



VMS ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

To learn from one another, to celebrate our unity in diversity, to work together for the well-being of the community and the world

Victoria Multifaith Society

2021 Year in Review

World Interfaith Harmony Week Event



Our World Interfaith Harmony Week for 2021 was held online on 4 February, with a panel of four diverse young Canadians speaking about race from the perspective of their lives and beliefs. We're very grateful to panelists Natalya Child, Sachi Ihara, Zara Chaudhry and Talia Friedman, as well as our MC, Steve Baileys of ICA.

The event was co-sponsored by the UVic Multifaith Centre and the Community Partnership Network of the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria.

Spiritually Speaking Newspaper Column



The Spiritually Speaking column of the Times-Colonist is a project we're proud to support. It features roughly 25 multifaith writers expressing a spiritual and values-based perspective on current issues & events.

The column appears twice weekly online and in the print edition of the Saturday paper. It's moderated by Anna Bowness-Park of the First Church of Christ,

Scientist, who has recruited and encouraged writers from a great variety of traditions. The column's success is a testament to her dedication.

Since the online versions of the articles appear in searches for subjects related to faith, spirituality or religion, these diverse voices are heard and read by an increasingly large group of people far outside the range of Victoria. It is rare for a news outlet to carry a regular weekly faith column in its paper, and even more rare on their online platform. The Times Colonist remains committed to supporting the blog and continuing to publish these excellent articles in the print paper.

The Interfaith Liaisons Network



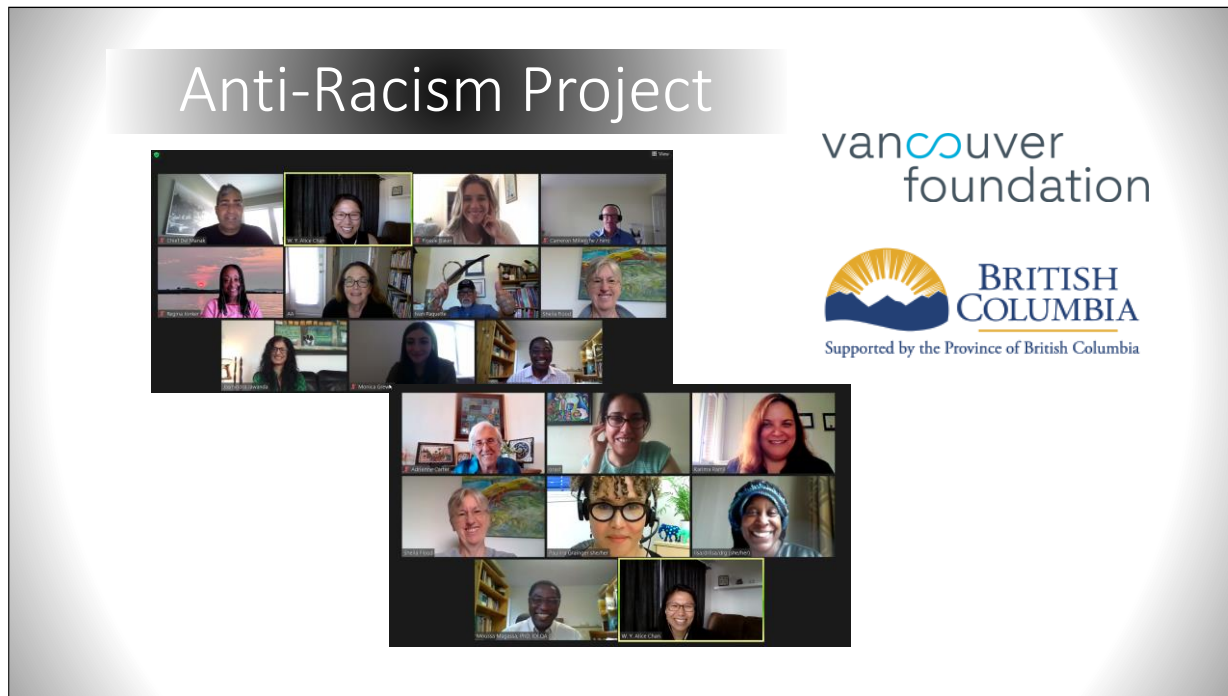
The Interfaith Liaisons Network, or ILN, is a project of VMS open to members of congregations and spiritual groups, who engage in interfaith dialogue and act as informal liaisons between the group and their communities.

Several meetings of the *Interfaith Liaisons Network* were held in 2021, the majority held online rather than the small, in person meetings of previous years. The online format allowed much greater access and appeal to a wider audience. with guest speakers, advertised on EventBrite and open to the general public. These included events on several topics from a spiritual perspective, including:

- Homelessness, with Janine Theobald, on January 18th
- Economics, with Badi Shams, on the 8th of March
- Environment, with Calvin Sandborn, on May 10th,
- And Indigenous Health, with Karen Pruden Shirley, on October 25th.

Special thanks to our speakers and also to Rev. Terri Woolgar, Beth Gibson, Derek Hawksley, Rev. Bill Cantelon and Rabbi Louis Sutker for their work with ILN. Although it's not meeting in person right now, ILN is open to new members. If you'd like more information, please send a note to victoriamultifaith@gmail.com

Discussing Racism: Leading Change from Multifaith Spaces



VMS, in partnership with the national non-profit Centre for Civic Religious Literacy, received grants from the Vancouver Foundation and BC Multiculturalism, to develop an anti-racism resource tool.

This one-year anti-racism project, “Discussing Racism: Leading Change from Multifaith Spaces”, involved creating two advisory groups, one based in Victoria and one provincial.

A series of 8 ANTI-RACISM WORKSHOPS were created, on Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism, as well as a Facilitator’s guide and Glossary. The materials have gone out to over 20 reviewers and are now being finalized.

It’s hoped that the workshops, due to be launched in 2022, will be used by groups of all types, ages, and sizes, all over the province.

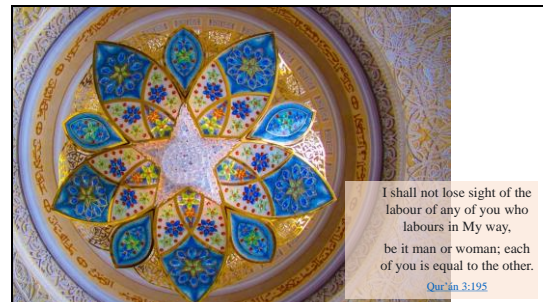
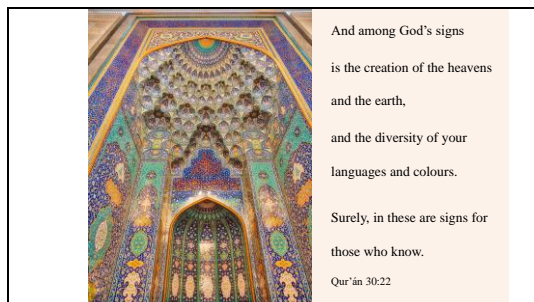
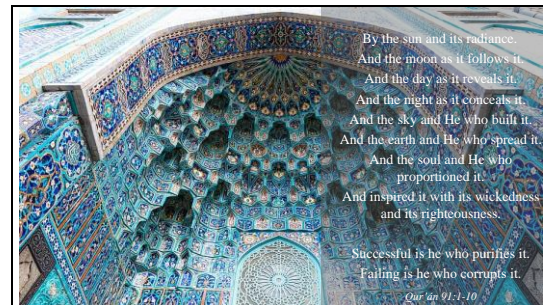
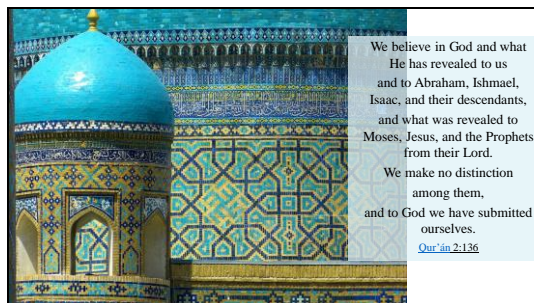
VMS is grateful to the Vancouver Foundation and BC Multiculturalism for their financial support for this project.

2021 AGM Theme: Countering Islamophobia



Countering Islamophobia, the theme of our 2021 AGM, is very much part of the role of VMS: to counter hate and foster knowledge, good will and understanding among people, by learning about the world's faiths through the eyes and experiences those who espouse them.

May Shihadeh, our guest speaker at this year's Annual General Meeting, is a Masters student at Royal Roads University in Intercultural and International Communication.



2021 Financial Report

Victoria Multifaith Society*		
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements		
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021		
	OPENING BALANCE July 1, 2020	\$ 3,129.22
RECEIPTS		
DONATIONS - INDIVIDUAL		\$ 126.08
MEMBERSHIP - Individuals		\$ 10.00
MEMBERSHIP - Faith Groups		\$ 50.00
GRANT Vancouver Foundation		\$ 20,000.00
GRANT BC Multiculturalism		\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 30,186.08
DISBURSEMENTS		
ADMINISTRATIVE - BC Societies Filing Fees 2018, 2019 and 2020		\$ 120.00
ADMINISTRATIVE - Name request fee		\$ 131.50
Internet Web Hosting Fees		\$ 108.89
Bank charges		\$ 6.00
GRANT Centre for Civic Religious Literacy		\$ 19,000.00
REMEMBRANCE DAY WREATH - POPPY FUND		\$ 84.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		\$ 19,450.39
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER DISBURSEMENTS		\$ 10,735.69
	CLOSING BALANCE June 30, 2021	\$ 13,864.91

Financial Report 1-7-20 to 30-6-21

*project of World Interfaith Education Association, BC

In its 15-year history, VMS has always relied chiefly on in-kind donations of venues, supplies and refreshments. That changed somewhat this year, with an anti-racism project funded by BC Multiculturalism and the Vancouver Foundation.

The \$30,000 that flowed through our account is being used to pay the projects facilitators, advisory groups and reviewers. Because the project is not yet finished, the funds haven't been completely disbursed, but this will eventually bring our closing balance back to its original balance. VMS continues to depend on membership donations for all other expenses.

Membership & Donations

- Membership free with any donation
- VMS website "Donate or Join"
 - E-transfers through Canada Helps
 - Tax receipts for donations \$20 & over
- Suggested donation:
 - \$25 for individuals,
 - \$50 for organizations

VMS recently decided to make memberships free with any donation, with a suggested donation of \$25 for individuals and \$50 for organizations. We'd like to keep membership reasonable and accessible to all people, especially students and other young people, so membership is included with a donation of any size.


During this past year we've also made it easy to make donations by e-transfer directly on our website, using the Donate or Join button on the navigation bar.

Printable receipts are automatically given for every donation of \$20 or more. These donations provide membership for one year and provide for all VMS activities.

New Role of Executive Director

1st VMS Executive Director

- Overseeing all aspects of the organization
- Working closely with Board of Directors
- Communications
- Coordination of projects, meetings and events



— Sheila Flood



Sheila Flood was named the Board's first Executive Director this past summer, after serving on the board at its inception in 2006 until 2010 and again from 2015 - 2021. She is responsible for communication and coordination as well as other tasks to keep VMS running smoothly and progressing in its capacity to serve the community. All VMS board members serve in a voluntary capacity.

Retiring Board members

VMS Board of Directors

Thank you
to our board members who have
completed their terms:

♥
Parminder Virk (Sikh seat)
&
Sridevi Ganti (Hindu seat)



We're losing two wonderful board members, **Parminder Virk** and **Sri Ganti**, our Sikh and Hindu board members since 2015.

Their years of dedicated service have been enormously appreciated.

The multifaith devotional event held at the Hindu temple each year when in-person gatherings are possible, was organized by Sri

Ganti and has been one of our most joyful and successful activities, with singing, chanting, music and prayer from a wide range of traditions.

Parminder Virk is well-known in Victoria for her support of multicultural and multifaith activities and has great skill in feeding multitudes of people both physically and spiritually.

Although their board terms have expired, we hope that both will remain in close contact with VMS.

New Board members





Changes in 2021

David Batterham (Bahá'í seat)

Ora Stefanic (Jewish seat)

Jagir Virk (Sikh seat)

Shrikant Shenwai (Hindu Seat)


David Batterham Ora Stefanic Jagir Virk


The VMS bylaws put in place in 2011 have provision for a maximum term of 6 years. Board members are asked to recommend members from their faith community, which leads to an interview process, a board decision and affirmation at the following AGM.

Four new members were appointed to the board this year, as board members stepped down and found replacements from their communities.

David Batterham, of the Baha'i Faith, joined the board in June. David is originally from Australia, has lived in Victoria for the past 5 years, and currently serves as the Baha'i spiritual care provider at the University of Victoria. David has a special interest in integrating the arts into our lives and being part of the process of revitalizing our communities through spiritual practice.

Ora Stefanic joined the board in the Jewish seat, as of this past March. Ora was born in Israel and immigrated to Canada in 1993, training as a teacher at the University of Western Ontario. She has been involved in community work around Ontario, Montreal and Nova Scotia. She is very interested in inter-cultural understanding, diversity and inclusion.

Jagir Virk has recently re-joined the board in the Sikh seat. Jagir came to Victoria 27 years ago from India with a Masters in Sociology. He worked for 25 years as a mental health worker and enjoys doing volunteer work and being involved in community-building.

Shrikant Shenwai is the most recent addition to the VMS board, just this past month. Shrikant is a member of the Hindu community and serves on the Board of Victoria Hindu Parishad & Cultural Center. Born in India, he moved to Victoria in 2012 after 15 years in Singapore where he was responsible for starting and running a non-profit wireless industry organization.

2021 AGM: Current Board members

VMS Board 2021

- **John Borrows** – Chair, Indigenous Spirituality
- **Henri Lock** – Secretary, Christian seat
- **Ora Stefanic** – Treasurer, Jewish seat
- **Yavhel Velazquez** – Non-affiliated seat
- **Moussa Magassa** – Muslim seat
- **Janine Theobald** – Buddhist seat
- **Jagir Virk** – Sikh seat
- **David Batterham** – Bahá'í seat
- **Shrikant Shenwai** – Hindu seat



The logo for the Victoria Multifaith Society is a circular emblem with colorful human figures in various poses. Below it, a poster features the same logo, the text 'VICTORIA MULTIFAITH SOCIETY', and a quote: 'To learn from one another, to celebrate our unity in diversity, to work together for the well-being of the community and the world.' The poster also shows silhouettes of people holding hands on a hill and contact information at the bottom.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Plans for 2022

World Interfaith Harmony Week

Launch of Anti-Racism Resource Tool

Interfaith Liaisons Network activities

Mindfulness & Indigenous Law event

Victoriamultifaith.com
Victoriamultifaith@gmail.com



The logo for the Victoria Multifaith Society is a circular emblem with colorful human figures in various poses.

Our activities this year will again be adapted depending on pandemic restrictions, but we're exploring new possibilities and avenues to pursue our mission *"to learn from one another, celebrate our unity & diversity and work together for the well-being of the community & the world"*.

We will be rolling out our Anti-Racism Project in early 2022 if all goes well, as well

as celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week, continuing ILN meetings, and we also have planned a joint event with the Sorrento Centre near Salmon Arm in October 2022, on the theme of Mindfulness and Indigenous Law.

If you're not already on the VMS email list and would like to be notified of upcoming events, please email us at victoriamultifaith@gmail.com

VMS would like to thank all those who contributed their time and expertise over the course of the year -- our presenters, participants, supporters, and collaborators, particularly our partner in the Anti-Racism project, the Centre for Civic Religious Literacy, and all of the members of the advisory committees for that project. We are enormously grateful to all of you!