

The 29th Annual
FESTIVAL of FAITHS

SACRED BELONGING

November 12-15, 2025
Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts

WWW.FESTIVALofFAITHS.ORG



The 29th Annual
FESTIVAL of FAITHS

SACRED BELONGING

The **2025 Festival of Faiths** celebrates the interconnectedness of all people and the world we share. Together we will explore ways to cultivate communities of care, foster solidarity through empathy, and resist cultural systems that sow discord. Gather with us to discover a joy that honors our differences as we seek true belonging.

"A generous heart is always open, always ready to receive our going and coming. In the midst of such love we need never fear abandonment. This is the most precious gift true love offers - the experience of knowing we always belong."

*—bell hooks,
All About Love: New Visions*

#FOF2025

Communities in Conversation. Love in Action.



Festival of Faiths



Festival of Faiths



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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025

10 am to 12 pm	PATHWAYS TO BELONGING WORKSHOP with Adam Kane	TODD HALL
5:30 to 7 pm	THE 29TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FAITHS OPENING CELEBRATION	CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025

KENTUCKY CENTER FOR
THE PERFORMING ARTS

8:30 to 9 am	SPIRITUAL PRACTICE Guides: Gerardo Abboud, Geshe Rapgyal	BOMHARD THEATER
9:30 to 11 am	MOVING FROM ESTRANGEMENT TO BELONGING Moderator: Justin Klassen Speakers: Tricia Hersey, Toko-pa Turner, Norman Wirzba Musicians: Sara Callaway (violin) , Jackie Royce (bassoon)	BOMHARD THEATER
11 am to 1 pm	FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN	MAIN LOBBY
11 am to 1:30 pm	LUNCH Lite grab-and-go options available for purchase	LEXUS LOUNGE
12:30 to 2 pm	THE DANGERS OF ‘OTHERING’ Moderator: Brandon McCormack Speakers: Sharon Brous, Joseph Tucker Edmonds, Minjung Noh Musician: Fred Nez-Keams (flute)	BOMHARD THEATER
2 to 5 pm	FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN	MAIN LOBBY
3 to 3:45 pm	DETAINED BY ICE: <i>Empowered through Faith in Action</i> Interviewer: Sarah Kelley Speaker: Ayman Soliman	BOMHARD THEATER
4 to 5 pm	FACILITATED CONVERSATION with Rus Funk	NORTH LOBBY
5:30 to 6:45 pm	EVENING RECEPTION	LEXUS LOUNGE
7 to 8:30 pm	REVOLUTIONARY LOVE: <i>An Evening with Valarie Kaur</i> Keynote Speaker: Valarie Kaur Musician: Qais Essar (rabab)	BOMHARD THEATER

8:30 to 9 am	SPIRITUAL PRACTICE Guide: Matt Derrenbacher	BOMHARD THEATER
9:30 to 11 am	THE BEAUTY OF RADICAL INCLUSION Moderator: Janan Sarwar Speakers: M. Shadee Malaklou, Simran Jeet Singh, Matt Weber Musician: Shyama Iyer (vocal)	BOMHARD THEATER
11 am to 1 pm	FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN	MAIN LOBBY
11 am to 1:30 pm	LUNCH Lite grab-and-go options available for purchase	LEXUS LOUNGE
12:30 to 2 pm	BIRTHING BELONGING: <i>Inspiration into Action</i> Moderator: Paul Brandeis Raushenbush Speakers: Gerardo Abboud, Joi McAtee, Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder Musician: Ben Sollee (cello)	BOMHARD THEATER
2 to 5 pm	FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN	MAIN LOBBY
2:30 to 3:30 pm	FACILITATED CONVERSATION with Rus Funk	NORTH LOBBY
3:30 to 5 pm	TOGETHER IN TIME WORKSHOP with Sara Callaway	TODD HALL
3:30 to 5 pm	WONDER WALK with Susan Patrice	BELVEDERE
5:30 to 6:45 pm	EVENING RECEPTION	LEXUS LOUNGE
7 to 8:30 pm	AN EVENING OF MUSIC Musicians: Appalatin, Qais Essar	BOMHARD THEATER

9:30 to 10:30 am	FAITH IN: <i>Creating a Welcoming Louisville for Immigrants</i> Moderator: Josh Moss Speakers: Karina Barillas, Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, Nima Kulkarni, Elmer Zavala (Interpreter: Galen Zavala Sherby)	BOMHARD THEATER
10:45 to 11:30 am	CLOSING CELEBRATION	BOMHARD THEATER
11:30 am to 12 pm	COMMON ACTION SPOTLIGHT	MAIN LOBBY

FESTIVAL CO-CHAIRS

Owsley Brown III is devoted to sustaining healthy communities by enhancing cultural, spiritual and civic life. He is a documentary filmmaker, a director of foundations and nonprofit boards, a student of theology and the spiritual path, and the leader of exploratory projects in community wellbeing. In his native city and beloved hometown of Louisville, Owsley is known as host and producer of the Festival of Faiths, a founding board member of the Kentucky College of Art + Design, and chair of the Compassionate Schools Project. Owsley is also an active fifth-generation shareholder of Brown-Forman, his family's international spirits and wine company, founded in 1870. He serves on the boards of the Center for Interfaith Relations, University of Virginia's Contemplative Sciences Center, Mind and Life Institute, Sustainable Food Alliance, Roxie Theater, and Tsoknyi Humanitarian Fund.



Adria Johnson is president and CEO of Metro United Way (MUW), a nonprofit that unites and empowers communities by investing in the full potential of individuals and families to ensure positive, sustainable change. Adria was selected for the position following an extensive national search, and in 2021, she became the first Black CEO of the agency, which serves seven counties in Kentucky and Southern Indiana. The native Louisvillian is an accomplished champion of social change with a longstanding dedication to community impact and equity. Previous positions include chief impact officer at MUW, commissioner at the Department for Community Based Services for Kentucky State Government, and assistant director at the Department of Housing and Family Services for Louisville Metro Government. Adria's strong fiscal experience was gained in various roles held in the private sector for the first half of her career at Humana, LG&E and Brown & Williamson.

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Stefanie Baker
Sara Callaway
Dr. Justin Klassen
Dr. Brandon McCormack

Rev. Paul Brandeis Raushenbush
Dr. Janan Sarwar
Tina Tom

CENTER FOR INTERFAITH RELATIONS STAFF

Juniper Bessemer, *Program Associate*
Ryan Daly, *Audio-Visual Manager*
Rev. Sally Evans, *Community Engagement Strategist*
Kathleen Gordon, *Financial Secretary*
Sarah Kelley, *Director of Communications*
Alex MacDonald, *Director of Operations*
Rev. Dr. Lauren Jones Mayfield, *Executive Director*
Kimberly Porter, *Development Associate*
Tricia Williams, *Director of Donor Experience*

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

10 am to 12 pm

PATHWAYS TO BELONGING WORKSHOP

TODD HALL

Explore themes of compassion, inclusion and radical belonging in this meditative workshop. Participants will engage in embodied mindfulness exercises that will set the stage for a meaningful festival experience.

5:30 to 7 pm

THE 29TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FAITHS
OPENING CELEBRATIONCATHEDRAL OF
THE ASSUMPTION

The 29th Annual Festival of Faiths, *Sacred Belonging*, opens with a multifaith, multicultural celebration in the historic Cathedral of the Assumption. All are welcome to this program, which will feature diverse cultures and faith traditions. Featuring:

- Stories of belonging from people of the Bahá'í, Jewish and Latter-day Saints faiths
- La Casita Center offering an ancestral blessing
- Afghan-American composer Qais Essar on the ancient rabab
- Other music curated by Louisville Academy of Music Director Sara Callaway
- Remarks from poet, activist and spoken word artist Hannah Drake

"CIR's unabashed commitment to preserving dignity and celebrating difference has the potential to revolutionize our city and even the country." —Rev. Dr. Lauren Jones Mayfield, CIR Executive Director

★ Become a Sacred Star monthly donor today starting at \$5

★ Uplift CIR as we head toward our 30th festival in 2026

★ Celebrate diversity and cultivate compassion

\$15 per month sponsors 7 students to attend the festival

\$30 per month supports the 30th Festival of Faiths

★ \$45 per month supports year-round work to strengthen communities

JOIN TODAY!

15 new monthly donors at

\$25/month will exceed our festival goal!



Visit www.interfaithrelations.org/stars
or scan the QR code.

SACRED STARS



CENTER for INTERFAITH RELATIONS

OPENING CELEBRATION

PRELUDE	<i>Debussy's Pour le piano: Sarabande</i> Rashid Hong, piano	Claude Debussy
ANCESTRAL BLESSING		La Casita Center
A WELCOME <i>to Belonging</i>		Rev. Dr. Lauren Jones Mayfield, Chris Wakild, Vahid Mockon, and Sharon Hordes
OPENING PRAYER		Rev. Frederick Klotter Rector, Cathedral of the Assumption
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		Greg Sekula Chair, Parish Council, Cathedral of the Assumption Board Member, Center for Interfaith Relations
MUSIC	<i>Dhire Dhire</i> Abby Mires (voice), Sara Callaway (violin), Rashid Hong (piano), M. Offutt (cello)	Reena Esmail
INTRODUCTION <i>to the Festival of Faiths</i>		Owsley Brown III Co-Chair, Festival of Faiths
INTRODUCTION <i>to the Embodiment of Belonging</i>		Adria Johnson Co-Chair, Festival of Faiths
MUSIC	<i>An Evening Raga</i> Qais Essar, rabab	Qais Essar
FINDING BELONGING <i>in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</i>		Chris Wakild Interfaith representative, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
FINDING BELONGING <i>in the Louisville Baha'i faith Community</i>		Vahid Mockon Workforce development leader, Eckerd Connects; active member, Bahá'í faith; board member, several interfaith nonprofits



MUSIC

Hallelujah
Sara Callaway, violin

Reena Esmail,
arr. of Leonard Cohen

FINDING BELONGING in *Judaism*

Sharon Hordes
Cantor, Keneseth Israel Congregation

POEM

Hannah Drake
Louisville-based activist, poet and published author;
co-executive director, IDEASxLab; co-founder, (Un)Known Project

MUSIC

An Evening Raga
Qais Essar, rabab

Qais Essar

FINDING BELONGING in *Communal Artwork*

Alayna Altman

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Shalom Chaverim
Sharon Hordes, Cantor

Hebrew Folk Song

Hebrew

Shalom, chaverim.
Shalom, chaverim.
Shalom, shalom.
L'hitraot, l'hitraot,
Shalom, shalom.

English translation

Farewell, my friends.
Farewell, my friends.
Peace, peace.
Till we meet again, till we meet again.
Peace, peace.

BENEDICTION

Hannah Drake

POSTLUDE

Twilight
Marvin Weis, piano

Florence Price

*Interested in visiting local houses of worship
with the Center for Interfaith Relations?
Sign up for our newsletter to be notified of future visits.*



The ceiling of the Cathedral of the Assumption. Photo Credit: Sean Sebastian Photography



8 to 9 am

MORNING MUSIC

MAIN LOBBY

MUSICIAN: Laura Stuart Obenauf (charm sound healing)

8:30 to 9 am

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

BOMHARD THEATER

This contemplative session offers an opportunity to set an intention for the day by opening our hearts, calming our minds, and centering our bodies for full engagement and dialogue.

GUIDES: Gerardo Abboud, Geshe Rappgyal

9:30 to 11 am

MOVING FROM ESTRANGEMENT TO BELONGING

BOMHARD THEATER

“The world [we] are inheriting is locked in a struggle between love and fear,” writes Dr. Vivek Murthy. In this panel, we will explore what causes this fear and how it limits our ability to feel we belong. Panelists will address where their faith traditions believe belonging can be found and investigate what mystic Toko-pa Turner calls the “origins of estrangement.”

MODERATOR: Justin Klassen**SPEAKERS:** Tricia Hersey, Toko-pa Turner (participating virtually), Norman Wirzba**MUSICIANS:** Sara Callaway (violin), Jackie Royce (bassoon)

Following this session, please visit the bookstore for a speaker book signing and meet-and-greet.

11 am to 1:30 pm

LUNCH

LEXUS LOUNGE

Lite grab-and-go options available for purchase

11 am to 1 pm

FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN

MAIN LOBBY

12:30 to 2 pm

THE DANGERS OF ‘OTHERING’

BOMHARD THEATER

How can we, as individuals, foster systems of inclusion and hospitality rather than marginalization? This panel will explore the reasons we exclude and how this tendency has unfolded throughout human history. By understanding the pitfalls of “ingroups” and “outgroups,” we can work toward understanding and embracing our interconnectedness.

MODERATOR: Brandon McCormack**SPEAKERS:** Sharon Brous, Joseph Tucker Edmonds, Minjung Noh**MUSICIAN:** Fred Nez-Keams (flute)

Following this session, please visit the bookstore for a speaker book signing and meet-and-greet.

1:30 to 4:30 pm

LEXUS LOUNGE OPEN

LEXUS LOUNGE

Snacks and drinks available for purchase

2 to 5 pm

FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN

MAIN LOBBY



***In order to experience true belonging,
we must not only acknowledge the gifts
we are receiving, but also give our beauty away,
no matter how it may be received by others."***

—Toko-pa Turner
Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home

3 to 3:45 pm

DETAINED BY ICE:
Empowered through Faith in Action

BOMHARD THEATER

Ayman Soliman, a beloved Muslim chaplain at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, was scheduled for a routine check-in with immigration officials on July 9, 2025. Instead, he would spend the next 73 days in ICE detention, sparking an unwavering outcry that paved the way for his release. In this conversation, Ayman will discuss what happens when one's sense of belonging is shattered — only to be restored by an outpouring of love from friends and strangers alike.

INTERVIEWER: Sarah Kelley
SPEAKER: Ayman Soliman

4 to 5 pm

FACILITATED CONVERSATION

NORTH LOBBY

Sacred Belonging is a practice that requires intentionality and reflection, and over the course of the festival, the sessions exploring this topic will invite us to think and feel deeply about what this means. Festival attendees are invited to join us for a facilitated small-group dialogue to discuss the wisdom and insights shared on stage throughout the day.

FACILITATOR: Rus Funk

5:30 to 6:45 pm

EVENING RECEPTION
Included with your evening session ticket or festival pass

LEXUS LOUNGE

7 to 8:30 pm

REVOLUTIONARY LOVE

BOMHARD THEATER

Valarie Kaur is a civil rights activist, lawyer, filmmaker, innovator and founder of the Revolutionary Love Project. In this festival keynote address, Valarie will explore the concept of reclaiming love as a force for justice.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Valarie Kaur
MUSICIAN: Qais Essar (rabab)

Following this session, please visit the bookstore for a speaker book signing and meet-and-greet.

THURSDAY

8 to 9 am

MORNING MUSIC

MAIN LOBBY

MUSICIAN: Emily Joan Smith (devotional singer and musician)

8:30 to 9 am

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

BOMHARD THEATER

This contemplative session offers an opportunity to set an intention for the day by opening our hearts, calming our minds, and centering our bodies for full engagement and dialogue.

GUIDE: Matt Derrenbacher

9:30 to 11 am

THE BEAUTY OF RADICAL INCLUSION

BOMHARD THEATER

When we belong, as bell hooks writes, we find “a place where the soul can rest.” This conversation will explore how radical acts of inclusion and hospitality can serve as pathways to a more just and beautiful collective future. Guided by visionary leaders across disciplines, we will identify barriers to belonging and imagine a reality rooted in authentic connection, care and equity.

MODERATOR: Janan Sarwar**SPEAKERS:** M. Shadee Malaklou, Simran Jeet Singh, Matt Weber**MUSICIAN:** Shyama Iyer (voice)

Following this session, please visit the bookstore for a speaker book signing and meet-and-greet.

11 am to 1:30 pm

LUNCH

LEXUS LOUNGE

Lite grab-and-go options available for purchase

11 am to 1 pm

FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN

MAIN LOBBY

12:30 to 2 pm

BIRTHING BELONGING:

BOMHARD THEATER

Inspiration into Action

How do we show up and speak out in the world today — a time when bold voices and actions rooted in the spiritual principle of belonging are desperately needed? In addition to sharing personal stories, diverse panelists will encourage attendees to consider their own narratives of belonging and how our experiences can inspire collective advocacy for all to belong in our fractured society.

MODERATOR: Paul Brandeis Raushenbush**SPEAKERS:** Gerardo Abboud, Evelio Menjivar-Ayala,
Joi McAtee, Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder**MUSICIAN:** Ben Sollee (cello)

Following this session, please visit the bookstore for a speaker book signing and meet-and-greet.

1:30 to 4:30 pm

LEXUS LOUNGE OPEN

LEXUS LOUNGE

Snacks and drinks available for purchase

2 to 5 pm

FESTIVAL PLAZA OPEN

MAIN LOBBY

2:30 to 3:30 pm

FACILITATED CONVERSATION

NORTH LOBBY

Sacred Belonging is a practice that requires intentionality and reflection, and over the course of the festival, the sessions exploring this topic will invite us to think and feel deeply about what this means. Festival attendees are invited to join us for a facilitated small-group dialogue to discuss the wisdom and insights shared on stage throughout the day.

FACILITATOR: Rus Funk

3:30 to 5 pm

TOGETHER IN TIME

TODD HALL

Rhythm naturally fosters belonging by coordinating and synchronizing our actions in time. This interactive session will feature local musicians who carry rhythmic traditions from around the world, creating a shared experience for all who attend.

CURATOR: Sara Callaway, Louisville Academy of Music

LEADERS: Randy Wilson, Luis de Leon Fernandez, Shyama Iyer, Ed White

3:30 to 5 pm

WONDER WALK:

BELVEDERE

Connecting with Nature through Photography

Photography offers a creative path to deepen our kinship with the natural world. During this contemplative “wonder walk”, Susan Patrice will share unique photography practices designed to awaken curiosity, wonder and love. Together, we will celebrate the visual wonders of nature while finding creative nourishment in kinship with the more-than-human world. No photography experience is needed, and camera phones are welcome.

CURATOR: Susan Patrice

5:30 to 6:45 pm

EVENING RECEPTION

LEXUS LOUNGE

Included with your evening session ticket or festival pass

7 to 8:30 pm

AN EVENING OF MUSIC

BOMHARD THEATER

Join us for an evening of uplifting original music. This high-energy program will feature the foot-stomping, hip-swinging sounds of Appalatin, a beloved Louisville band blending Appalachian folk and Latin music, as well as the melodic sounds of Qais Essar, an acclaimed Afghan-American composer and instrumentalist.

MUSICIANS: Appalatin, Qais Essar

*“I wish I could show you,
When you are lonely or in darkness,*

*The Astonishing Light
Of your own Being!”*

— Hafiz

9:30 to 10:30 am

FAITH IN:*Creating a Welcoming Louisville for Immigrants*

BOMHARD THEATER

Join us for an open, honest dialogue, during which Louisville immigration leaders will discuss barriers to belonging and explore ways to create more welcoming communities. This candid conversation will challenge stereotypes, foster empathy and ignite positive actions intended to “welcome the stranger.”

MODERATORS: Josh Moss**PRESENTERS:** Karina Barillas, Evelio Menjivar-Ayala,
Nima Kulkarni, Elmer Zavala (with interpreter Galen Zavala Sherby)**MUSICIANS:** Fred Bogert (keyboard), Sanaan Hamza (daf drum),
Fernando Moya (charanga/andean flute), Christella Philippe (vocals)

10:45 to 11:30 am

CLOSING CELEBRATION

BOMHARD THEATER

The festival will close with a community gathering that honors our differences, celebrates our shared humanity, and inspires us to embrace belonging in our lives. The brief program will feature a closing blessing, along with a performance by Kentucky Refugee Ministries musicians.

CLOSING CELEBRATION**INTERFAITH PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE****COMMUNITY ART DEDICATION**

Alayna Altman

MUSICAL OFFERINGKentucky Refugee Ministries Ensemble
Christella Philippe, Fernando Moya, Sanaan Hamza, Fred Bogert**CLOSING REFLECTION**

Owsley Brown III

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Lauren Jones Mayfield

**“Don’t give up on belonging. Solitude
has its place, but remember Audre Lorde:
“Without community there is no liberation.”**

— @colearthurriley
#blackliturgies
November 14, 2021

COMMON ACTION SPOTLIGHT

11:30 am to 12 pm

COMMON ACTION SPOTLIGHT

MAIN LOBBY

We welcome the following organizations to the Festival of Faiths and are proud to provide a space for them to uplift their varied missions. We encourage attendees to visit each station and learn more about the important work being carried out in our communities.

- Family Community Clinic
- Americana Community Center
- Catholic Charities of Louisville, Inc.
- Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Justice
- Office of Immigrant Affairs

WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK

Thanks for joining us today!
Visit www.festivaloffaiths.org/feedback
to share feedback on your experience.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

At the Center for Interfaith Relations (CIR), our inner CIRcle of volunteers is a critical part of presenting this nationally acclaimed interfaith event and a meaningful way to contribute to our mission of promoting interfaith understanding, cooperation, and action. We are grateful for each volunteer that has helped us make this festival a gift to so many.

Thank you for helping to make our CIRcle complete and ever growing! If you are interested in volunteering for future events, visit www.festivaloffaiths.org/subscribe and sign up for our volunteer mailing list.

SHARE THE SACRED WISDOM

The festival catalogue is produced annually around each year's theme and offers insights and wisdom from ancient and modern voices. Past festival catalogues have explored topics such as feminine wisdom, nonviolence, racial justice, and the intersection of faith and science.

These publications are available to festival-goers at no charge thanks to the generous support of sponsors — and we want to make this resource available to anyone who may be interested. If you would like a copy of a past catalogue, want to send one to a friend, or would like to use it with a study group, you can place an order at www.festivaloffaiths.org/catalogue, and we will mail them at no cost to you.

**GERARDO ABBODD**

Gerardo Abboud was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he was educated as an engineer and worked as a financial analyst at Ford before making a dramatic life change. In 1970, he traveled to India and Nepal to study Tibetan Buddhism. Gerardo has translated from Tibetan to English and Spanish for many lamas, specifically serving as main translator to His Holiness Dalai Lama since 1992 during his visits to Latin America. He is the head and resident teacher of the Dongyuling Tibetan Buddhist Center in Argentina, alternating with his teachings in Mexico, the U.S., Canada and Europe.

**KARINA BARILLAS**

Karina Barillas, a native of Guatemala, won a Fulbright scholarship that led her to the University of Louisville, where she earned degrees in education with a concentration in counseling psychology. She began working on women's issues as president of UofL's International Students Organization, then spent eight years advocating for Latina survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault at the Center for Women and Families. She co-founded and works as executive director for La Casita Center, a nonprofit that enhances the well-being of Louisville's Latino community.

**PAUL BRANDEIS
RAUSHENBUSH**

The Rev. Paul Brandeis Raushenbush is a Baptist minister and CEO of Interfaith Alliance, where he works to forge alliances among people of diverse beliefs to build an inclusive multi-faith democracy. Paul speaks regularly at colleges, faith communities and institutes around the country and is a regular commentator on issues of religion, civil rights and social justice. He's published two books and hosts the weekly podcast "The State of Belief," in partnership with Religion News Service. Paul is the great-grandson of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis and theologian Rev. Walter Rauschenbusch.

**SHARON BROUS**

Rabbi Sharon Brous is the senior and founding rabbi of IKAR, a leading-edge Jewish community based in Los Angeles, and author of the national bestseller "The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World." She offered the invocation at the Democratic National Convention in 2024 and has blessed Presidents Obama and Biden and Vice President Harris. The "New York Times," "Los Angeles Times" and "Washington Post" have published her work, and more than 1.5 million people have viewed her TED Talk "Reclaiming Religion."

**TRICIA HERSEY**

Tricia Hersey's upbringing as the daughter of an abolitionist pastor influences her art. A native of the South Side of Chicago, and the torchbearer of her family's Mississippi and Louisiana roots, Tricia weaves her past throughout her experiences as a teaching artist, chaplain, poet, performance artist and community organizer. Her practice embodies somatics, womanism, womanist theology, Black Liberation Theology, Afrofuturism and her ancestors. From these reservoirs of knowledge, Tricia founded The Nap Ministry and created the "rest is resistance" and "rest as reparations" frameworks.

**ADAM KANE**

Adam Kane began exploring Buddhism after graduating from Duke with a degree in neuroscience in 2000. He first studied in the Theravada lineage, then took the Anagarika ordination in the Thai Forest Tradition. After two years in a forest monastery, he began practicing Tibetan Buddhism and moved to Nepal to study Tibetan language and Buddhist philosophy. He stayed there for seven years, gaining a master of arts in Buddhist studies from Rangjung Yeshe Institute. Adam mentors translator trainees from Khyentse Vision Project and interprets, translates and develops curriculum for his root lamas and various other lamas and khenpos.

**VALARIE KAUR**

Valarie Kaur is a civil rights leader, lawyer, documentarian, faith leader, mother and founder of the Revolutionary Love Project. She became an activist when a Sikh-American father, Balbir Singh Sodhi, was murdered in hate in the aftermath of 9/11. She tells untold stories — at the sites of mass shootings, inside America's prisons, at detention camps — and has won policy changes on issues ranging from hate crimes to solitary confinement. A popular address she gave, now seen by more than 40 million people, asks: "The future is dark: Is this the darkness of the tomb — or the darkness of the womb?"

**JUSTIN KLASSEN**

Justin Klassen is a professor of theology and religious studies at Bellarmine University, where he teaches courses in philosophical theology and religious ethics. His scholarly work focuses on religion and ecology, theological responses to systemic injustice, and the role of awe in moral formation and the quest for a meaningful life. Along with numerous scholarly and popular essays, he is the author of "The Paradox of Hope" and co-editor of "Aspiring to Fullness in a Secular Age." He and his family are Canadians now living in Kentucky.



NIMA KULKARNI

Nima Kulkarni is an immigration lawyer and a Democratic member of the Kentucky House of Representatives representing District 40. She is the founder of Indus Law Firm and a member of both the Kentucky and Georgia Bar Associations, as well as the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Nima is the first Indian American to be elected as state representative in Kentucky and has served since 2019.



**M. SHADEE
MALAKLOU**

M. Shadee Malaklou (she/they) founded the bell hooks center at Berea College and chairs the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. A critical, trans-disciplinary scholar of race/ism, gender and sexuality (and their intersections), Shadee approaches questions of identity and difference from a problem-oriented perspective, wanting to make sense of our world in real time. She publishes in academic journals, appears on culture podcasts and regularly writes think pieces on such topics as Beyoncé and Jay-Z, the sports-media complex, women's freedom movements and animal rights.



JOI MCATEE

Joi McAttee's mission to build a better, fairer world shines through her leadership in education, nonprofit innovation and public service. A proud graduate of Central High School, Joi earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky and a master's in higher education administration from the University of Louisville, and she's now pursuing a master's in public administration and PhD in urban studies and public affairs. Joi is project manager for the Ali Compassion Index at the Muhammad Ali Center. Previously, she served as executive director of equity for Louisville Metro Government.



**BRANDON
MCCORMACK**

Dr. Michael Brandon McCormack is associate professor of Pan-African Studies and Comparative Humanities at the University of Louisville, where he teaches courses in African American religion, religions of the African diaspora, and religion and hip-hop culture. He is the former director of the Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research and is also a member of the Black Interfaith Project, a network of academics, artists and activists engaged in research and action about the role of Black religious practices in social justice movements.



**EVELIO
MENJIVAR-AYALA**

Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala was born in El Salvador and migrated to the United States in 1990. He studied in Miami and Rome before being ordained to the priesthood in 2004. His work has included serving as parochial vicar and pastor at numerous churches and as a member of the Archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board. He speaks English, Spanish and Italian and, throughout his ministry, has actively supported workers and promoted social justice for immigrants. In 2023, he became the first Salvadoran bishop in the country, serving for the Archdiocese of Washington in D.C.



JOSH MOSS

Josh Moss has served as editor of Louisville Magazine since 2014, and he began working at the publication upon graduating from Ohio University in 2006. He's written about Pappy Van Winkle mania, the city's oldest Black-owned funeral home, Louisville's last abortion clinic, the divide between east and west Louisville, and how the city has changed since March 2020. He spent a year working on a profile of rapper Jack Harlow. In 2013, he ate 38 burgers in 31 days on a quest to find the city's best. In 2020, the magazine won a General Excellence award from the City and Regional Magazine Association.



MINJUNG NOH

Dr. Minjung Noh, assistant professor of religion at Lehigh University, explores global Christianity, colonialism and transnational networks of care. Her current book project, "Transnational Salvations: Korean Evangelical Missionaries in Haiti," examines how mission and disaster are entangled in histories of empire and resilience. She also writes about visual pop culture and visual anthropology, how images and media shape faith, and belonging and imagination across borders. Minjung speaks on how traditions both confront and reproduce inequality, and how communities create belonging in times of crisis.



JANAN SARWAR

Janan Sarwar, an entrepreneur and speaker based in Louisville, fosters a combination of expertise in pharmacy, publishing and media, coupled with a commitment to promoting understanding and compassion. Her journey exemplifies the power of merging professional pursuits with a genuine passion for cultivating positive change in the world.

**SIMRAN JEET SINGH**

Dr. Simran Jeet Singh, a historian of South Asian religions, is assistant professor of interreligious histories at Union Theological Seminary in New York and author of the national bestseller “The Light We Give: How Sikh Wisdom Can Transform Your Life.” He is senior advisor for the Aspen Institute’s Religion and Society Program, host of the podcast “Wisdom and Practice,” a contributor to “TIME” and an Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and Columbia University. He has authored multiple children’s books, including the recent “A Vaisakhi to Remember.”

**AYMAN SOLIMAN**

Imam Ayman Soliman, a Muslim chaplain in the Cincinnati area (including at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital), received his Islamic education, both formal and informal, in Egypt. Before focusing on chaplaincy, he served as the imam in multiple mosques, and as the graduate students’ Muslim chaplain at Northwestern University and the Muslim chaplain at the Oregon Department of Corrections. Ayman is a member of the board of directors at the Initiative on Islam and Medicine. His areas of interest include Islamic law, Islamic biomedical ethics, interfaith relations and addressing Islamophobia.

**CHELSEA
STEINAUER-SCUDDER**

Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder is the author of “Mother, Creature, Kin: What We Learn From Nature’s Mothers in a Time of Unraveling.” She grew up in the Great Plains of Nebraska and Oklahoma and, after receiving a master’s in theological studies at Harvard Divinity School, began focusing her writing on the confluence of relationship to place with experiences of the sacred. Chelsea previously worked as a staff writer and editor for Emergence Magazine, an online and print publication exploring the intersection of culture, ecology and spirituality.

**JOSEPH TUCKER
EDMONDS**

Joseph L. Tucker Edmonds is an associate professor of Africana studies and religious studies at Indiana University Indianapolis. His research addresses the intersection between Black religion and the body, with a particular focus on agency, care and wellness. His team was recently awarded a \$5-million grant from the Mellon Foundation to explore “Black Humanities in the Midwest” with collaborative, community-embedded research labs throughout Indiana. Joseph also explores the afterlives of incarceration through an examination of Black men, racial trauma and creating communities of care.

**TOKO-PA TURNER**

Toko-pa Turner is Ashkenazi Jewish and Polish on her mother's side, and British on her father's side. She was born on a farm in England and, at age 4, immigrated to Montreal, where her maternal grandparents settled after surviving the Holocaust. She grew up in a Sufi kahnqah (spiritual community) in the Ināyati Order. Toko-pa says her home life was volatile, and she ran away at age 14. Toko-pa eventually returned to the mystical teachings of Sufism and the study of dreams, and in 2001, she founded the Dream School. In 2018, she released the award-winning book "Belonging."

**MATT WEBER**

Matt Weber is a Harvard-educated humorist and the author of "Fearing the Stigmata" and the Christopher Award-winning "Operating on Faith." He is a national speaker, producer, writer and former host of the weekly CatholicTV show "The Lens," a humorous recap of digital trends, culture and news in the faith community. His work has been featured in "The New York Times" and on CBS News, which referred to him as "the voice of a new generation of Catholics." Matt plays the harmonica and has three small children — all in various stages of harmonica playing.

**NORMAN WIRZBA**

Norman Wirzba is the Gilbert T. Rowe Distinguished Professor of Theology and the director of research in the Office of Climate and Sustainability at Duke. He writes and teaches at the intersections of theology, philosophy, and agrarian and environmental studies. His most recent books include "Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis"; "Agrarian Spirit: Cultivating Faith, Community, and the Land"; and "This Sacred Life: Humanity's Place in a Wounded World."

**ELMER ZAVALA**

The Rev. Elmer Zavala is the pastor at Preston Highway Hispanic Presbyterian Ministries in Louisville. Originally from Honduras, he became a minister to support those in need in the immigrant community. Elmer also co-founded La Minga, a community farm in Prospect, Kentucky. His interpreter and son, Galen Zavala Sherby, will join him at the festival.

Appalatin's foot-stomping sounds unite Appalachian folk and high-energy Latin music blending traditional guitar, mandolin, upright bass, charango, indigenous Andean flutes, hand percussion, harmonica and vocal harmonies. Their name reflects the unexpected meeting of Kentucky-raised musicians and Latin émigrés from Ecuador,



Nicaragua and Guatemala. After starting out playing at a local coffee shop for free coffee in 2006, the band has since performed at some of the region's most prestigious venues and has shared the stage with musicians ranging from Sam Bush to Ben Sollee.



Qais Essar is an acclaimed Afghan-American composer, instrumentalist and producer. Renowned for his mastery of the rabab — a 2,500-year-old string instrument — Qais bridges ancient and modern sounds by blending traditional Afghan and Indian classical music with contemporary genres. Qais has toured internationally, contributed original music

to feature films and TV and was a featured artist with the Oxford Philharmonic.

The Best of Louisville Voting Academy pools our perspectives, experiences and reactions as we explore what's happening and what might happen next in our shared home, organized by groups based on where we live, our work experience and our interests.

As a participant in this year's festival, we invite you to join. In fact, if you care about your corner of Louisville and can answer a few quick questions each week, we need your voice.

Lo isville

NEEDS

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Join us:

louisville.com/votingacademy



And if you have any thoughts or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

— Josh Moss, editor, Louisville Magazine, josh@louisville.com



**MATT
DERRENBACHER**

Rabbi Matt Derrenbacher completed a master of divinity degree at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary while working at The Temple as senior rabbinic assistant. Matt has served as solo rabbi for a wide array of synagogues, as well as senior rabbinic fellow for Hillel at Ohio University. He was a chaplain candidate for the Air Force and rabbi for Congregation Beth Shalom, where he led services in both the Reform and Conservative traditions to meet the needs of a diverse Jewish community. He and his wife run Luna Bell's Moonbows, a rescue for dogs with challenging medical conditions.



**GESHE KALSANG
RAPGYAL**

Geshe Rapgyal is executive director and spiritual teacher of the Drepung Gomang Center for Engaging Compassion, a Tibetan Buddhist organization in Louisville offering teachings on Saturdays and Sundays, day-long retreats once a month and spiritual guidance for sangha members. Geshe was born in Tibet and in 1987 entered Tashi Choeling Monastery, where he took novice and monastic vows. In 1991, he fled to India and, under the direction of H.H The Dalai Lama, was accepted into Drepung Gomang Monastery. He has studied logic, philosophy and poetry in Buddhist metaphysics.



RUS FUNK

Rus Funk is coordinator for the Kentucky Unitarian Universalist Justice Action Network and a consultant, activist and trainer. He helps create systems-level transformation that supports men and boys in ways that advance gender, sexual and racial equity and justice. He has more than 30 years of experience in mobilizing men to end gender-based violence, providing therapeutic and other support services. Rus is co-founder of Men Can Stop Rape Inc., the Own It Initiative (a Center for Women and Families project), White Folks Against Racism, the People's Coalition for Justice and other groups.



SUSAN PATRICE

Susan Patrice is a photographer who has collaborated with hundreds of professional and citizen artists to create transformative cultural experiences. Her passion for art spans 25 years and includes both experimental creative communities and facilitated public installations in places as diverse as nature trails, garbage dumps, abandoned city lots and government buildings. She lives in Cumberland, Maryland, where she co-directs the Kinship Photography Collective, a community that invites photographers to contribute to thematic conversations that explore nature, culture and belonging.

Get the latest updates in your inbox — sign up for our newsletter!

Each month, we share the latest news about the Festival of Faiths and our year-round work, along with words of wisdom from spiritual and thought leaders, info on diverse spiritual holidays, opportunities for common action, and more.

Register at www.festivaloffaiths.org/subscribe.



SARA CALLAWAY

Sara Callaway believes music belongs to everyone. As executive director of the Louisville Academy of Music, she has launched a needs-based scholarship program, reached thousands of people through new community programs and led renovations to LAM's historic main campus. Sara holds degrees in violin performance and has attended several international programs, including at the Berlin University of the Arts. She co-curated SONICBernheim, a performance series that explores the relationships between sound, music and nature, and has recorded with musicians such as Will Oldham.



SHYAMA IYER

Shyama Iyer is an emerging Indian-American writer, composer and choreographer who works most often in live theater settings, where she blends Bharatanatyam, contemporary dance, Carnatic and American musical theater music, and the aesthetics of classical Indian poetry and drama. Her recent musical theater work, which reimagines Indian myths, includes writing the book, music and lyrics for “The Sound of an Anklet” and “A Game of Dice”. She also co-directs the Guru Vandana Arts Academy and the Geeva Arts Festival in Louisville.



FRED NEZ-KEAMS

Fred Nez-Keams, who now resides in Kentucky, is a Diné flutemaker and musician from the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. Raised in Navajo traditions by his grandparents, a Medicine Man and a Hand Trembler, Fred shares his ministry through his music and stories. The Kentucky Arts Council has featured his work in a “Native Reflection” exhibit and commissioned his work for the 2022 Governor’s Awards in the Arts.

**JACKIE ROYCE**

Jackie Royce is a bassoonist who earned her degree in instrumental performance from the University of Louisville. She plays with several orchestras in the region, including the Louisville Orchestra, and has played internationally in Poland, Costa Rica and Switzerland. Jackie is a member of the art-rock band Ut Gret and collaborates with various experimental and rock groups. For more than 15 years she has been a music teacher, including offering improvisation workshops and coaching the Beginner Group with the Louisville Leopard Percussionists.

**BEN SOLLEE**

Ben Sollee, a Kentucky musician and composer, has been blurring boundaries with his musical style for two decades, and his latest album, “Long Haul” (2024), is no exception. After his last album in 2017, Ben took a break from touring to grow his family and deepen community connections in Louisville. Now a father of three, he’s leaned into work as a composer, scoring films such as “LAND” from director Robin Wright, and “Maggie Morre(s),” a film featuring Tina Fey and Jon Hamm. Ben also helped launch the nonprofit Canopy, which supports Kentucky businesses positively impacting their communities.

Holy Echoes

LISTENING TO PROPHETS
THEN & NOW

a FESTIVAL of FAITHS short-form podcast



PODCAST.FESTIVALofFAITHS.ORG



PLAZA OFFERINGS

LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

In *Light Through Us*, guests are invited to reflect on experiences with belonging in their communities with this meditative, collaborative art exhibit. Participants will have an opportunity to create their own stained glass windows, inspired by those at LPTS's Caldwell Chapel, which will be placed on a backlit frame to create a growing Window of Belonging through the festival.

MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER

The Muhammad Ali Center invites guests to step into the ring. Not to fight, but to connect, through a display that reflects both Muhammad's legacy as the greatest boxer of all time and his radical compassion. The ring embodies the festival's theme of Sacred Belonging, the profound truth that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.

Each rope of a three-sided ring will be labeled with one of the values from the Muhammad Ali Compassion Pledge: courage, action and justice. Guests will have the opportunity to add their own act of compassion to the ring, as well as sign the pledge. This act serves as a reminder that while we may have different stories and experiences, we are all connected.

Through examples of Muhammad's acts of service, shared through the lens of the Muhammad Ali Index, guests will explore how he led with respect for all, grounded in a deep belief in our shared humanity and in the conviction that "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

ENTANGLEMENTS

Entanglements is a multimedia and multi-sensory exhibit that explores the shifting edges of the climate crisis as both sites of grief and loss, as well as fertile spaces of imagination and interconnection. The exhibit invites the community to engage in practices of co-creation and of envisioning possibilities.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



ALAYNA ALTMAN

Alayna Altman is a Jewish interfaith artist exploring the connections between memory and identity. She works in oil paint and written word to create narrative-based pieces rooted in her own genealogy and culture. Her work moves between abstraction and portraiture, blending personal stories with imagined forms. Through color and text, she explores how memory can shift, fade, and reappear in new ways. Each piece becomes a way to understand where she comes from and what it means to belong.

The Festival of Faiths artist-in-residence program is sponsored by the Kentucky Foundation for Women.

FESTIVAL AESTHETICS

The decor for this year's Festival of Faiths embodies the theme of belonging, a celebration of how we are rooted within one another and within the vibrant community that sustains us. Bright saturated colors, natural textures and exposed roots ground the space, symbolizing the unseen networks that nourish us beneath the surface, reminding us that belonging is not only about being seen, but about being supported. Whimsical sculptures from beloved local artist Marvin Finn mirror the festival's spirit: that holiness can be found in the simple and familiar, and that beauty blooms where we are rooted. Together, these elements create a living environment that invites participants to pause, connect and remember that we each belong...to each other, to the earth and to the great web of life.



Credit: Courtesy of the artist



FESTIVAL
of FAITHS
SHOP

Thursday

9 am to 7 pm

Friday

9 am to 7 pm

Saturday

9 am to 12 pm

in the Main Lobby

LOUISVILLE STONEWARE MUGS • RECYCLED TIRE COASTERS
VINTAGE STREET BANNER BAGS • 100% COTTON T-SHIRTS
HOODIES • BALL CAPS • STICKERS • WATER BOTTLES • JOURNALS
HOUND DOG PRESS POSTERS • ORGANIC COTTON TOTE BAGS

OR SHOP ONLINE AT

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FEST FRIENDS



PARTNERS



AN UNFORGETTABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS

We are thrilled to welcome high school and college students to this year’s festival! We love providing opportunities for students to experience meaningful conversations, culture and creativity. A big thank you to all our participating educators, administrators and students this year!

If you’re an educator, we invite you to consider a field trip to next year’s festival. We’re happy to work with you to curate the best possible experience! Visit www.festivaloffaiths.org/educators to sign up for our educators mailing list.

Participating Schools

Atherton High School	Bellarmino University
J. Graham Brown School	Berea College
Louisville Collegiate School	Centre College
DeSales High School	Georgetown College
W.E.B. DuBois Academy	Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Fern Creek High School	Spalding University
Francis Parker School of Louisville	University of Louisville
Islamic School of Louisville	
Presentation Academy	
Saint Xavier High School	
Waggener High School	

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and individual donors, students and their teachers are able to attend the festival free of charge.

PLACES TO EAT

Lexus Lounge (inside the Kentucky Center)

Thursday and Friday · 11 am to 1:30 pm
Lite lunch grab-and-go options available for purchase.

Lexus Lounge will remain open from 1:30-4:30 pm and will have snacks and drinks available for purchase.

Wiltshire Pantry Bakery & Cafe
605 W. Main St. (361 ft.)

Walker’s Exchange (inside the Galt House)
West Tower, 2nd Floor (400 ft.)

Main Eatery
643 W. Main St. (0.1 mi.)

Bristol Bar & Grille
614 W. Main St. #4211 (0.1 mi.)

Proof on Main (inside 21c Museum Hotel)
702 W. Main St. (0.2 mi.)



CENTER *for* INTERFAITH RELATIONS

502.583.3100

info@interfaithrelations.org

WWW.CENTERforINTERFAITHRELATIONS.ORG



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