

## DIVERSE PEOPLE OF FAITH CELEBRATE HARMONY



They broke and shared the bread of friendship, these people of faith, Hindus, Muslims, Catholics and Protestants, at the third annual World Interfaith Harmony Week observance on Thursday, February 7, 2013. Thirty people braved a major snowstorm to attend the event, one of over 300 around the world, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Neenah, Wisconsin.



They interacted and shared stories from today's Middle East and from Africa and from those ancestors who came mostly from Europe generations ago. Some have lived in the area all their lives while others were recent immigrants from the Ivory Coast, Somalia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.



Attendees signed and sent a message of prayerful support to Malala Yousafzai, the 15-year-old Pakistani girl and Peacemaker, recovering from gunshot wounds inflicted by the Taliban. They celebrated the Habitat for Humanity "2013 Interfaith Build," involving seven faith communities including a mosque and synagogue, and ESTHER, the interfaith justice ministry in the Fox Valley. The "Parliament of the World's Religions" was introduced. The value of a central site for sharing information on interfaith events and resources was lifted up for consideration. And bread was broken and shared.

Three years ago the United Nations General Assembly designated the first week of February as "World Interfaith Harmony Week" which has been endorsed by religious leaders worldwide. The 2014 Event in the Fox Valley will be Thursday, February 6.