



# Faith and Peace



## Faith and Peace is an inspiring exhibition which presents perspectives on peace from the three Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The exhibition is accompanied by artworks created by groups of women in the Bradford area from 2016-2019.

The Peace Museum created the exhibition and led workshops with local women who explored what the themes of faith and peace mean to them in their everyday lives and created artworks which capture some of their reflections.

The exhibition explores the ways in which the three faiths promote peace – in their teaching, and in the lives of their people. It tells stories of their peacemakers. It shows the emphasis placed on each religion on hospitality and welcome for the stranger, including those of other faiths.

Faith and Peace was a 3-year project sponsored by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and the exhibition panels are illustrated with images of artefacts in the collection of the Peace Museum in Bradford. Funding for additional workshops was provided by Near Neighbours.

The artworks were produced by local groups of women, from a range of backgrounds and across a wide range of ages, who met together to explore the themes of faith and peace. Their perspectives and experiences are reflected through the art.





## WOMEN OF FAITH

**Created by a group meeting at Bradford Cathedral**

An initial group of 10 women from different faith backgrounds came together hosted by Bradford Anglican Cathedral and included women referred from a local mental health charity. The group met weekly and started their creative process inspired by a unique stained glass window at the Cathedral which features women from the Bible. We discussed our own responses to the themes of Faith and Peace and how we were inspired by the women figured in the window. We were supported by community artist, Shaeron Caton-Rose, to adapt outlines of the women from the windows and personalise the designs to incorporate other women who inspire us, our own stories and perspectives. We each completed a textile piece using the reserve applique technique which were combined into a joint piece.



## SANCTUARY

**Created by a group meeting at Bradford Cathedral**

A second group of women from different backgrounds came together at the Cathedral and met weekly to explore the theme of Sanctuary. We reflected on what home means to us, where we feel safe and where we find our sanctuary. We were again supported by artist, Shaeron Caton-Rose, to use tie-dyeing techniques to dye our fabric. We then learnt and shared different embroidery techniques to decorate our pieces which are in the shape of houses and which hold a small pillow which were also decorated. Embroidery is a skill which is common in many communities and techniques vary across different communities so we enjoyed learning and sharing our skills.



## TREE OF LIFE

**Created by Syrian refugees**

The group was hosted by a local Islamic organisation, Al Markaz UI Islami, and was made up of 8 women who had recently arrived in Bradford (within the last 18mths) under the UNHCR Syrian resettlement programme. The group met regularly for several months to explore the themes of Faith and Peace through the lens of gender.

We then reflected these reflections and stories via individual embroidered/ painted panels which came together in a Tree of Life hanging. Again peace had multiple meanings to the women, although they were no longer living in immediate danger from war, many felt that finding peace remains complex but neither did they underestimate how individuals can contribute to peace through their relationships with each other.



## QUILTED CUSHION COVERS AND EMBROIDERED HANDS

Created by the Maryam Project

The Maryam project meets in the hall of St Philip's Anglican Church in Gillingham and we worked with the group for several months to recover the cushions in the hall as a gift to the Church. We learnt and shared quilting skills and decorated the cushions using a range of techniques.

We also dyed fabric at a workshop at East Riddlesden Hall using natural dyes. We then embroidered our hands and our names on a joint textile piece to reflect the community of women which has grown around the Maryam Project and the sense of peace and joy the women find at the group each week.



## LINO CUT BOOK AND DOVE MOBILE

Created by Shine

A diverse group of women of different beliefs, ethnicities, backgrounds and interests who already meet weekly at St Stephen's Anglican Parish Church in West Bowling (a very deprived inner-city area) joined the project and worked on their piece over several sessions. They explored the same themes of faith and peace, and with support from artist Shaeron Caton-Rose sketched their perspectives and stories in pencil, these were traced and turned into lino cuts. The prints from the cuts were put together into a concertina style book and each print had a cut-out dove shape which became a mobile to display.

The women had different experiences and interpretations of what peace means to them, how they understand faith and what role it plays in their lives and what difference they feel gender makes. Some women had direct experience of conflict and so peace meant seeking immediate safety but also hopes for justice and to return to a homeland. For others peace was safety from abusers or safety in their homes and communities. For others, it was about peace of mind. For all the women, the importance of relationships were crucial in helping them find peace and in contributing to creating a sense of peace for others, in their families and the local community.

Many thanks to the funders who made this project possible and all those who participated in the workshops. For further information visit [www.peacemuseum.org.uk](http://www.peacemuseum.org.uk)