



# Diocese of Hallam

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## ABOUT THE DIOCESE OF HALLAM

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## Bishop's Commissions

[Council for Liturgy](#)

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The Diocesan Contact for Interfaith and Ecumenism is Reverend Andrew Crowley.

▼ [Interfaith](#)

*Ever since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has placed special emphasis on the importance of dialogue and cooperation with the followers of other religions. In order to be fruitful, this requires reciprocity on the part of all partners in dialogue and the the followers of other religions. (Pope Benedict XVI, Twickenham 17 September 2010)*

Interfaith Calendar ([link](#))

There is an [Inter Faith Week](#) throughout the UK that aims to increase awareness of different faiths and promote understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs.

The aims of Inter Faith Week are:

- To strengthen good interfaith relations at all levels;
- To encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation;
- To increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society;
- To increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs;
- To encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

For local interfaith news please visit <http://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/>

## Guidance on Visiting Specific Religious Centres

### ▼ Visiting a Vihara (Buddhist)

- A gift of flowers to be placed in the shrine room, by the image of Buddha, is a kind gesture, as is a small donation.
- Visitors should remove their shoes before entering the shrine room.
- Visitors will usually sit on the floor.

- Some Buddhist monks are not allowed to touch women and do not shake hands. They will prefer to put their hands together in the traditional Eastern manner of greeting.

#### ▼ Visiting a Church Building (Christian)

- Male visitors remove their hats when entering a church building
- Certain parts, such as the altar area, may not be open to explore. This must be clarified with the host community before the visit begins.
- Some churches have a burial ground next to them. The gravestones can themselves provide a fascinating insight into people's beliefs about life, death and the afterlife.
- Traditionally, church buildings are east-facing (that is, the "east end" contains the altar) and various reasons are given for this.
- The amount of decoration and ornament in a church building will reflect the particular tradition and its beliefs. For example, Roman Catholic churches are generally highly decorated (statues, lamps and candles, *stations of the cross* etc) whilst buildings used by members of the Free Churches (such as Baptists) are relatively plain.

#### ▼ Visiting a Mandir (Hindu)

- All visitors will have to remove their shoes and place them in the shoe racks provided.
- Head covering is not normally required.
- On first entering the worship hall, a small bow to the *murtis* (images of the deities set out at the front of the hall) shows respect to the host community. Backs should not be turned on the *murtis* or the soles of the feet pointed towards them when sitting on the carpet.
- *Prashad* – a gift of fruit, nuts and other blessed food – is often given to visitors as they leave.
- Visitors usually sit on the carpeted floor.

- Sometimes, the priest will offer to place a red mark (*tilak*) on the forehead of those who want this.

#### ▼ Visiting a Synagogue (Jewish)

- All males have to cover their heads. Often synagogues have a supply of *kippot* (skull caps) to use. Jewish married women wear headscarves or a hat when in an Orthodox *synagogue*. This won't be needed in a Reform or Progressive *synagogue*.
- In Orthodox *synagogues*, men and women sit in separate areas for worship.

#### ▼ Visiting a Mosque (Muslim)

- All visitors will have to remove their shoes and place them in the shoe-racks provided.
- During prayer time, male visitors may be required to cover their heads. Females may need to wear a headscarf.
- Given the Muslim emphasis on modesty, clothing should cover arms and legs.
- Male and female visitors may have to sit separately, but this is unlikely during an educational visit.
- Visitors should avoid sitting with the soles of their feet pointing towards the *mihrab* (prayer niche at the front of the prayer hall).

#### ▼ Visiting a Gurdwara (Sikh)

- All visitors will have to remove their shoes and place them in the shoe racks provided.

- All visitors will need to cover their heads. Head coverings will be available in the *Gurdwara* but a knotted handkerchief is acceptable. Other hats (eg baseball-style caps) are not appropriate.
- Few chairs are available and so, when sitting, this will be on the carpeted floor.
- On first entering the large prayer room, a small bow to the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the holy book) shows respect to the host community. Backs should not be turned on the *Guru Granth Sahib* or the soles of the feet pointed towards the book when sitting on the carpet.
- Visitors are usually offered *kara parshad* (sweet food offered as a gift) in the worship hall, which is usually given in cupped hands and eaten with the right hand.
- Visitors will be usually given *Langar* (vegetarian food from the communal kitchen).

## ▼ Ecumenism

*If Anglicans and Catholics see that both are not there for themselves, but are rather instruments of Christ, 'friends of the Bridegroom' as St John says; if both follow together the priority of Christ and not themselves, they draw closer together, because the priority of Christ brings them together, they are no longer in competition, each one seeking greater numbers, but are united in commitment to the truth of Christ. (Pope Benedict, in flight 16 September 2010)*

### Churches Together in Britain & Ireland

[Churches Together in South Yorkshire](#) (Joint Presidents: Rev Gill Newton, Chairman of the Sheffield Methodist District, Bishop of Sheffield, Rt Rev Ralph Heskett CSsR, Bishop of Hallam)

More local 'Churches Together' Groups exist throughout South Yorkshire

Sheffield North Deanery Mission & Unity (Contact Fr Shaun Smith)

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