sunrise to sunset on October 13. That day is for Muslims one of the fast days of Ramadan, and for Jews is the fast day of Yom Kippur.

Just as Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah welcomed into their tent thirsty travelers from all four directions, we welcome to this Fast not only those of the three Abrahamic traditions but all who thirst for a world made whole. We encourage those who join in this Fast to dedicate their prayers and their intention to serve the God Who calls us to seek peace, feed the poor, heal the earth, and then later to take visible steps in the world to heed God's call.

This Call was initiated by The Tent of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah. For more information and action suggestions, see [www.tentofabraham.org](http://www.tentofabraham.org). The Call has been endorsed by the National Council of Churches, the Islamic Society of North America, Pax Christi, The Shalom Center, the Jewish Committee for Isaiah's Vision (see note 3 below), ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal and its rabbinic body, Ohalah, the Disciples Justice Action Network, Northwest Interfaith Movement (Philadelphia) [partial list]