

FAQ for ***Celebrate! Faith and Cultures***

What is the ***Celebrate! Faith and Cultures*** festival?

Celebrate! Faith and Cultures is a music, dance and sensory celebration of the many faiths and ethnic cultures in the Tri-Cities region. Informational booths are presented by local faith and cultural groups, and activities for all ages provide a full afternoon of entertainment. It is a non-profit event made possible by donors, sponsors, fundraising drives and a small army of hardworking volunteers, performers and exhibitors. This event is our community at its finest, and an amazing afternoon of fun!

What is the mission of the event?

Celebrate! Faith and Cultures was founded with a mission of building community through education, interaction, and entertainment. We believe that the open sharing of our diverse cultural and religious backgrounds advances mutual understanding and empathy toward our neighbors. We believe this encourages a more friendly, peaceful and supportive community that improves quality of life for all.

Why does the festival include both faith AND cultures?

Throughout history, culture and faith have been inextricably intertwined. Faith influences cultures and vice-versa, and often it is hard to discern where one stops and the other begins. We felt it appropriate to present both for this reason.

Who runs this event?

Production of this festival is a partnership between two organizations: the ***Celebrate! Faith and Cultures Committee***, the volunteer group which first envisioned, produced and debuted the inaugural event in 2018, and ***Tri-City Freethinkers***, a 501(c)3 organization that is partnering in the presentation process in 2019. The two organizations share a vision of community enrichment, and decided in 2019 to collaborate in presenting this event. Each organization brings valuable specialized experience and expertise essential to growing the event for the community.

How often do you do this event?

This event is produced annually, in mid-June.

How much does it cost to attend?

Attendance is free to all.

How much does it cost to have a booth?

Booths are free, and subject to approval by the planning committee for the event.

Are animals allowed?

Animal policy is determined by the venue rules and regulations. In Howard Amon Park, all dogs must be on leash at all times.

Is this [insert name of this, that or the other group] -friendly?

This event is inclusive. We do our best to include/accommodate patrons and participants as our budget allows.

How do you describe your philosophy?

Our philosophy is that community doesn't just happen. We have to create it together. True community isn't formed when we only hang out with others like ourselves. We forge it when we meet others who are different from ourselves and get to know them. Ask questions. Answer theirs. That's how we make new connections that strengthen our community. Our aim is to make it exciting and fun for everyone.

What kinds of attractions are there at the festival?

- Music and dance performances
- A variety of booths presented by local Tri-Citians representing their own faiths and cultures
- Free food samples offered by some of the ethnic/international booths
- Kids' games and activities
- Food trucks
- Raffles and/or silent auction, and prize drawings

What kinds of booths are allowed?

This is a primarily educational event that is non-commercial in nature. There are three basic categories of tables.

1) Faith/spiritual practice tables. These are presented by organized faith groups or people who practice a particular approach to spirituality/religion. These may include practices/arts which have their roots in religious tradition or practice.

2) Culture/nationality tables. These tables represent a country, region or particular culture with origins that has a history related to geographic origins.

3) Information tables presented by event sponsors whose level of sponsorship qualifies for a table. These may be promotional in nature.

Categories 1) and 2) above are allowed to sell merchandise as a fundraiser for non-profit organizations. Licensing requirements for all merchandise sales are detailed in the registration agreement. If retail sales are for personal or business profit, all merchandise must be of educational/aesthetic value that clearly relates to the booth's exhibit and must be pre-approved/juried for suitability to the event. The event organizers retain sole discretion over suitability of merchandise for sale at the event. This is in keeping with our theme of building community.

What kinds of performances are allowed?

Priority will be given to performances in keeping with our general theme of faith and cultures. Time slots are limited, so performances will be selected from applicants.

How do you choose who gets to have a booth?

We make our choices based on adherence to our theme and the vibe we are seeking to make the event match our vision. Sometimes this includes rejecting interested exhibitors. Approval of booths is at the sole discretion of the ***Celebrate! Faith and Cultures*** planning committee.

How can I request a booth?

First, contact us through Facebook or email. We will send you the required forms to fill out and submit.

Facebook: Celebrate Faith and Cultures

Email: sandrapmurray@hotmail.com or barbarachen1@gmail.com

Can I sell stuff at my booth?

It depends. See "What kinds of booths are allowed"?

Can I promote my business at my booth?

Sponsors' tables are allowed and encouraged to do so. For cultural tables, usually this is fine, as long as the business is related to the exhibited materials.

Are donations to the event tax-deductible?

Yes! Thanks to Tri-City Freethinkers' status as a 501(c)3 organization, donations to the event are tax-deductible. We will provide tax ID information upon request.

Is this a religious event?

This event is **NOT** for the purpose of converting audience members to any religious practice or philosophy. Missionary work and proselytizing are explicitly forbidden. We aim to provide a completely non-pressured and comfortable environment in which the audience can learn objective information about the wide variety of faith and spiritual practices on display. Exhibitors violating this policy will be asked to leave, and excluded from future events. We appreciate any audience members who report feeling pressured or discomforted in any way by exhibitors so that we can address the issue.

What does the day of the event look like?

Our celebration of diverse and distant faith and cultural origins starts "at the beginning", with an opening ceremony performed by the Nixya'awii Dancers from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. These awesome youth dancers travel from Pendleton for the day to share their culture and history with us. Their presence and generosity inspires us to respect this amazing place we all have come to call home, and we can't help but be reminded of how new the rest of us are to this land.

Throughout the afternoon, you can sample ethnic food (lots of sweets!) from around the world at the various international booths, while watching cultural dance and music performances. Browse informational displays from many cultural organizations in our region who share their food, daily life, language, art forms, traditional clothing and myriad other items that make their country or region of origin unique.

Learn from many local faith and spiritual groups what distinguishes their faith beliefs or practice distinct from others, in an objectively educational, non-pressuring environment. This is an opportunity to learn both basic and more advanced information about religious practices from the world over, and to meet real people who practice them. It's a fantastic introduction to these concepts for children who have little exposure to religions different from that of their own family. Missionary work and proselytizing are strictly forbidden, so ask all the questions you've always wondered about. Our

exhibitors are here to answer. Make new acquaintances, and perhaps new friends. Get to know your neighbors!

Kids can grab a Celebrate! Faith and Cultures Passport and take a "trip around the world", learning something at each booth and collecting a prize at the end of their tour. Food trucks will keep everyone fueled while kids enjoy the bounce house, try new craft activities or learn new dance moves with our performers. Learn about the cultural and religious roots of many art forms practiced here in our region. Raffles and/or auctions to support the event will be held, as will random prize drawings.

The Nixya'awii Dancers also perform a closing ceremony later in the afternoon before bidding us farewell.

How do I contact you to ask questions?

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