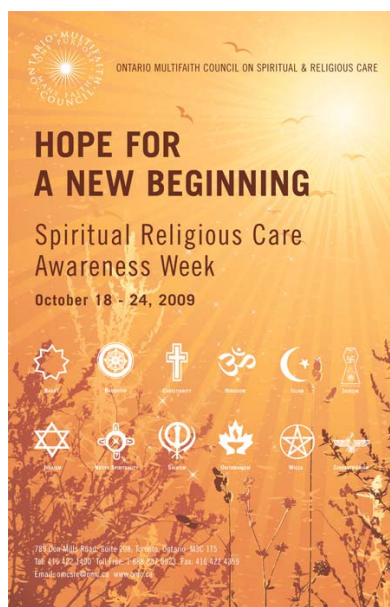




# Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual & Religious Care (OMC)

## A MULTIFAITH LITURGY ON HOPE FOR A NEW BEGINNING



Spiritual and Religious Care Awareness Week

**Theme: Hope for a New Beginning**

Date: October 18 – 24, 2009

Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care  
Suite 208, 789 Don Mills Road  
Toronto, Ontario

## Hope for a New Beginning

### *General instructions for use and preparations:*

This celebration need not take a lot of preparation to create a meaningful event. There are 13 prayers / messages of hope included in our package, though organizers/celebrants may decide that they would like to include other faith groups or shorten our list, as they find appropriate. There are many sources of short faith statements available on the internet, or faith group adherents may choose to write one about their own faith.

### *Suggested Program:*

Place a table in the center of the room, and put a candle<sup>1</sup> (in a holder) on the table for each of the faith groups, which will be represented in your gathering PLUS ONE. The **celebrant** will light this one at the end of the last reading. Also, place a book of matches or a lighter on the table prior to beginning the celebration.

The number of **readers** should be the same as the number of faiths being celebrated, and each reader should have some time to read over the text and familiarize themselves with any difficult language, and to satisfy themselves that they understand the words they will be reading. Note: It is probably best if faith adherents can be offered the opportunity to read the section representing their own faith; (e.g. if there is a Muslim reader, she could be offered the choice of reading the piece about her own faith, etc.). Should any reader feel uncomfortable representing a faith which is not their own, they should be encouraged to pass the task to another participant.

As each faith group presentation is made, the **reader** will step to the center of the circle, light a candle, and step back into their place in the circle. This will provide a few moments of reflection between each of the readings. After the last reading, and prior to the closing words, the celebrant will light the final candle in honour of those faiths who are not present here today. This is an optional part of the service and may be replaced by another technique to provide reflective time.

The gathering can take place anywhere the participants feel is appropriate. If possible, invite participants to stand or sit in a circle. The celebrant may ask people to introduce themselves if the numbers are appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> If candles are not available, consider using a bouquet of flowers which would be placed in a vase upon each reading, in place of lighting a candle, etc.

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**Celebrant:** *Welcoming and instructional statements*  
*The following is a suggested text; we encourage the celebrant to bring their own flavour to this celebration.*

“We are gathered here today to celebrate the caring and hope offered to us by our faith and the faith of our neighbours. This is a circle of celebration and learning. We welcome all faiths and all peoples into our circle, where we expand our understanding and show respect for each other’s beliefs.

As we move around the circle, in clockwise fashion, the readers will bring you good news from the perspective of the faith which they are representing today. Each reading will conclude with a short scriptural passage which helps us to understand why Spiritual and Religious care are important to the Faith Group. When the readers finish their reading, they will bow their heads, come to the center of the circle and light a candle. You may acknowledge their reading with any positive affirmation, which you find appropriate. Myself, I will be saying ‘Amen’; you are free to choose your own manner of showing respect and understanding of their words.

*The celebrant begins by reading the following:*

At this time, we are called to ignite a new meaning of hope. It is a time of expectation and perseverance.

A time of relationship and listening to the wisdom that resides in the recesses of our souls.

A time when through new moments of self-expression our imagination erupts and the divine becomes present in our lives.

A time when the inward search activates an increased momentum toward meaning and purpose in our lives.

A time when we gather to celebrate the traditions of indigenous peoples and the sacred stories of oppressed peoples everywhere.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> “A *Canticle of Hope*,” The Sacred Impulse, A Planetary Spirituality of Heart and Fire, by James Conlon, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 2000.

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*The celebrant nods to the first reader, who reads a portion of the liturgy and then lights a candle. After a brief moment of meditation, the next reader follows and so on..*



**Bahá'í faith**

“O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee, O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.”  
Baha' u' llah

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION



**Buddhism**

May the blind see forms,  
And the deaf hear sounds.  
ay those whose bodies are worn with toil  
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,  
The hungry find food;  
May the thirsty find water  
And delicious drinks.  
May the poor find wealth,

May all who are sick and ill  
Quickly be freed from their ailments.  
Whatever diseases there are in the world,  
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid  
And those bound be freed;  
May the powerless find power  
And may people think of benefiting each other.

— A prayer contributed by Shantideva.

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**Christianity**

**The Anglican Church of Canada**

God whose glory fills the whole creation and whose presence we find wherever we go; surround them with your loving care; protect them from every danger; and bring them in the safety to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Remember, Lord, your people bowed before you, and those who are absent through age, sickness or any other cause. Care for the infants, guide the young, support the aged, inspire the faint hearted, and bring the wandering to your fold. Journey with the travelers, encourage the oppressed, defend the widows, deliver the captives, heal the sick. Strengthen all who are in tribulation, necessity or distress. Remember for good those who love us, unworthy as we are, to pray for them. Remember especially, Lord, those whom we have forgotten. For you are the helper of the helpless, the Saviour of the lost, the refuge of the wanderer, the healer of the sick. You know the need of all and have heard each prayer: save us in your merciful loving kindness and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For the Unemployed

Heavenly father, we remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use their wealth and resources that everyone may find suitable and fulfilling employment and receive just payment for their labour; through your son Jesus Christ our Lord.

For Those in Affliction

Almighty and everlasting God, the comfort of the sad and the strength of those who suffer, hear the prayers of your people who are in any trouble. Grant to everyone in distress mercy, relief and refreshment; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION 



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.

Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION

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<sup>3</sup> *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Augsburg Fortress, 2006). © [www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights) ~~  
The prayers of Lutherans and Anglicans are quite similar to those of The Baptist Church, and Canadian Conference Brethren in Christ Church.

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**Hinduism**

“O God,  
Let us be united;  
Let us speak in harmony;  
Let our minds apprehend alike.  
Common be our prayer;  
Common be the end of our assembly;  
Common be our resolution;  
Common be our deliberations.  
Alike be our feelings;  
Unified be our hearts;  
Common be our intentions;  
Perfect be our unity  
Rig Veda

PAUSE FOR QUET REFLECTION



**Islam**

So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: verily, with every difficulty there is relief.

The Qu' ran (The Koran) 94:5-6

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION



**Jainism**

The Lord Tirthankaras of the past, the present and those yet to come in the future  
Have preached, do preach and shall preach this eternal truth:  
See an extension of yourself in all of creation.  
Do not hurt, do not disturb.  
Do not cause pain, do not humiliate, do not exploit.  
Do not inflict any of those indignities on any living being.  
Nor on any of the material elements of this creation.  
The words of the Lord Mahavir:

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**Judaism**

*Sh'ma Yis'ra'eil Hashem Elokeinu Hashem echad.*

Hear, Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is One.

In an undertone:

Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.

And you shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart.

And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION



**Native Spirituality**

Oh Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world – hear me – I come before you, one of your children.

I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made, my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise, so that I may know the things you taught my people, the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength not to be superior to my brothers and sisters, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy, myself.

Make me ever ready to come to you, with clean hands and straight eyes,

So that when life fades as a fading sunset,

My spirit may come to you without shame.

First Nations invocation often given at Native gatherings

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**Sikhism**

Raag Basant. M:3.  
With the coming of spring,  
There is blossom in every spray;  
In the same fashion,  
With the coming of inner devotion to God,  
All sentient creatures have an inner blossoming;  
And in this way the mind becomes fresh and green.

By uttering and meditating on God's name,  
Egoism is washed off and the world blooms with love.

The lord Himself is spring season and the world is His garden,  
Nanak says, by good luck, we are in perfect harmony with the divine.

- Sri Guru Granth Sahib page 1177

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION



**Unitarian Universalism**

Eternal God, source of all created things,  
we would give substance to our thankfulness  
by resolving to make right use of the gifts  
we have received from your bounty.  
With your gift of the sense we would fashion and preserve  
a world of beauty for all.  
With your gift of reason we would engage in a responsible search for truth.  
With your gift of compassion we would build a world of justice and mercy.  
And with your gift of Being we would walk together in peace.  
Thus, in gratitude, may we become faithful servants  
of your glorious ongoing creation.

Robert R. Walsh, UUMA Worship Materials Collection, 1997

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**Wicca**

Bless me Lord and Lady, for I am Thy child  
Bless my mind, that I may know Thee  
Bless my voice, that I may speak Thy words in truth  
Bless my heart, for it is Thy temple and Thy shrine  
(for a woman) Bless my womb, for it is as the source of all life  
(for a man) Bless my seed, for it is as the seed of all life  
Bless my knees, which kneel at Thy holy altars  
Bless my feet, which have brought me in Thy ways  
Bless my hands, for they are the instruments of Thy work.  
Bless me Lord and Lady, for I am Thy child

PAUSE FOR QUIET REFLECTION



**Zoroastrianism**

A PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL CARE:

Best life is cultivated, through the Holy Spirit,  
by one, who speaks words stemming from  
Good thinking with his tongue; and  
performs deeds of active benevolence and care with his hands.  
For Wise lord is the creator of Righteousness

**Ys 47.2**

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**Celebrant:** *Shedding light on faiths which are not represented here today.*

**Here the celebrant moves to the center of the circle and addresses the participants from the center, as s/he lights the last remaining candle.**

“We light this final candle in recognition of the many faith groups, large and small, which are not represented here today. This candle sheds light on those areas of our understanding which may remain in the dark corners of our minds“.

**Celebrant:** *Closing Remarks*

**The celebrant moves back into line, joining the circle, and addresses the group from this position of equality.**

“We have heard from some of the faith groups with whom we share our world, and we have learned what gives them hope and what motivates their compassionate care. Go now in peace and in a fuller understanding of the ways of your brothers and sisters of differing faiths“.



**A note regarding the sources and development of these texts:** The faith group profiles in this liturgy were compiled through research in The Multifaith Library. Sources included books, articles, and the internet. In most cases, text and ideas were taken from statements on web sites managed by the faith groups themselves, and have been read and vetted by faith group representatives or experts in the field (or both). The editor was careful to avoid creating situations where one faith adherent was called upon to worship according to another’s faith. The editor would like to acknowledge that these profiles are derived from a variety of sources, and welcomes constructive advice, comments, or additions at: [thelibrary@omc.ca](mailto:thelibrary@omc.ca).

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