



Powering Pluralism Network: Religious Leadership Cohort Members



Dr. Saba Ayman-Nolley

President, Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council

Dr. Ayman-Nolley is a member of the Baha'i community and president of Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council (HPKIFC). HPKIFC is the oldest interfaith council in the country, spanning over 100 years, and its mission is to address hunger, homelessness, and joblessness in its community—with a focus on issues of social justice.



Rev. Dawnesha Beaver

Director of Business Operations and Strategy

New Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Dawnesha K. Beaver, MPH, MAT serves as the Director of Operations and Strategy at New Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, CA. As one of the youngest members of the Senior Leadership Team, Rev. Beaver is an experienced and successful non-profit leader with more than 10 years of experience driving superior operations and overall performance. Over the course of her career, she has launched initiatives, policies, and programs to champion the cause for equality and justice for underserved communities in health literacy and access, education, housing, transportation, employment, and community planning and investment.



Rev. Dr. Reginald Blount

Pastor, Associate Professor

Arnett Chapel A.M.E. Church, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Rev. Dr. Reggie Blount is the Pastor of Arnett Chapel A.M.E. Church in Chicago, IL. He also serves on the faculty of Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary as Associate Professor of Formation, Leadership and Culture and teaches in the area of Christian Education, Congregational Leadership and Youth and Young Adult Ministry.



Father Jon Chalmers

Associate Pastor, Executive Vice President

Prince of Peace Catholic Parish, John Carroll Catholic High School

Fr. Jon Chalmers passionately believes that love of God and love of neighbor have a constitutive relevance in the Church, especially in the ability of education and healthcare to nurture health, healing, and holiness. As the former President of Holy Family Cristo Rey and Pastor of the Prince of Peace Catholic Parish, he has particular interests in how the past informs the future, the conversation between nature and culture, and redemptive responses to social challenges. A graduate of the University of Alabama, Harvard, and Yale, he is also formed by old roads, wilderness trails, and learning from his family.



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Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Cohen

Professor of Rabbinic Literature, American Jewish University

Aryeh Cohen is a rabbi and scholar who serves as a professor of Rabbinic Literature at American Jewish University. His scholarship focuses on the Talmud, Jewish ethics, and social justice.



Rabbi Shoshanah Conover

Senior Rabbi, Temple Sholom of Chicago

Rabbi Shoshanah Conover is only the 8th Senior Rabbi Temple Sholom has had during its 152-year history. Rabbi Conover's responsibilities at Temple Sholom of Chicago reflect her passions: learning and teaching inspiring (and challenging) texts, leading dynamic and engaging spiritual experiences, serving as pastoral counselor, and finding ways to improve our world through the guidelines of our faith.



Cheryl Cook

CEO, Avodah

Cheryl Cook is the Chief Executive Officer of Avodah. With close to 30 years of experience working across the Jewish community as a leader, fundraiser and manager, Cheryl is helping to develop the next generation of Jewish social justice leaders. Cheryl has overseen some of the organization's most successful national growth strategies, including expansion of the leadership programs to new cities, the creation of innovative models to elevate Jewish justice voices, and bringing educational resources and conversations into the Jewish community to strengthen our work on poverty & social justice in the United States.



David H. Crawford

President, McCormick Theological Seminary

David H. Crawford is President of McCormick Theological Seminary: a diverse, ecumenical, progressive, Reformed, 191- year-old institution affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, USA, coupling rigorous academic work with leadership training and focusing on issues of social justice in a multicultural, urban context.



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Barbara Gholar

Co-Chairperson, Interfaith Council of Monrovia

I'm Barbara Gholar from Monrovia, Ca a member of the Baha'i Faith and Co-Chairperson of the Interfaith Council of Monrovia. As an Interfaith Council we work closely with the city with activities including our different Faith Traditions, such as Race Unity Day, National Day of Prayer, and World Religion Day.



Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque

Pastoral Staff, Alfred Street Baptist Church

Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque is a retired pastor of the Community Church of Barrington, an American Baptist Church focused on developing within to serve without. She currently serves as a member of the pastoral staff at Alfred Street Baptist Church.



Rev. Hannah Kardon

Teaching Pastor, Urban Village Church

Hannah is the Teaching Pastor of Urban Village Church - an innovative, multi-site, LGBTQ-celebrating, anti-racist, deeply in love with Jesus Christian community in Chicago. UVC Pastors recently published their first book study *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* through the United Methodist Women, and worship and hold devotionals regularly on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube @uvchurch.



Malik Johnson

Director of Prison Outreach, Masjid al-Rabia

As the Director of Prison Outreach for Masjid al-Rabia, Malik communicates with incarcerated communal members via mail or phone, responding to requests for pen pals, religious doctrine and rulings, and Islamic materials. He enjoys meeting new people and engaging in different cultures. Malik believes the key to cultivating a community of caring individuals is "to practice being unapologetically honest with ourselves and love one another, especially in our differences."



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Brie Loskota

Executive Director, Former Religion & Society Program Fellow

The Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion

Brie Loskota is the former director of the University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture and now serves as the Executive Director at the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on how religions change and make change in the world. She is also the co-founder and senior advisor to the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute and serves as the implementation partner for the United States Institute of Peace's Generation Change program.



Rabbi Michelle Missaghieh

Rabbi, Temple Israel of Hollywood

Rabbi Michelle Missaghieh has served as Associate Rabbi of Temple Israel of Hollywood (TIOH) since 1996. She enjoys teaching people of all ages and empowering them to participate in Jewish living. She takes special interest in working with individuals for conversion, creating environments where TIOH members gather for intergenerational neighborhood Shabbat dinners, and others where members connect to discuss issues of aging, parenting or preparing for end of life issues.



Jenan Mohajir

Senior Director of Special Projects, Interfaith America

Jenan Mohajir is an educator, a storyteller, and a believer in building relationships across the lines that separate us. Jenan currently serves as Senior Director of Leadership at Interfaith America, where she oversees the creation and implementation of programs that invest in development of alumni and student interfaith leaders, including the annual Interfaith Leadership Institute (ILI).



Nadiah Mohajir

Founder & Executive Director, HEART Women & Girls

Nadiah Mohajir is the Executive Director of HEART, a national nonprofit working to promote sexual health literacy and sexual violence prevention in Muslim communities.



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Lisa Notter

Development Officer, Hands of Peace

Lisa Notter served as the former Vice President for Advancement for Chicago Theological Seminary, a graduate school of theology, where she oversaw a staff of six and was responsible for strategic initiatives, alumni/church engagement and communication, foundation giving and grant administration, stewardship and donor relations, annual giving, and advancement operations. She currently serves as the Development Officer at Hands of Peace.



Ronak Patel

Outreach Volunteer

BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Los Angeles

BAPS is a spiritual, humanitarian, civic and charitable organization that strives to serve communities, uplift families, and unite society.



Daniel Schwartz

Executive Director, Faith in Action Alabama

Daniel Schwartz is Executive Director of Faith in Action Alabama, a statewide multiracial, multifaith faith-based community organizing nonprofit that seeks to honor God by dismantling systemic racism to create pathways of opportunity for all Alabamians. Faith in Action Alabama strives to serve as a vehicle that further develops the leadership capacity of grassroots individuals and communities to advocate for their core concerns.



Rev. Melissa Self Patrick

Pastor, Executive Director

United Methodist Church (North Alabama), Birmingham Holocaust Education Center

Rev. Melissa Self Patrick is a UMC pastor currently working as the Executive Director, Birmingham Holocaust Education Center, which is dedicated to teaching the history of the Holocaust and empowering teachers, students, and community members to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to create a more just and accepting community.



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Joumana Silyan-Saba

City of Los Angeles, Civil and Human Rights Department

Joumana is an accomplished public leader, with a career spanning 16 years of policy development, civic engagement, and peacebuilding. Through her extensive work in the City of Los Angeles she advanced inter-group relations, religious pluralism, police-community engagement, and social cohesion. She is a passionate, culturally sensitive, civic-minded professional, who has engaged in cultivating strategic partnerships, and committed to bringing about social change and improving relations among institutions and the constituencies they serve.



Tahil Sharma

Regional Coordinator for North America, United Religions Initiative

Tahil Sharma is an interfaith activist based in Los Angeles who was born to a Hindu father and a Sikh mother. Following the Oak Creek, WI shooting of a Sikh temple in 2012, Tahil became involved in efforts for interfaith literacy and social justice and has been doing this work professionally for the past eight years.



Kim Schultz

Coordinator of Creative Initiatives

InterReligious Institute at Chicago Theological Seminary

Our society has a long history of normalizing Christianity as the preferred or normal way to be an American. We counter this false and harmful notion at CTS through our course work and degree programs. The IRI serves as our means to engage the public as we work to reshape the public square, such that people of all religions and people of no particular religion have equal space and voice



Rt. Rev. Alexei Smith

Ecumenical and Interreligious Officer

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Rt. Rev. Alexei Smith has served as the Ecumenical and Interreligious Officer for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles since the year 2000.



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Rev. Dr. Najuma Smith-Pollard

Program Director

Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement at USC

Rev. Dr. Najuma Smith-Pollard is the Founding Pastor of Word of Encouragement Church and Program Director of the Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement at USC. Rev. Najuma is grateful to combine her twenty plus years in ministry with her professional work, to serve as a Faith Leader & Activist in her community. Rev. Najuma is a frequent speaker and panelist for conferences related to Civic Engagement, Faith Leadership, The Black Church, Women's Empowerment, Women In Ministry, Sexual Violence Awareness, and Personal Development.



Dr. Najeeba Syeed

Associate Professor of Muslim and Interreligious Studies

Chicago Theological Seminary

Najeeba Syeed, J.D., is Associate Professor of Muslim and Interreligious Studies at Chicago Theological Seminary and director of Bayt Rahma, a center for healing justice. She is recognized as a leader in peacebuilding and social justice-based research and twice received the Jon Anson Ford Award for reducing violence in schools and in the area of interracial gang conflicts and was named Southern California Mediation Association's "Peacemaker of the Year" in 2007. Professor Syeed received the 2017 Scholar-Activist Award from Auburn Seminary. Her peace and justice work has been the subject of news reports and documentaries as well such as this film which aired on NBC *Waging Peace: Muslim and Christian Alternatives*. In 2020 her co-edited book (with Heidi Hadsell) *Critical Approaches to Interreligious Education: Experiments in Empathy*, a project supported by the Henry Luce Foundation was published.



Ashfaq Taufique

President Emeritus, Birmingham Islamic Society

Ashfaq Taufique is President Emeritus of Birmingham Islamic Society (BIS), which provides worship and social services to the Muslim community of Birmingham, AL. In addition, BIS actively participates in the interfaith community along with serving their community through Habitat for Humanity, a free food pantry at their center, and a soup kitchen.



RELIGION & SOCIETY

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Roohi Younus

Co-Founder, Principal, R&R Strategists

Roohi Younus, co-founder and principal at R&R Strategists, has been consulting with nonprofit organizations for over 11 years. She is currently the Program Manager and Facilitator for the Community Collaboration Initiative, an action-based research project based out of Indiana University's Lilly School of Philanthropy. Roohi also co-founded MUSE Bookings, a speaker and artists bureau that provides booking services to American Muslims.