



Dr Margaret Belton, whose dedication will be paid tribute to at the Harmony Week get-together.

MARTIN DE RUYTER/ THE LEADER

Harmony garden party to pay tribute

Nelsonians and visitors are invited to attend a celebration of the United Nations' World Interfaith Harmony Week on Sunday in the Queen's Gardens

World Interfaith Harmony Week was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010 and is observed in the first week of February every year.

Soheil (Sole) Ighani from the Interfaith Council of Nelson-Tasman said the Nelson celebration was a timely opportunity to honour Dr Margaret Belton who is stepping down from her role, due to ill-health.

"Margaret has been a member of the Nelson Baha'i community for many years and has worked on events such World Religion Day and Children's Day, and for many causes such as peace, religious tolerance, gender equity and race unity," he said.

"She is the author of Millennium Stardust - Making Peace Inevitable and has for many years been a leading influence in our Nelson community for peace and tolerance, with an emphasis on our role as individuals and families in fostering these values."

Everyone is welcome to attend the Interfaith Celebration on Sunday 4 February from 4-6pm in the Queen's Gardens, just inside the Hardy St gate.

It will include music from the Taizé Choir and a tribute to Margaret Belton given by former Nelson Mayor and Cabinet Minister Philip

Woolleston. It is suggested you bring a folding chair, drinking water and an umbrella - rain or shine.

The Nelson Taizé Choir was started by Burke Hunter, who while travelling in northern France near the town of Taizé, came across a little sanctuary where four people were singing Taizé chants in the quiet of the evening.

The effect of the simple repetitive music, sometimes small phrases of Christian liturgy in many languages, was very powerful and he vowed to bring the practice back to Nelson. Taizé monastery had become a focus of peace and reconciliation after the horrors of WW2, and its Swiss founder, Brother Roger, welcomed people of all faiths, especially young people.

Taizé community believes all humanity forms a single family and God lives within every human being without exception.

The Interfaith Council of Nelson-Tasman was formed last year and includes members from the Christian denominations including the Church of the Latterday Saints, Methodist, Anglican, Anglican Maori Mission, and followers of Buddhism, Sikhs, and the Baha'i Faith. The group meets monthly at various locations between Richmond and Nelson; and is looking forward to their March meeting when they will host Professor Paul Weller from Oxford University of Oxford in the UK, the author of 'Religious Diversity in the UK'.