



Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FEBRUARY 2012 INTERFAITH MONTH: "MANY FAITHS – ONE FAMILY"
SALT LAKE INTERFAITH ROUNDTABLE CELEBRATES TEN YEARS
WITH MONTH OF FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Salt Lake City – The Roundtable's tenth-annual Interfaith Month officially starts Thursday, February 2 with an invitation-only prayer breakfast at the Salt Lake Marriott Hotel, recognizing United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 1–7.

Since 2003, the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable has celebrated February as Interfaith Month. It begins the month's activities with a breakfast meeting, while "joining with others around the world to recognize 'World Interfaith Harmony Week,'" explains Roundtable Secretary Elaine Emmi.

Commenting on the annual event, Roundtable Executive Director Ivan Cendese says that "the Interfaith Roundtable is delighted to be celebrating the tenth year of our coming together for the 2002 Olympics. The work that we began at the Olympics in fostering understanding and cooperation among the various diverse faith traditions in Utah continues. It is our hope that Interfaith Month will be a time to come together to promote love, harmony, and understanding among all faith traditions."

The theme of this year's World Interfaith Harmony Week is "We Are All Connected by Compassion."

The UN General Assembly established World Interfaith Harmony Week in 2010 in recognition of the importance of "mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue" to peace. The UN United Religions Initiative (URI), an organization founded on the principle of enduring interfaith cooperation for peace and justice, participated actively in the inaugural observance in 2011. The URI has called on its more than 530 member organizations to participate again this year.

As a representative of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), Roundtable member Wendy J. Stovall will read the UN Resolution recognizing World Interfaith Harmony Week. The UPF, an NGO, is a

global network of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a world of peace in which everyone can live in freedom, harmony, cooperation, and prosperity.

The morning's hosts are Rev. Cendese, and Josie Stone, 2011 Interfaith Month Chair. The breakfast will open with a welcome from Rev. Cendese. J.B. Singh of the Sikh Temple of Utah, and Roundtable member, will offer the opening prayer. It will be followed with the reading of written proclamations by Utah Governor Gary Herbert, Salt Lake Mayor Ralph Becker, and Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Carroon, recognizing February as 2012 Interfaith Month.

Ms. Emmi, Rev. Cendese, and Roundtable Board Chair Alan Bachman will present the annual awards, including the Community Award, to Safi Safiullah and the Salt Lake Downtown Main Library for promoting understanding in our diverse community. Past Board Chair Brian Farr will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award recognizing his many years of service to the Roundtable.

Mr. Bachman will introduce the morning's speaker, John Kesler of the Salt Lake Center for Engaging Community, who will address "Civility as the Civic Expression of the Golden Rule; The Special Role of Faith Communities in our Polarized Society." He will conduct a seminar entitled "Civility Outreach Training for Church Leaders and Their Faith Communities," starting at 9:30 a.m. at the hotel. There is no charge, and anyone who is interested may attend.

The Utah Civility and Community Initiative seeks to encourage and assist individuals, schools, civic groups, churches, businesses, local communities, the media, and elected officials throughout Utah to set goals to be more civil, welcoming, inclusive, and caring, and to act on them.

According to Mr. Kessler, "Civility is essentially the civic expression of the Golden Rule, some version of which is common to all major faith traditions. In today's polarized cultural and political environment it is perhaps our faith communities that have the greatest potential to provide the capacity for civic healing. Even more than 'bridging the religious divide,' it is time for our religious communities to come together in shared commitment and action to help us all to do better at treating one another as brothers and sisters in the public square."

The Rt. Rev. Scott B. Hayashi, Eleventh Bishop of Utah, Episcopal Diocese of Utah, will offer the benediction, which will be followed with closing remarks by Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Executive Director, Ivan Cendese.

The tenth-annual Interfaith Breakfast is made possible by the generous financial assistance of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, The Universal Peace Federation, and anonymous donors.

February 2012 community-wide interfaith events: a month of diversity and inclusivity

More than ever before, this year's events express the true diversity that exists in our community. All are presented with the hope of promoting understanding and respect, harmony and peace.

Interfaith Month Planning Committee Chair Josie Stone, says, "We have been a very active committee and we are proud and delighted to have an amazing diversity of programs this year for our interfaith

community and the public at large. We cannot express our appreciation enough for all of the many people who have worked extraordinarily hard to offer these events at their individual places of worship, in their communities, and in their volunteer organizations. ...it is truly a joy for me to be involved in this way with our [Salt Lake] interfaith community...”

The Roundtable encourages people of all faiths and beliefs to take this opportunity to come and learn more about each other:

- Enjoy traditional cuisine at a Jewish – Muslim cooking class
- Attend evening Pan Orthodox Vespers with Greek, Serbian, and Antiochian Clergy
- Visit to the Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple of Utah
- Cultivate humility and gratitude in the midst of difficult times at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple
- Attend a prayer service followed by lunch at the Sikh Temple of Utah
- Gain understanding at an engaging interfaith lecture series at Westminster College
- Eat heartily at a pre-Lenten Shrove Tuesday pancake supper
- Be inspired and uplifted at a genuine gospel extravaganza

Interfaith Month Community Service Projects

In addition to the daily schedule of events, there will be two community service projects:

Youth Service Activity – An Interfaith Youth Community Project for Homeless Families at the Family Promise Day Center, Friday, February 3, 4 – 6 p.m. Youth aged 8-17 will be led in a brief discussion of local interfaith partnerships that serve the needs of homeless families. Afterwards, they will perform a cleaning service project of the Family Promise Day Center, 814 W. 800 So., Salt Lake City.

Month-long SLIR / YWCA Women’s Shelter Donation Drive – During February, the Roundtable is asking everyone and their faith communities to help the YWCA meet their critical operating needs by selecting items for donation from the YWCA Wish List. The Wish List and a special Roundtable Donation Form are available at <http://www.interfaithroundtable.org/2012DonationDrive.htm>. Donations will help ensure the YWCA’s ability to continue providing valuable services to Salt Lake’s women and children.

Tenth Annual Interfaith Musical Tribute

The Roundtable presents the annual Interfaith Musical Tribute, where diverse world religions come together to worship through dance, song, sacred text, and prayer, Sunday, February 26, 6 p.m., at the Salt Lake LDS Tabernacle on Temple Square.

Hosted by KSL’s Carole Mikita and Mary Dickson of KUED, the Musical Tribute is the signature event of Interfaith Month in Utah, celebrated annually to keep alive the legacy and spirit of global harmony and understanding inspired by the Olympics.

This interfaith service originated on the Sunday evening before the 2002 Olympics as a time of prayerful reflection in preparation for welcoming the world to Salt Lake City, and returns every February on the anniversary of the Games.

Commenting on the event at the Tabernacle, Roundtable Chair and Musical Tribute performer, Alan Bachman, says this “is one of the greatest experiences a person can have. It is educational, uplifting and entertaining, all at the same time. It provides hope that the many faiths can live together in peace on our one planet. The LDS Church is very generous in providing one of their most holy places for this event. This event is Utah at its best. Please come and bring your family and friends.”

Performers include a Christian gospel choir, Earth-based music, Hindu dance, Jewish music, readings from the Koran, LDS Children’s Choir, Little Taiko Buddhist Drums, Presbyterian Bell Ringers, a Sikh blessing, Tahi Buddhist Dancing, dances from Togo, Unitarian Choir, and more.

Dean Kaelin, songwriter, musician, performer, and teacher, returns for his fifth year of involvement with the Musical Tribute. He says, “I strongly believe in the things that Interfaith does and what it stands for and encourages, so I was happy to help.”

The tribute begins at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5 p.m. Free tickets are required for the Musical Tribute, and there is a limit of eight tickets per person. Tickets may be obtained over the Internet at www.lds.org, or by calling 801-570-0080 (locally) or toll-free 1-866-537-8457 (1-866-LDS-TIKS).

Seating will be general admission. For this event in the Tabernacle, admission is open to all ages. The Tabernacle doors will open 60 minutes before the performance start time. The length of the performance is approximately 90 minutes. Sunday dress is encouraged.

Please visit to www.lds.org for information about seating and special considerations.

See the complete, updated schedule of Interfaith Month events at www.interfaithroundtable.org. The public is welcome, and all events are free. (Please check the Roundtable website for appropriate dress and directions.)

Interfaith Month is sponsored by the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable. For donations or information about the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, Interfaith Month events, and the Musical Tribute on February 26, 2012 at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, please visit our website at interfaithroundtable.org.