

London Inter Faith Centre

St Anne's Brondesbury is an Anglican church in Kilburn. The old church building was demolished in 1995 and a new building opened in November 1997. The new building houses a joint ecumenical project with St Andrew's URC church, who moved out of their original building in 1996, and is also home to the London Inter Faith Centre which is jointly led by the Anglican priest (with URC input for 6 of its 12 years).



The attractive "front" on the main road is circular. Within the entrance is a meeting space with café style seating and a kitchen area. The circular floor space under the dome with a compass star was created as a "faith neutral" area. This is used for the regular Sacred Silence sessions. Just beyond this space and to the right is a tranquil Christian chapel, with reserved sacrament. In seeking to offer a welcome to those of all faiths and none, the need to wash before prayer (Muslim wudu) is facilitated in the design of the cloakroom areas. The remainder of the ground floor area is hall space used during weekdays by a nursery school. Upstairs around the inside of the dome are offices, meeting/classroom areas, and a library. Above the rectangular hall space is the main Christian worship venue. Whilst this space can be adapted for large gatherings, such as the popular 'Music of the Faiths' evening, the distinct sanctuary area is retained at all times.

The London Inter Faith Centre is a place for meeting, study and dialogue among the world's religions and for dialogue between faith communities and the secular world.

The Centre works to

- Build bridges between faith communities
- Resource the host culture in approaching these issues
- Work in partnership with other agencies in this field

Working with a basic definition of 'inter faith' as 'faiths in encounter and the issues raised thereby' the Centre emphasises the need for cross community contact, while avoiding any conclusions and simply seeking to facilitate amicable consequent relations. Living out its motto 'true to self and open to others' the Centre endeavours to create a safe space within which those of differing and sometimes conflicting points of view can start to build communication with one another, leading to mutuality, trust and sometimes cooperative shared action.

No one is asked to compromise their beliefs nor are they judged if they do not have religious beliefs - yet all are encouraged to be open to encounter with those whose position and situation may be very different.

Sacred Silence

London Inter Faith Centre is Christian hosted. Christian prayer is offered to God through Jesus Christ. The Centre respects the boundaries of the mainstream positions of the main religions (often traditionally exclusivist) including its own. We thus generally do not engage with what is often described as multi-faith worship. However we affirm the centrality of the spiritual in human life ("We are not human beings on a spiritual journey, we are spiritual beings on a human journey" as a Hindu expression has it) and as such we recognise the desire for those even of traditionally exclusive positions together with those who are pluralist, to explore the spiritual together.

The Centre approaches this in a number of ways (occasional Quiet Days etc) including via *Sacred Silence*. These occasions are faith neutral shared explorations of structured silence, punctuated by brief repeated readings from a particular tradition, as often as not read by a member of that tradition. Thus the respective separate integrities of all present are acknowledged and honoured, with those who attend commenting on the power of the experience of sharing silence with others, whose spiritual way may or may not overlap with one's own.

For more about the centre see www.londoninterfaith.org.uk or [here](#) for more on Sacred Silence.