



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

## About

**Rumi Forum** was founded in 1999 to foster **interfaith dialogue** and **intercultural understanding**.

The Forum is affiliated with the **Hizmet Movement**, a transnational civil society network that focuses on **preventing conflict** through dialogue, **overcoming ignorance** through education, and **eradicating poverty** through empowerment.

## Mission

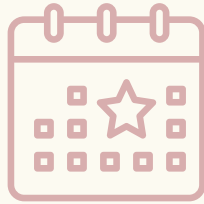
Rumi Forum`s mission is to **build relationships**, **offer learning opportunities**, and **mobilize leaders** to advance intergroup understanding, strengthen social trust, and eliminate polarization.

## Vision

An **inclusive**, **cohesive**, and **harmonious** society where differences are celebrated and human potential prospers.



# OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS



**40 Events**



**1920 Participants**



**35 Partnerships**

# INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

## Community Events

**Community Events** are where we unite efforts with a wide array of stakeholders. Together with our partners, we collaborate on occasions like iftars, concerts, and unity walks, which are opportunities for people from all walks of life to meet their neighbors in an interfaith context.

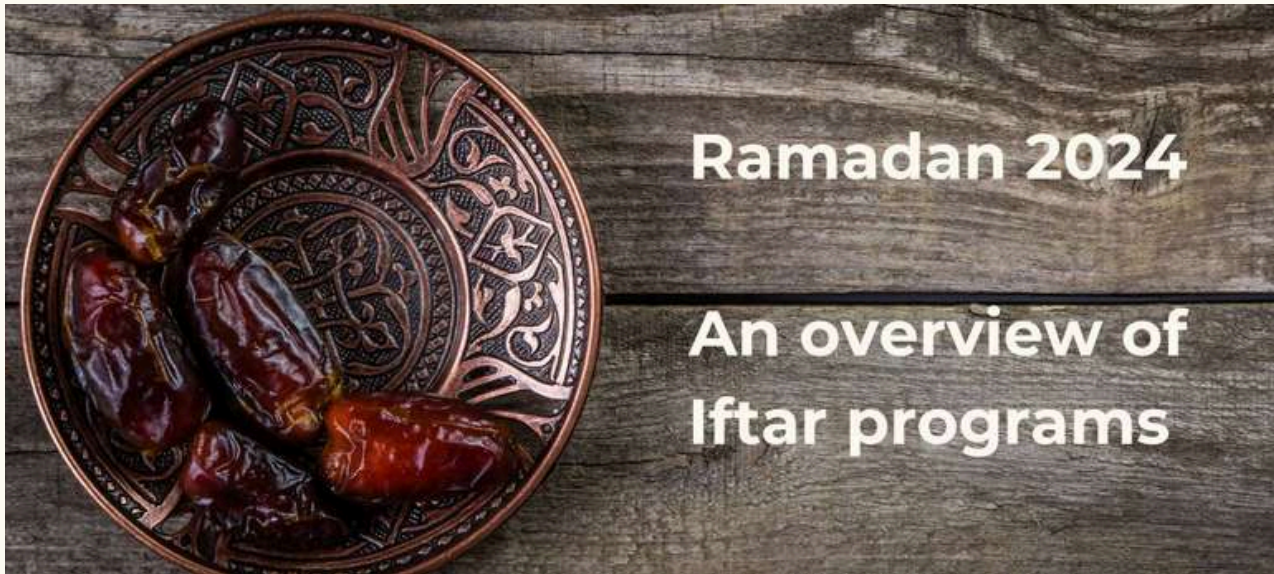
## Religious Literacy

**Religious Literacy** gatherings provide a space for members of different religious communities to learn about each other's faiths and strengthen their sense of cohesion through cordial conversations.

## Scriptural Reasoning

**Scriptural Reasoning** (SR) is a practice in which Christians, Jews, and Muslims study each other's sacred texts. SR participants meet once a month to read short passages from their respective scriptures on a certain topic. Moderated by a study leader, each session is an opportunity to listen and share various perspectives. SR sessions thereby help participants reflect on a curious list of topics within the Abrahamic tradition.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



## Ramadan Iftar Series

**Ramadan 2024** was an extraordinary time for Rumi Forum and its **community partners**. We were busy with various Iftar gatherings we hosted or co-hosted in the DMV area. This unique period was the moment to reconnect with our **friends** and **allies**, sharing the joy of Iftar while engaging in fruitful conversations regarding future endeavors. Ramadan also allowed us to continue our monthly **Scriptural Reasoning** series in person, followed by an Iftar.

We are grateful to all our partners and guests for their support in making the holy month an opportunity to reconnect and reinforce our commitments to the **interfaith endeavor**.



# RAMADAN IFTAR SERIES



**Washington, DC  
Reunion Iftar**



**Baptist Joint  
Committee  
(BJC) Iftar**



**Virginia  
Community  
Iftar**

# RAMADAN IFTAR SERIES



**Maryland  
Community  
Iftar**

**International  
Religious  
Freedom (IRF)  
Summit and  
National Museum  
of American  
Religion (NMAR)  
Iftar**



**Interfaith Encounters  
Association (IEA) Iftar**



# RAMADAN IFTAR SERIES



**Jerusalem  
Youth Chorus  
(JYC) Iftar**



**Interreligious  
Communities  
Project (ICP) Iftar**



# RAMADAN IFTAR SERIES



## Scriptural Reasoning-Virginia Theological Seminary “Riots and Rebellion” Discussion and Iftar



# 2023 ANNUAL GALA AND DIALOGUE AWARDS CEREMONY

A traditional component of Rumi Forum's endeavor is recognizing the lifetime dedication of inspirational public figures who have championed its cause. The **Rumi Forum Dialogue Award** honors successful practitioners with outstanding track records in **interfaith engagement, community service, human rights, and education.**





# 2023 ANNUAL GALA AND DIALOGUE AWARDS CEREMONY



## 2023 Rumi Forum Dialogue Award Honoree

**Micah Hendler**

Musical Changemaker  
Founder and Artistic Director  
Jerusalem Youth Chorus



## Award Presented By

**Aziz Abu Sarah**

Cultural Educator  
Co-founder of MEJDI Tours



# 40TH ANNUAL INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Rumi Forum was honored to participate in the **40th Interfaith Thanksgiving Service** hosted by Burke United Methodist Church.

The celebration was attended by a large audience coming from **various faith communities** in Northern Virginia. We thank our hosts, the partnering congregations, and **Sufi Melody** for making this landmark celebration a truly special one!



# QUARTERLY SOCIAL

Rumi Forum's **Quarterly Social** is an opportunity to meet individuals from various backgrounds and engage in **stimulating conversations**.

Each Quarterly Social features a different theme, about which participants share thoughts in an **open** and **welcoming environment**. The meetings are facilitated conversations in which the participants themselves are the speakers.



# NIGHT OF THE UNION

with Live Sufi Music and Rumi Poetry



**Rumi Forum** hosted a **live Sufi music** performance by Sufi Melody and a **keynote address** by Sarah A. Snyder on “Seeking Mental Health Through Rumi’s Poetry.”

Sheb-i Arus (**Night of Union**) marks the anniversary of **Rumi’s passing** on December 17, 1273. On this night, admirers of the great luminary worldwide engage in various **spiritual practices** and **learning activities** to honor his legacy. The word “arus,” meaning “wedding,” symbolizes the union of the soul with the Divine upon death.



## FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION

# SEVAP/MITZVAH

## PARTNER EVENT



**Rumi Forum** and the **Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society (JIDS)** hosted a dialogue featuring the film screening of “Sevap/Mitzvah” at **Washington Hebrew Congregation**.

This short film is a moving dramatization of a Bosnian Muslim woman who hid a Jewish family during the Holocaust and then was rescued by Jews during the war in Bosnia 52 years later. It is a story about the power of true friendship, which is one thing organizations like JIDS and the Rumi Forum have tried so hard to foster – true friendships between **Muslims** and **Jews**.

# FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION

## REUNITING AMERICA

### PARTNER EVENT

**Rumi Forum**, George Mason University's **Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution**, **Braver Angels**, **International Center for Religion & Diplomacy**, and **Focolare Forum** brought together an evening of rich discussion on **bridging the divide** in the face of the growing partisan hatred that threatens our nation.

It was great to see **people coming together** who are heartsick about the rancor tearing our country apart and who think that our opponents should not be our enemies and that America's best days can lie ahead.



# RELIGIOUS LITERACY



## INTERRELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES PROJECT (ICP)

The **Interreligious Communities Project (ICP)** is designed to engage religious diversity within a safe and tested format and to widen participation in interreligious activity in Northern Virginia.

Participants were invited to **listen, learn, and connect** through these visits to spaces where people **pray, worship, engage** in religious practices, and celebrate life's events. Each visit contained specific elements: an architectural/religious tour of the space, an introduction to the religion, a communal history, sharing from members, a dialogue or a shared activity, and a delicious meal!

Each visit was more than a 'tour' or 'open house'; it was an experience. The ICP is designed to **deepen people's understanding** of one another, **build trust, generate goodwill**, and foster a greater **sense of community**.



# INTERRELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Join SHARING SACRED SPACES For a Site Visit to

**THE FIREFLY HOUSE**

OCT. 15TH, 2023  
3:00PM-5:30PM

**JOIN IN**  
with 7+ different faith groups to explore this community and spiritual home, learn about their teachings, and participate in insightful dialogue.

This event is part of the Interreligious Communities Project, North Virginia, bringing together faith communities to build bonds of solidarity.

**RSVP REQUIRED: REGISTER TODAY AT**  
[www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events](http://www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events)

**ALL ARE WELCOME.**



Join SHARING SACRED SPACES For a Site Visit to

**BURKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

NOV. 16TH, 2023  
5:45 - 8:30 PM

**JOIN IN**  
with 7+ different faith groups to explore their community-oriented Meeting House, learn about their teachings, and participate in insightful dialogue.

This event is part of the Interreligious Communities Project, North Virginia, bringing together faith communities to build bonds of solidarity.

**RSVP REQUIRED: REGISTER TODAY AT**  
[www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events](http://www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events)

**ALL ARE WELCOME.**



Join SHARING SACRED SPACES For a Site Visit to

**MASJID MUHAMMAD THE NATION'S MOSQUE**

DECEMBER 3RD, 2023  
3:00-5:30 PM ET

**JOIN IN**  
with 7+ different faith groups to explore the mosque, learn about Islam, dine together, and participate in insightful dialogue.

This event is part of the Interreligious Communities Project, North Virginia, bringing together faith communities to build bonds of solidarity.

**RSVP REQUIRED: REGISTER TODAY AT**  
[www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events](http://www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events)

**ALL ARE WELCOME.**



Join SHARING SACRED SPACES For a Site Visit to

**DRIKUNG DHARMA SURYA CENTER**


JAN. 28TH, 2024  
7:00PM-9:30PM

**JOIN IN**  
with 7+ different faith groups to explore the temple, learn about their teachings and tradition, and participate in insightful dialogue.

This event is part of the Interreligious Communities Project, North Virginia, bringing together faith communities to build bonds of solidarity.

**RSVP REQUIRED: REGISTER TODAY AT**  
[www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events](http://www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events)

**ALL ARE WELCOME.**



Join SHARING SACRED SPACES For a Site Visit to

**TEMPLE RODEF SHALOM**

FEB. 18th, 2024  
5:00PM-7:30PM

**JOIN IN**  
with 7+ different faith groups to explore the temple, learn about their teachings and worship space, and participate in insightful dialogue.

This event is part of the Interreligious Communities Project, North Virginia, bringing together faith communities to build bonds of solidarity.

**RSVP REQUIRED: REGISTER TODAY AT**  
[www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events](http://www.sharing-sacred-spaces.org/events)

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**ALL ARE WELCOME.**




# IRF SUMMIT 2024

## PARTNER EVENT

**Rumi Forum** was a **Convening Partner** and **Steering Committee Member** of the **IRF Summit 2024**, which brought together a broad coalition that passionately **supports religious freedom** around the globe for a two-day in-person event in Washington, DC, on January 30 and 31, 2024.

The **IRF Summit brought** attention to the plight of religious adherents who are **persecuted, individually and collectively**. It grew the grassroots and global movement for religious freedom. Breakout sessions hosted by the convening partners explored important IRF topics.

Rumi Forum's research center, **Center for Faith, Identity, and Globalization's** booth presented its monthly publication to an interested group of audience.





# IFC'S UNITY WALK 2023

## PARTNER EVENT

**Rumi Forum** partnered with **IFC** for its **Unity Walk 2023**, an annual public demonstration of love and support for all who live in our region.

The annual walk began at **Washington Hebrew Congregation** and ended at the **Islamic Center of Washington, DC**.



Participants of all ages walked to visit different houses of worship in upper NW DC to learn about and experience **diverse faith traditions**. They also had additional opportunities to engage with fellow walkers through moderated speed dialogues and various family activities.





# JWF SDG CONFERENCE

## PARTNER EVENT

**Rumi Forum** was a partner of the **Journalists and Writers Foundation`s** (JWF) SDGs Conference 2023, which was held in the margins of the 78th Session of the **United Nations General Assembly** (UNGA).

The conference convened 36 Global Partners from 24 countries with participating **world leaders, diplomats, civil society members, journalists, and academics** to discuss contemporary impediments to the timely and effective implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).



# THE MOST BEAUTIFUL STORY

## IFLC

### PARTNER EVENT

**Rumi Forum** partnered with the **IFLC (International Festival of Language and Cultures)** for a musical event, “The Most Beautiful Story,” in Washington, DC.

More than **70 participants from 15+ countries**, such as France, Germany, Romania, and Tunisia, joined to contribute to **world peace** and **dialogue** by gathering **young people** from all around the world, regardless of their race, religion, or language, to share **music** and **dance performances**, promote cultural understanding and foster lasting friendships and connections.



# SCRIPTURAL REASONING

in collaboration with

Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS)



## Monthly Study Session Topics

**AUGUST 2023:** NON-VIOLENT RESPONSES TO HATRED

**SEPTEMBER 2023:** PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

**OCTOBER 2023:** PEACEMAKING

**NOVEMBER 2023:** PILGRIMAGE

**DECEMBER 2023:** RECONCILIATION

**JANUARY 2024:** REFUGEES

**FEBRUARY 2024:** REVELATION

**MARCH 2024:** RIOTS AND REBELLION

**APRIL 2024:** SCRIPTURE

**MAY 2024:** SPIRITUAL MENTORING



# SPEAKER SERIES

## JIDS AND BRAVER ANGELS “FAITH AND POLARIZATION”

**Rumi Forum** was a partner in a panel discussion on “Faith and Polarization,” which examined political polarization through a different prism: faith.

We were joined by the **Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society (JIDS)**, **Braver Angels**, and our host, **Kol Ami Reconstructionist Community**.

	  	
<p>Ibrahim Anli Rumi Forum</p>	<p><b>Faith and Polarization: A Participatory Afternoon</b> Sunday, Oct. 29th, 3:00-5:30 p.m. Kol Ami Reconstructionist Community UU Church of Arlington 4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA, 22204</p>	<p>Sofi Hersher Andorsky A More Perfect Union</p>

# 5<sup>TH</sup> INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Rumi Forum, Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington, and Washington Theological Consortium presented the **5th Interfaith Leadership Forum**: “Harnessing Our Collective Strength Through Interreligious Literacy” on February 29, 2024.

The program featured **keynote speaker** Shaun Casey, an **interfaith panel**, and an opportunity for **small group dialogues**.

**INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP FORUM**

**WORLD INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP WEEK**

## HARNESSING OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH THROUGH INTERRELIGIOUS LITERACY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024  
VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY; ALEXANDRIA, VA

5:30 PM RECEPTION/6:15-9:00 PM PROGRAM  
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/REGISTRATION REQUIRED AT: [TINYURL.COM/ILFORUMS](https://tinyurl.com/ilforums)

**KEYNOTE BY:**

**SHAUN CASEY**  
SENIOR FELLOW WITH THE LUCE PROJECT ON RELIGION AND ITS PUBLICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**ORI Z. SOLTES, MODERATOR**  
PROFESSOR  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

**PANELISTS:**

**LITTLE SISTER LAURALEE SEUBERT**  
CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN

**DR. INEZ TUCK**  
HEALTH CARE EDUCATOR

**KATE SOULES**  
FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
RELIGION EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

**SENIOR POLICE KEVIN E. JOHNSON JR.**  
DC POLICE DEPT

# 5<sup>TH</sup> INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP FORUM



## About the Event

Social sectors like **Chaplaincy, Healthcare, Education,** and **Law Enforcement** bring together people from various **religious** and **cultural backgrounds**.

Those who work in and interact with these sectors benefit from the fruits of **interreligious literacy**, which effectively empowers people to be true to their identities and equips them to engage with **diverse perspectives** productively.



# CENTER FOR FAITH, IDENTITY, & GLOBALIZATION (CFIG)



The **Center for Faith, Identity, and Globalization** (CFIG) is Rumi Forum's interdisciplinary research and publication unit.

CFIG hosts scholarly exchanges, engages fellows, creates publications, and generates media. CFIG contributes **academically-informed analysis** that **enriches public discourse** and **advances actionable work** at the intersection of faith, identity, and globalization.

## Research Areas:

- Interfaith Engagement
- Religious Nationalism
- Conflict Resolution
- Religious Freedom
- Globalization
- Spirituality

# CENTER FOR FAITH, IDENTITY, & GLOBALIZATION (CFIG)

## MONTHLY PUBLICATIONS



### Polarization and Depolarization in the U.S.:

Roles of Religion

David Tasseil  
Research Fellow



June 2023

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



### Loss of Identity:

The Religious Passiveness of American Youth

William Adamczyk  
Associate



July 2023

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



### Faith and the Law:

The Extent of Religious Freedom in Modern America

Millie Caughey  
Associate



August 2023

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



### Sickness and Health in the Body Politic:

Religious Traditions of Social Boundaries, Justification, and Policy

Allison K. Ralph, Ph.D.  
Research Fellow



October 2023

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



# CENTER FOR FAITH, IDENTITY, & GLOBALIZATION (CFIG)

## MONTHLY PUBLICATIONS



**Prophetic Politics:**  
Islamic Readings of Plato's *Republic*

Wyatt Flicker  
Associate



November 2023

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



**Holy Friendship for a Religiously Plural World:**  
Insights from Thomas Aquinas and Ibn al-Arabi

James Shelton Nalley  
Research Fellow



February 2024

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



**Disliked by Opposing Ends:**  
Understanding Shared Hostility Towards the Hizmet Movement  
by Turkey's Secularists and Islamists

Anwar Alam, Ph.D.  
Hizmet Scholar



March 2024

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



**Islam and the Latin American Diaspora:**  
Exploring Cultural Connections

Jacqueline Bucaro  
Associate




April 2024

[rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



# CENTER FOR FAITH, IDENTITY, & GLOBALIZATION (CFIG)


## MONTHLY PUBLICATIONS



**Myths of Religious Nationalism:**  
Distinguishing it from Religion-Infused Politics

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Paul Marshall, Ph.D.  
Senior Fellow

 Center for Faith Identity & Globalization  
May 2024 [rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



Special Rumi Issue

**A Heart Not Divided by Time:**  
M. Fethullah Gülen and Jalaluddin Rumi

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Ori Z. Soltes, Ph.D.  
Rumi Scholar

 Center for Faith Identity & Globalization  
December 2023 [rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)

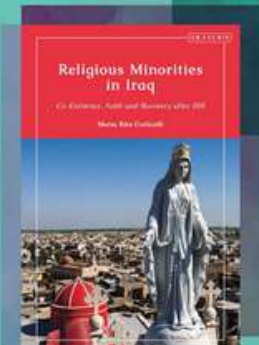


**Book Review:**  
Unique Breakthrough Research on How Evangelicals See Muslims

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Rev. Robert Schenck, D.Min.  
Hebrew College

 Center for Faith Identity & Globalization  
September 2023 [rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)



**Book Review:**  
A Beacon of Hope and Courage: Iraq's Religious Minorities

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Salah Ali  
Iraq Religious Freedom and Anti-Discrimination Roundtable

 Center for Faith Identity & Globalization  
January 2024 [rumiforum.org/cfig](http://rumiforum.org/cfig)

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