

# What's On In Edinburgh? Scottish Interfaith Week



**Scottish Interfaith Week** starts today. In Edinburgh, a programme covering everything from **organ donation** to **climate change**, **tree planting** and the annual **Interfaith Quiz** offers something for everyone, whatever their faith or lack of it.

Interfaith Week provides an opportunity for individuals, local interfaith groups and faith communities across the country to celebrate Scotland's religious diversity, in events that bring local people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's many religious communities. This year's theme is **Care for the Environment**; when **Mahatma Gandhi's** grandson **Arun** visited Edinburgh in the autumn, he talked about the problem of '**passive violence**: the non-physical violence that we commit every day' – exploiting people, discriminating against them, wasting resources, creating disparities in society – these, he said, are all forms of violence. **Iain Stewart**, General Secretary of **Edinburgh Interfaith Association**, says,

'to live in harmony with nature and to protect and help the most vulnerable in society are key values... In order to achieve these we all need to work...towards non-violent behaviour and *become the change we wish to see in the world*'.

Here are some of the week's highlights:



## **Our Faiths Honour the Earth**

An interfaith earth-honouring celebration focused on caring for the environment, with art, music, poems, readings and

prayers from different religious traditions. The Baton from the **Climate Change Walk** will be present. This event is organised by the University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy and the Edinburgh Inter-faith Association, who say; 'The **Climate Baton** will be going to Paris. Despite the terrible events a week ago we are determined to share its message of climate justice with others preparing for the **UN Climate Change Conference**. It has now been to over 100 churches, schools and other groups and carries the prayers, hopes and aspirations of tens of thousands of participants in its journey across Scotland'.

5.30-8pm, Tuesday 24th November, [University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy](#), 1 Bristo Place. Free, all welcome, food provided, no booking required.

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## **Faith and Organ Donation**

A crisis in organ donation is threatening the lives of hundreds of people who desperately need transplants. Whilst nearly a quarter of people waiting for kidney transplants are black, Asian or from another minority ethnic group, fewer than 2% of those who have joined the Organ Donation Register are from BME groups. This panel discussion, chaired by **Pamela Niven OBE**, Project Manager for Organ Donation and Transplantation, investigates the religious and cultural barriers to organ donation and considers how might they be overcome. Panel members will include **Mrs Manjit Jheeta** of the **South Asian Peer Educator** project, **Ms Anne Mulligan**, a retired hospital chaplain at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, who will talk about her experience working as part of the transplant team, and **Mrs Jill Adhikiri**, a specialist nurse in organ donation, who will speak about the service her department provides and answer any questions the audience may have about the donation process.

6-7.30pm, Wednesday 25th November, Sanctuary, [Augustine United Church](#), George IV Bridge. Free, all welcome, but booking is required and may be made by emailing [info@eifa.org.uk](mailto:info@eifa.org.uk) or calling 0131 283 5427.

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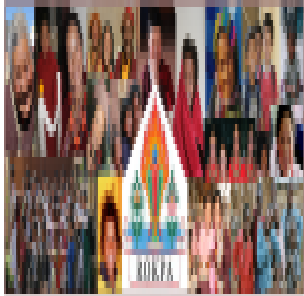
**Peter Owen Jones: Why Do We Forget to Share? *Around the World in Eighty Faiths***

Peter Owen Jones, who presented the BBC's ***Around the World in 80 Faiths*** series, will share some episodes from his pilgrimage to visit the world's diverse faith traditions. These include his experience in Ethiopia, where he found a utopian community living in a harsh and unforgiving land. He poses the questions *Why can't the rest of the world follow from this example? Why do we forget to share?*

7pm, Thursday 26th November, Studio, [Augustine United Church](#), George IV Bridge. Tickets cost £9/£7 (concessions)/£5 (students) and may be booked via eventbrite [here](#) or (if you prefer to pay by cheque) by emailing [info@eifa.org.uk](mailto:info@eifa.org.uk). This event is supported by Augustine United Church and Edinburgh Churches Together.

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## Caring for Mother Earth

**Kagyu Samye Dzong Tibetan Buddhist Centre** is hosting a day of events looking at ***Caring for Mother Earth. Think Globally, Act Locally***, a talk by environmentalist and community garden director **Natalie McCall**, will be followed by a planting of indigenous fruit trees. Hot Chai will be served courtesy of the Nepali community in Edinburgh, after which there will be a screening of an inspirational film, *Compassion in Action – Environmentalism in the 21st Century*, in which **His Holiness the 17th Karmapa** speaks (during his recent tour of US Universities) on environmental activism and the Buddhist view of our interconnectedness with Mother Earth and all beings.

2-5pm, Sunday 29th November, [Kagyu Samye Dzong](#), Tibetan Buddhist Centre, 4 Walker Street. All welcome, free – donations will be invited for the **Rokpa Nepal Earthquake Fund**.

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## William Johnstone: Decalogue and Dialogue

William Johnstone, Emeritus Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at the University of Aberdeen, will propose that the

10 commandments provide a model case for biblical interpretation. They are central to the book of Exodus, its meaning and structure, yet despite being 'written in stone', the surprising fact is that they appear in two versions in the Bible with two distinctive viewpoints. Professor Johnstone participated in archaeological excavations at Ras Shamra/Ugarit in Syria and at Enkomi/Alasia in Cyprus and was epigraphist to the Marsala Punic Ship expedition, Sicily. Recently, his research in the Hebrew Bible has focused on the book of Exodus, on which he published a two-volume commentary last year. This event is organised by **Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society**.

8pm, Sunday 29th November, [Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Synagogue](#), 4 Salisbury Road. Tickets cost £2 (members), £3 (non-members) on the door.

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### **The Big Interfaith Quiz!**

Return of the popular annual interfaith quiz, with a delicious buffet of dishes from many different faith cuisines and a brain-teasing array of mind-bending questions. How much do you know about your own and others' faiths?

7pm, Sunday 29th November, [Well Café, City of Edinburgh Methodist Church](#), 25 Nicolson Square. Free and family-friendly! Contact [info@eifa.org.uk](mailto:info@eifa.org.uk) to register your team.

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And don't forget **Scotland's Climate Change March** starts at **12.30pm (assemble at 12 noon)** on **Saturday 28th November** on the

**Meadows.** The organisers ask you to wear your brightest colours and march on this weekend of global action, to stand up for people affected by climate change and demand that world leaders attending the UN climate change negotiations in Paris agree an ambitious deal. An ecumenical service, to which **all are welcome**, will held before the march at 11am at [St Albert's Catholic Chaplaincy](#), 24 George Square.

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In the UK Parliament on Thursday 19th November, six days after the atrocities in Paris, **Margaret Ferrier MP** for Rutherglen and Hamilton West, proposed; 'In light of the tragic events in Paris on 13 November 2015, it is vital that people of all faiths, and those of none, all come together to combat rising extremism; (this House) recognises that local interfaith groups and faith communities across the country enhance Scotland's rich diverse society...'.

To see the full programme of Scottish Interfaith Week events visit **Interfaith Scotland** [here](#); paper programmes have also been distributed to many venues throughout the city.

