



FAITH
OVER
FEAR

GRAND RAPIDS, MI

*Living Courageously Alongside Our
Muslim Neighbors*

The Faith Over Fear - Grand Rapids, MI: Living Courageously Alongside Our Muslim Neighbors training is organized by Shoulder to Shoulder in partnership with the Kaufman Institute, Kuyper College, the Christian Reformed Church's Office of Social Justice, the Reformed Church in America, Resonate Global Mission, Al Amana Centre, Calvin University, Institute of Social Policy Understanding is designed for faith leaders, lay leaders, and multifaith or faith-based organizational leaders (with a special focus on Christians*) who wish to counter anti-Muslim discrimination in their communities. We'll share up-to-date research, resources, tools, and messaging to be stronger, strategic, and more effective actors in shaping our nation toward a greater vision - where all people, no matter their religious or cultural background, are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

This Program Guidebook belongs to:

ABOUT FAITH OVER FEAR

Faith Over Fear is a training program developed to equip faith leaders and communities with effective strategies for better advocating against anti-Muslim bigotry.

The approach, which centers on positive, aspirational, and values-based messaging to correct a narrative of fear and divisiveness, was originally developed collaboratively by Shoulder to Shoulder, the Muslim Association of Puget Sound- American Muslim Empowerment Network, Neighbors in Faith, and CAIR-Washington. We are grateful to partner with numerous additional national organizations and experts on the content for this training, which we are bringing to communities around the United States.

The core-curriculum has been developed and shaped by Shoulder to Shoulder, ReThink Media, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, and OverZero.



Shoulder to Shoulder is a national coalition-based campaign of religious denominations and faith-based organizations and communities that are committed to ending discrimination and violence against Muslims in the United States by equipping, connecting, and mobilizing faith leaders to effectively take action. Visit www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org/trainings

FAITH OVER FEAR – Grand Rapids, MI



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Please join us in thanking the members of The Implementation Team who made this Faith Over Fear training possible in Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Pastor Jay Blankespoor, *Boston Square Christian Reformed Church*
Rev. Jeffery Bos, *Christian Reformed Church in North America and Al Amana Centre*
Nina M Fernando, *Shoulder to Shoulder*
Dr. Lisa Hoozeboom, *Kuyper College*
Rev. Richard Killmer, *Reform Church in North America and a Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign Founder*
Dr. Douglas Kindschi, *Kaufman Institute*
Kyle Kooyers, *Kaufman Institute*
Cassandra Lawrence, *Shoulder to Shoulder*
Dr. Frans van Liere, *Calvin University*
Rev. Laura Osborne, *Reformed Church in America*
Rev. Mark Stephenson, *Christian Reformed Church in North America*
Roman Williams, *Interfaith Photovoice*
Emma VanDrie, *Northwestern College*

Journeys Into Friendship, a project of Resonate Global Mission

The Spirit moves through friendship! A world of cultural and religious diversity is developing in our backyards. When we share our lives with others in relationships of mutual respect, we make visible the love of Christ. This, in turn, leads to opportunities to share the reason for the hope that is in us.

How can you be a good neighbor, friend, and witness to your neighbors who come from a different cultural or religious background? How do you bear witness to Christ in a way that is compassionate and respectful, but also true to your deepest convictions?

What do you do? What do you say?

Resonate's Journeys into Friendship will equip and support you.

Learn more at <https://www.resonateglobalmission.org/journeys-friendship> Contact Rev. Laura Osborne (Coordinator for Interreligious Relations, Reformed Church in America) for more information: losborne@rca.org

Scriptural Reasoning with the Al Amana Centre:

Scriptural Reasoning (SR) is a tool for inter-faith dialogue whereby people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures. SR allows not only to appreciate the many things which we share and have in common, but it also draws on differences and teaches participants to appreciate them. You do not need to be an expert in your tradition or have religious education to participate. You are expected to be open, respectful, and willing to see your own scriptures in a new light. The result is often a deeper understanding of others' and one's own scriptures, as well as the development of strong bonds across faith communities. *See more information in the appendix of this booklet.*

TRAINING AGENDA

Kuyper College, Lower Parking Lot - 3333 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89376074569>

Friday, March 18, 2020 | 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

8:30 am | Registration & Open Zoom Room for Virtual Participants

Zoom Room Facilitator: Cassandra Lawrence, Shoulder to Shoulder

8:40 - 9:00 am - Optional Videos: Why We Do This: Faith Leader Perspectives:

Rabbi Jonah Pesner, a Reform Jewish perspective
Jordan Denari Duffner, A Catholic perspective
Kevin Singer, an Evangelical Christian perspective
Kathryn M. Lohre, a Lutheran perspective

9:00 am | Introductions, Welcome & Why We're Here

Why are we here? How can we make a difference? This opening session will feature some words of welcome, an overview of the Faith Over Fear training, a group orientation, and group introductions.

Lisa Hoogeboom, Kuyper College
Douglas Kindsci, Kaufman Institute
Nina M. Fernando, Shoulder to Shoulder

9:45 am | Who are American Muslims?

Participants will first engage in a live anonymous poll to begin to identify their current understanding of the American Muslim community, and the common perceptions and misperceptions they might hold, followed by a presentation about the broader American Muslim community, based on data and research from the Institute for Social Policy & Understanding.

Meira Neggaz, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (Video)
Petra Alsoofy, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

10:45 am | Break

10:55 am | What is Islamophobia: Contextualizing Anti-Muslim Discrimination in the United States

We must understand the problem in order to begin to shape our responses to it and become an effective part of the solution. This interactive session will feature a live presentation and an activity for participants to begin to grasp the complexity of anti-Muslim discrimination & violence in the United States. Participants will engage in a

'Teaching for Change' Jigsaw Activity aimed at helping people understand the complexity of anti-Muslim discrimination & violence in order to begin shaping our responses to it. This will be followed by a live discussion with author, Dr. Todd Green.

Alison Kysia, Educator and Art Activist (Video)

Dr. Todd Green (Live Zoom)

12:00 pm | Lunch Buffet - *Break for the Day*

1:30 pm | Optional Jummah Service

Faith Over Fear - Grand Rapids, MI participants have been graciously invited to observe Jummah (Friday congregational prayer) at Masjid At-Tawheed on March 18th for their 1:30 pm service. Prayer is followed by a sermon or khutbah by the imam. If you have not already RSVP'd to join us for this, and you wish to do so, please contact Nina (nina.fernando@s2scampaign.org).

Please note: To show respect for prayer time, prepare to remove shoes before you enter the prayer area and wear comfortable modest clothing. Women are welcome to bring a scarf to cover their heads. If it's your first time visiting a mosque, check out [Preemptive Love's Non-Muslims Guide to Visiting a Mosque](#).

Saturday, March 19, 2020 | 9:00am - 1:00pm

8:30 am | Registration & Open Zoom Room for Virtual Participants

Zoom Room Facilitator: Cassandra Lawrence, Shoulder to Shoulder

Optional Videos: What I want you to know about anti-Muslim discrimination

Simran Jeet Singh, Writer/Professor/The Aspen Institute Religion and Society Program

Margari Hill, Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative

Hussein Rashid, Academic/Speaker/Activist

Madihha Ahussain, Muslim Advocates

Todd Green, Professor/Author

9:00 am | Introductions & Training Recap/Overview

9:15 am | Messaging and Communicating to Create Change

In light of what we often hear about Islam and Muslims, including the common myths and tropes, what do we say in response and how do we say it in a way that is true and makes a difference? This interactive session will feature video content, presentations and activities for participants to review the underlying dynamics of why negative speech resonates and how it can lead to group-targeted harm, the psychology of fear, and the trends and patterns of countering dangerous speech. We will then move into designing

values-based communications based on the most recent messaging and communications research, and participants will have the opportunity to practice their own messaging and communications with others.

Samantha Owens, OverZero (Video)

Corey Saylor, Rethink Media (Video)

Nina Fernando, Shoulder to Shoulder

10:15 am | “But What About...?”

This moderated conversation on hot button topics, common tropes, myths, and misperceptions about Islam and Muslims will dive into the hard issues that come up in this space that we sometimes brush over or ignore - i.e., evangelism, political polarization, etc.

Cory Willson, Calvin Theological Seminary

Imam Kip Curnutt, Masjid At-Tawheed

Lynn Smith, Masjid At-Tawheed

Petra Alsoofy, Institute for Social Policy & Understanding

Pastor Terry Kylo, Paths to Understanding

Moderated by Nina Fernando, Shoulder to Shoulder

11:00 am | Break

11:10 am | Strategies for Engagement & Change: A Panel Discussion

This interactive session will focus on some key ways people have navigated the challenges of showing up for one another and reaching “beyond the interfaith choir” featuring partners who have been successful in organizing on different fronts and different contexts, including “firefighting” and “tree planting.”

Mallory Wycoff, Faith and Culture Center, Tennessee (Video)

Martin Brooks, Peace Catalyst International, Kentucky (Video)

Pastor Joel Rainey, Covenant Church, West Virginia (Video)

Pastor Mandy France, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Minnesota (Video)

Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani, Kaufman Program Manager

Jay Blankespoor, Boston Square Christian Reformed Church

Moderated by Kyle Kooyers, Kaufman Institute

12:15 pm | Developing Your Strategy Workshop

Participants will continue to unpack and develop their values-based communications messaging work and delve deeper into audience mapping and an attitudes & involvement chart for strategically moving people toward positive & active engagement.

Samantha Owens, OverZero (Video)

Nina Fernando, Shoulder to Shoulder

12:45 pm | Closing & Next Steps

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Arranged in alphabetical order by Last Name

Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani, Kaufman Interfaith Institute Program Manager. Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani was born in Karachi, Pakistan but has lived primarily in the US (Florida, Texas, and California) for most of her life. She considers Southern California her home even though she has now lived in Michigan for a longer amount of time. Zahabia is a wife, sister, daughter, and mom of 3 kids (19, 17, and 11). She has worked in market research and for non-profits, currently working for Kaufman Interfaith Institute at Grand Valley State University. As Program Manager at Kaufman, Zahabia works on leading the Kaufman Youth Interfaith Scholars, Summer Service Day Camps, and assists on all of the other flagship programs for the organization. Her passion is the intersection of social justice and interfaith which is also the main theme for the Scholars this year. Active participation in our community drives her to participate on various boards and committees, such as the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan, Model Communities Initiative, and Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates. She is also close to completing her Masters in Public Administration at GVSU.

Petra Alsoofy, is the Outreach & Partnerships Manager at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), where she strengthens valued partnerships and forges new ones with organizations who share ISPU's goal of strengthening Muslim communities and building understanding. Petra's work includes working with ISPU's large network of scholars and sharing research with policymakers, community leaders, faith leaders, educators, and the general public to equip them to make informed decisions about American Muslims. Petra is a Detroit Equity Action Lab (DEAL) Racial Equity Fellow and an alum of New Detroit's Multicultural Leadership Series. She also serves as the vice president of the Michigan Center for Civic Engagement's Board of Directors and as a member of the American Association for State and Local History's Religious History Committee. Petra has been a leader in interfaith work and public education for more than 15 years and is a graduate of Grand Valley State University where she earned a BA in political science.

Pastor Jay Blankespoor, Boston Square Christian Reformed Church. Pastor Jay Blankespoor came to Boston Square Church in the fall of 2003. Pastor Jay received his Masters of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary where he received the John T. Galloway Prize in Expository Preaching. He has also studied at Fuller Theological Seminary and Calvin Theological Seminary. Pastor Jay is married to Pastor Elizabeth Vander Haagen and they have three children. Pastor Jay walks to work, enjoys Ultimate Frisbee and pickleball, and likes to explore the outdoors whenever possible.

Imam Kip Curnutt was born in Columbia Missouri in 1986. His first introduction to Islam was from a grade school friend from Afghanistan. This friendship had a lasting impact on Kip that ultimately led to him accepting Islam many years later at the age of 24. After accepting Islam Imam Kip dedicated himself to learning and teaching Islam. He studied Arabic and Islamic studies from Cambridge Islamic College and Qasid Institute in Amman Jordan as well as traditional learning in a variety of Islamic subjects from scholars in the US, Jordan, and Egypt. He served as the Imam of the Islamic Center of Morgantown in Morgantown, Wv before relocating to Grand Rapids with his wife and two children to join Masjid-At-Tawheed.

Nina M. Fernando serves as Executive Director at The Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign, a multifaith coalition of religious denominations and faith-based organizations committed to countering and preventing anti-Muslim discrimination and violence in the United States by building a society where all are treated with dignity and respect. She first joined the Shoulder to Shoulder team in 2017. Nina holds a Master of Arts in Interreligious and Cultural Studies from Claremont School of Theology and a Bachelor of Arts in "Social Change through Music and Religious Studies" from the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies at the University of Redlands. Previously, she's worked as a LankaCorps Fellow through The Asia Foundation in Sri Lanka supporting research on interreligious and intercultural conflict and coexistence at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, and prior to that, as a Faith-Rooted Organizer, educating, organizing, and mobilizing faith leaders to stand in solidarity with workers and immigrants at Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice in Southern California. Nina's intersectional identities have informed her work as a multifaith community organizer, activist, vocalist, and songwriter. Nina lives in Southern California with her husband, Rev. Noel Andersen and their toddler, Aiyan.

Dr. Todd Green is Associate Professor of Religion at Luther College. A nationally recognized expert on Islamophobia, Green served as a Franklin Fellow at the U.S. State Department in 2016-17, where he analyzed and assessed the impact of anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe on countering violent extremism initiatives, refugee and migrant policies, and human rights. He has given lectures on Islamophobia to other federal agencies, including the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, along with media interviews to outlets such as CNN, NPR, and The Washington Post. Green is the author of two books on Islamophobia: *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West - 2nd Edition* (Fortress Press, 2019); and *Presumed Guilty: Why We Shouldn't Ask Muslims to Condemn Terrorism* (Fortress Press, 2018).

Lisa Hoogeboom is currently Professor of Intercultural and Biblical Studies at Kuyper College, where she teaches New Testament Greek as well as an immersion course on Islam that brings students in direct contact with Muslims living in Grand Rapids and Dearborn areas. She also represents Kuyper College on the Kaufman Interfaith Consortium.

Dr. Douglas Kindschi, now in his 40th year at Grand Valley State University served in the position of dean for 28 of those years. He is the Director of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute. He is currently a University Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy and the Director of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute. While Dean of Science he was responsible for 14 departments including the basic sciences, mathematics, computer science, the School of Engineering, the School of Health Professions, and the Water Resources Research Institute. In August 2015, Grand Valley named its new science building the P. Douglas Kindschi Hall of Science recognizing his role in advancing the sciences at the university. Douglas Kindschi received his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Houghton College in New York, did graduate study at the Divinity School, University of Chicago. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he also completed a minor in philosophy.

Kyle Kooyers, Rev. Kyle Kooyers, M.Div. is the Associate Director for the Kaufman Interfaith Institute of Grand Valley State University. He is responsible for coordinating community-based interfaith engagement, dialogue and relationship-building activities, networking faith and

non-faith congregations and organizations, and facilitating the efforts of the West Michigan Interfaith Council and its task forces. Originally from Southwestern Pennsylvania, Kyle has spent several years exploring asset-based community development and organizational capacity building in various contexts, addressing generational poverty and combating food insecurity as an AmeriCorps/VISTA. Kyle is an ordained minister within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

Pastor Terry Kylo, Paths to Understanding - The Rev. Terry Kylo is a Christian pastor who strives to live by the core teachings of the Abrahamic Tradition: Love God more than our tribe and tradition; love our neighbors as we love ourselves, and; manage the economy equitably within the limits of the ecosystem. Terry is a Lutheran pastor serving as the Executive Director of Paths to Understanding (formerly the Treacy Levine Center). In 2015, Terry founded Neighbors in Faith to counter anti-Muslim bigotry. Neighbors in Faith is now a program of the Paths to Understanding. He is the author of two books, *Being Human* and *Apprenticeship*. He was published by the Aspen Institute in their 2018 *Pluralism in Peril Report* and has been featured on Crosscut.com, KOMO TV, KOMO Radio, TriCity Herald, and appeared on the Challenge 2.0 TV Show.

Cassandra Lawrence works with the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign on communications and community engagement to equip and engage faith communities and people of goodwill to end Anti-Muslim bigotry. Cassandra worked with the diplomatic and mediation community identifying training gaps and designing training processes for better engagement with religious and traditional peacemakers for more sustainable peace processes. She worked with the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs on the President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge International Program. She is a trained mediator, dialogue facilitator, and interfaith and racial justice community organizer. She also teaches negotiation and conflict transformation primarily to faith communities. She has a BA in Religious Studies from the University of British Columbia and a master's degree in comparative ethnic conflict from Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland. In 2021 she completed a master of divinity at Wesley Theological Seminary with honors, specializing in Public Theology, and received the Excellence in Public Theology Award.

Meira Neggaz is the Executive Director at ISPU, where she is responsible for the institution's overall leadership, strategy, and growth. Meira works to build and strengthen ISPU, to cultivate relationships with community leaders, policymakers, scholars, partner institutions, and stakeholders, and to broaden the reach and impact of ISPU's research. Before joining ISPU, Meira served as Senior Program Officer for Marie Stopes International (MSI), a leading, UK-based organization working in 42 countries. There, she led and managed programs in multiple countries, developed partnerships with key stakeholders and partner institutions, provided technical advice, and managed key grants and donor relationships. Formerly, Meira was the first Executive Director of WINGS in Guatemala, where she grew the organization from its infancy to become a national leader in the health sector, and the Guatemala Country Representative for Curamericas, establishing country presence and leading a USAID funded child survival project. She holds a BA from Huron University in London and a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Samantha Owens is a regional director (U.S.) at Over Zero, which supports societies to resist division and create long-term resilience to identity-based conflict through trainings, strategy

advising, piloting and testing new approaches, and supporting interdisciplinary research. She has extensive experience leveraging strategic communication for social change. Her experience includes developing trainings and strategic communication campaigns to prevent extremism among youth in Bosnia, art-based initiatives for conflict transformation and human rights, and communication campaigns to prevent youth homelessness in the U.S. She holds an MA in Human Rights.

Corey Saylor is the Deputy Director of Strategy at ReThink Media. Corey Saylor is the Deputy Director of Strategy at ReThink. He has spent over 20 years in non-profit advocacy working on political communications, media relations and combatting anti-Islam prejudice in the United States. He has appeared on news outlets ranging from Fox News to CNN, the BBC, the New York Times and Al Jazeera. He has run successful advocacy campaigns holding major companies such as Burger King, American Express and Bell Helicopter-Boeing accountable for their corporate policies as well as combatting anti-Islam legislation nationwide and removing biased and inaccurate materials from law enforcement counterterrorism trainings. Corey has also authored a number of reports documenting anti-Islam sentiment and civil rights issues in the United States. For instance, *Confronting Fear*, produced in partnership with staff at the University of California, Berkeley, explores the funding and impact of U.S. anti-Muslim groups. Corey has also conducted dozens of leadership, advocacy and media trainings across the United States, including speaking to audiences at NASA, Yale, Princeton, and the U.S. National War College. Saylor is an avid DC United fan. He reads entirely too many history books and often bores his family with long walks on Civil War battlefields. He is convinced one of his daughters will become President of the United States and the other will win a Nobel Prize. He just cannot decide which one and in what order.

Lynn Smith, is a veteran educator and the founding principal of the Islamic School of Grand Rapids, a small, private Islamic K-5 school in Grand Rapids. Born and raised Catholic, Lynn converted to Islam in 2001 while living and teaching in Egypt. She is the mother of three daughters and enjoys traveling, hiking, and reading.

Cory Willson, lives with his wife, Monica and son Warren in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They are expecting their second child in May. Cory is an associate professor of missiology and missional ministry at Calvin Theological Seminary and an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church of North America. He is the co-author of *Work and Worship: Reconnecting Our Labor & Liturgy* and the co-founder of *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue* journal which brings together global voices to discuss the practices and theologies of multi faith engagement from Christian perspectives.