



Interfaith Peace Service at the Al Mahdi Institute

Birmingham, United Kingdom, June 12, 2022

By David & Patricia Earle

Around 150 people of all faiths, cultures, races and different ethnic backgrounds came together at the Al Mahdi Institute in Selly Oak, Birmingham for an Interfaith Peace Service under the theme 'Healing our Wounded World', including 8 faith leaders and 2 Birmingham City Councillors. We met under the beautiful, cloistered arches of the Institute's Prayer Hall / Chapel, which help to create a very warm, embracing atmosphere. Quite several people also joined online, through the Institute kindly live streaming the event via a YouTube link



Imam Shahid Tameez gave our invocation, the Islamic 'Call to Prayer', and was followed by our first speaker, Sheikh Arif, the Institute's Director. We then invited seven ladies to share a short reading or prayer from the Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Baha'i and Brahma Kumari faith traditions. Before leaving the stage, a bouquet of roses was presented by Viola Dirnhofer to our Jewish lady, Ruth Shire, who was 101 years old just a short time ago. Amazing!

Our next 2 speakers were Dr Pyara Singh Bhogal, a member of the National Sikh Council, and Mrs Ruth Jacobs, representative of the West Midlands Jewish community. A piece of devotional music was then offered, an original interfaith song composed by Tom Pritty, who sang together with Viola. The song received a very warm round of applause.

Our final 2 speakers were Rev Carver Anderson, a 'practical theologian' and social scientist, and Dr David Earle from the Universal Peace Federation.

To connect with the reality of our 'Wounded World', we then heard a message from E. Y. of Youth and Students for Peace who had travelled recently to Moldova to join in the Peace Federation's efforts in helping hundreds of Ukrainian refugees, and finally Dr Sadia Ahmad of the United Kingdom Islamic

Mission. Dr Sadia described the appalling conditions in which so many families are living, in Yemen, and UKIM's efforts to help feed some of the people through building bakeries and distributing bread daily. We asked for donations to help this work and were able to collect £650 through everyone's generosity.

Patricia Earle then presented Ambassador for Peace awards to six very deserving ladies, and we concluded our afternoon with delicious refreshments and fellowship in the dining area and grounds of the Institute, where some people renewed acquaintance, and many others made new friends. It was so wonderful to meet again, face to face, and heart to heart after the Coronavirus pandemic. Some people would have stayed a lot longer, if we had not had to vacate the property around 5.00pm! A very productive and meaningful experience, judging by the amount of positive feedback we have received.