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## Welcome to the spring edition of the GRASSROOTS newsletter!

Spring brings the hope of bright sunshine to chase away the winter gloom. The waking of spring flowers and the sound of tweeting birds are a further joy. But for Christians, spring also brings the season of Lent, a time for reflection, acknowledging our individual and corporate sins, repentance for making (or not making) choices which contribute to the injustice in our world. Then, at the end of Lent, comes Easter - celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ; the victory of hope and life over death. Through words and actions, Christians should seek to share that hope with the rest of the world. Besides speaking a message of salvation, we must act to challenge the injustice which surrounds us, perpetuated by powerful nations, and limiting the lives of so many people around the world. As we reflect, repent and pray that the world may change, may our prayers change us first, so that our faith may be real and permeate everything we do.

## Ghar se Ghar Trip

Ghar se Ghar (Home to Home) arranged a trip for 49 women from different faith & cultural backgrounds to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir (Neasden Hindu Temple) on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016. The group thoroughly enjoyed their day out to this magnificent building, an incredible feat of engineering, which left a lasting impression on everyone.



*Ghar se Ghar visited the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden*

The trip included a guided tour of the temple, a visit to the 'Understanding Hinduism' exhibition, a video presentation of the history of the building, attending the morning Arti ceremony in the maha-mandap sanctuary, a talk with Q&A session and a delightful buffet lunch.

## Precious Pearls

Our annual Precious Pearls event was held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016, celebrating International Women's Day with over 100 women from different faiths and cultures taking part. Held at the Bury Park Community Resource Centre, this year's event had the theme of 'Women Sowing Peace', and featured a wide range of entertainment, information-sharing and activities.



*Members of Ghar se Ghar entertaining over 100 women who attended Precious Pearls*

Presentations relating to local projects were given under the headings of Inner Peace, Family Peace, Peace in the Community, Peace with the Environment and Peace in the World. The evening also included an array of songs, dances, poems and sketches and concluded with food and conversations.

## Fairtrade Fortnight

GRASSROOTS, in partnership with Luton Council of Faiths, was proud to continue promoting Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight which ran from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016. During this year's Fairtrade Fortnight, campaigners were encouraged to support, promote, organise and participate in Fairtrade Breakfasts in their communities.



*GRASSROOTS team members and colleagues enjoying a Fairtrade Breakfast*

GRASSROOTS and colleagues from the Fairtrade Steering Group supported a Fairtrade Breakfast held by Harpenden Fairtrade in Cornelia's Coffee Shop, Harpenden, on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The University of Bedfordshire also put on an exciting programme of events celebrating the Fortnight.

## Other GRASSROOTS News

### Holocaust Memorial Day

GRASSROOTS colleagues were involved in the planning of the Holocaust Memorial Day event which took place at Luton Town Hall on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Candles were lit to commemorate the 11 million victims of the Holocaust, students from Stopsley High School performed a moving sketch on Bullying and there was also a deep reflection on the 'Impact of Slavery on African Caribbean Communities'.

### Britain First Patrol

Britain First returned unannounced to Bury Park, Luton, on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016, provoking the local community and causing unrest, whilst filming material to make an anti-Islamic propaganda video. Luton's Church leaders responded the next day by visiting Bury Park on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to denounce the actions of Britain First and share the message of peace.

### Faithful Fundraising Grant Workshop

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 GRASSROOTS hosted a well-attended workshop led by John McCallum, a Near Neighbours Coordinator from Leicester, designed to develop confidence and skills in searching for and writing fundraising bids for faith based and social community action.

### Circle Dancing

Circle Dancing classes, featuring traditional folk dancing from around the world, continue to run across Luton! To find out more please contact us via email at [annhyde204@msn.com](mailto:annhyde204@msn.com) or call 01582 725266. Our classes run on:

- **Blenheim Crescent Baptist Church Hall (Blenheim Crescent) – Tuesdays**  
**Next Sessions:** 12<sup>th</sup> April / 10<sup>th</sup> May / 14<sup>th</sup> June from 2:30-4pm
- **St Anne's Church Hall (Crawley Green Road) – Tuesdays**  
**Next Sessions:** 19<sup>th</sup> April / 17<sup>th</sup> May / 21<sup>st</sup> June from 7:30-9:30pm
- **Hockwell Ring Community Centre (Mayne Avenue) – Wednesdays**  
**Next Sessions:** These sessions run weekly term time only from 1-2pm
- **High Town Methodist Church Hall (High Town Road) – Wednesdays**  
**Next Sessions:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the Month from 3:30-4:30pm

### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

'Was it all Worth It?' was an event held at Holy Ghost Catholic Parish Church on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016 to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Led by Luton's Ecumenical Area Deans, the event invited Christians from different denominations to reflect on war and peace in light of the centenary of the First World War. Speakers Don Rowe, a Quaker writer and education consultant, and Matt Jeziorski, Peace Education Worker for Pax Christi, were invited to share different perspectives.

## Dates for your Diary

**Taxi Tehran**, a film screening on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 from 7-9pm at The Hat Factory, 65-67 Bute St, Luton. Book online at <http://www.lutonculture.com/hat-factory/>

**A Syrian Love Story**, a film screening on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016 from 6-9pm at the Hat Factory, 65-67 Bute St, Luton. Book at <http://www.lutonculture.com/hat-factory/>

**Agent**, a "gritty multi-disciplinary piece of theatre" looking at Human Trafficking on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 at The Hat Factory, 65-67 Bute St, Luton. Book at <http://www.lutonculture.com/hat-factory/>

**Same Difference** at Beech Hill Methodist Church on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, 12:30-2.30pm including a shared meal. Open to all. Contact [crcwsmiles@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crcwsmiles@hotmail.co.uk)

**Latin America: Spirit of Liberation** – MWM Conference from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Book online at <http://mwm.org.uk/conferences/>



*A Muslim Woman giving a speech at the Holocaust Memorial Day*



*Christian and Muslim community leaders giving away flowers after the Britain First visit*



*John McCallum delivering a Faithful Fundraising grants workshop at GRASSROOTS*



*Circle Dancing sessions take place across Luton throughout the year*



*Reflective discussions commemorating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*