

# A N NIGERIAN PEACEMAKER'S JOURNEY



NIGERIA

From a troubled land to Hartford Seminary, one man's quest for religious tolerance



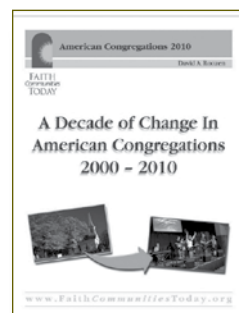
*By Amy Robinson*

If ever there was a life that illustrated the need – and passion – for interfaith dialogue, Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario's is a perfect example. This former Nigerian Air Force major has seen firsthand the terrible cost of religious enmity, both in his family and community.

Ezekiel comes from Plateau State in northern Nigeria, an area that – unlike the south – is predominantly Muslim. His Hausa tribe is in the majority in both numbers and power, and Ezekiel's grandfather, Alhaji Abdullahi Wase, came from a long, hereditary line of emirs (now called Islamic scholars), who govern the area to this day. During British colonialism, mission schools were established in the region, and although they provided a modern education, they were strictly Christian.

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## New Study Examines Ten Years of Changes in American Congregations



Despite bursts of innovation, pockets of vitality and forays into greater civic participation, American congregations are less healthy today than 10 years ago.

Among the warning signs for congregations are drops in financial health, continuing high level of conflict, an aging membership, fewer people in the pews, and decreasing spiritual vitality.

Still, the decade saw increases in interfaith involvement, innovative worship, use of electronic technology and a greater variety of member-oriented and mission-oriented programs.

These are among the conclusions drawn from a major new Faith Communities Today 2010 survey of American congregations.

In the fall, FACT released a new report, titled "A Decade of Change in American Congregations, 2000 – 2010," that explores the health of congregations and how their health has

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## Renewing the Alumni/ae Council with New Leaders



Imam Dr. Salahuddin Muhammad

As with most graduate schools, Hartford Seminary alumni/ae are a vital part of our institutional well-being. Now two new leaders are working to strengthen our Alumni/ae Council and engage alums more fully.

We interviewed Imam Dr. Salahuddin Muhammad, Council President, and The Rev. Dr. Karen Bailey-Francois, Vice President. In these roles, Salahuddin and Karen will represent Hartford Seminary alumni/ae on the Board of Trustees and serve on the Seminary's Executive Committee and Governance Committee, respectively.

**What kind of experience did you have at Hartford Seminary? How has it enriched your vocation and/or life?**

**SM:** I received a Doctor of Ministry degree on November 14, 2010, and had a wonderful experience at Hartford. I met so many beautiful people from various faiths. My life has been enriched tremendously by the knowledge obtained, as well as the connections that I have made as a



The Rev. Dr. Karen Bailey-Francois

result of being a student at the Seminary for nearly six years. The Seminary has made me a better Imam, Chaplain, father, husband, and well, better as a human being!

**KBF:** I chose Hartford Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program because of its emphasis on learning in the context of one's ministry setting. As a United Church of Christ minister serving a church in the City of Hartford, the location was certainly convenient. That was not the deciding factor for me, however. Having worked in integrated planning in a corporate setting, I was impressed by the comprehensive approach to understanding both "place" and "process" that is inherent to the Congregational Studies model. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to look at my congregation's experience in conversation with colleagues about their settings and our shared learning. Beyond the excellent education I received from Hartford Seminary, I came away with a continuing sense of connection to a network

of skilled, insightful and caring professors, staff and ministry colleagues.

**Can you briefly explain the recent history of the council and why you volunteered to revive it and to head it up?**

**SM:** For many years the Alumni/ae Council was active, but through a variety of factors it went into a kind of "hibernation". I am hopeful that we will be able to reawaken it because it is a vital part of Hartford Seminary. It is the fruit of the labor as it were, the finished product. In my saying that, I don't mean that we have grown and there is no more growing to do. I mean that we are graduates of the various degree programs and we have gotten back into the sea of our work – as new persons – persons with deepened faith and commitment. We are ambassadors of the word, so to speak! We who have benefited so greatly need to always be there to give support to our fine Seminary. This giving back is not necessarily just financial. It is also giving back by representing the Seminary as one of its graduates.

**KBF:** I agreed to help recreate an Alumni/ae Council at Hartford Seminary for two completely intertwined reasons. First, the Seminary needs it. Second, so do I. Hartford Seminary is a hands-on kind of place. Its programs are rooted in one's ministry setting. Its classes revolve around mutual learning and creating networks of support. My hope is that the Council can help be a bridge back to the energy, diversity, inspiration and intellectual challenge

of Hartford Seminary for those of us who have completed our coursework and want to continue our connection to a community that has so much to offer for the work God calls us to do.

**What are your goals for the Council?**

**SM:** Our goals are still being worked on. We certainly want to reach out to all alumni/ae and let them know that we represent a very prestigious group. We want them to know that the Seminary is there for them. They can continue to take courses at a greatly reduced rate. We want them to know about all that is being offered at the Seminary, and want to keep them informed of the Seminary's growth. And we also certainly want our alumni/ae to support the Seminary financially.

**KBF:** I would very much like to help make Hartford Seminary feel more accessible and inviting to those who have finished "having a reason" to be on campus. Even more, I would like to be part of a whole lot of conversations about what alums – and others – want and need that the Seminary might provide that would help them revive their connection. I am looking forward to being "back" and would like to extend the opportunity to any who might miss it, too.

*If you are an alumnus/a and would like to be involved in the Council's work, please contact Jonathan Lee, Chief Development Officer, at [jlee@hartsem.edu](mailto:jlee@hartsem.edu) or phone 860.509.9556.*

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Praxis or about Hartford Seminary, please contact David Barrett at Hartford Seminary, 77 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105.

# Memorial Service for Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi'

Sunday, October 2, 2011

Hartford Seminary held a memorial service for Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi', an expert on contemporary Muslim thought, who died suddenly of a heart attack on July 2 while attending a conference in Amman, Jordan. He had been an esteemed Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary from 1991 to 2008. The service included remembrances, testimonials, story-telling, readings, music and prayer.



A photograph of Dr. Abu-Rabi' adorns the stage as part of the setting for the service.



Colleen Keyes, a student and colleague, was among the speakers.



Former Deans Ian Markham, Bill McKinney and Efrain Agosto attended the service.



The Rev. Joseph Pace, long-time chair of the Macdonald Center Advisory Council, presided.



*Hartford Seminary held its fall Convocation on September 8 to celebrate the start of the 2011-2012 academic year. Here students join in the singing of the closing song.*

## Nigerian Peacemaker

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In 1949, seeking a progressive education for his son, Alhaji Abdullahi Wase, who was Chief Scribe of the emirate, sent the Muslim youth to the school, where he converted to Christianity, much to his father's outrage. The young Babagario was cast out from the family and village, unable to return to the palace or even see his family, so in 1963 he joined the country's newly independent Air Force, married a Christian and started a family that grew to three children.

Ezekiel, his brother and his sister were raised

so strained that when Ezekiel's father died in 1987 he could not be buried in his hometown of Wase.

During the young officer's Air Force career religious violence continued to spread in the region, but such extremism did not infiltrate the military, and Ezekiel worked alongside Muslims without any problems. But 2002 became a turning point for the major, when violence escalated as a result of the Miss World contest held in southern Nigeria. Muslims were offended and outraged, and it unleashed two

who are majority Christians and unleashed mayhem on the Muslims. Jos is about the only place in the north where Christians are majority in number. So it was the aftermath of the crisis of 2001 that my brother was murdered, because there was tension between the two camps and every opportunity was seen as an avenue to inflict pain on the other."

Despite his grief and anger, Ezekiel refused to exact revenge. He had already begun an interfaith initiative with his church's youth group, and decided to go into the ministry to help prevent more bloodshed. With the support of his wife, Veronica, a physician,

personal aims, and that is why I hate the politicians."

### From Discussion to Dialogue

By 2008 the discussion group had created a committee that targeted young men, using soccer teams and a community center to nurture friendships and discussions of each other's faith traditions. "We believed the best way to bring peace was through the young people since so many of their elders are set in their ways."

The peacemaker didn't realize he was promoting the concept of "interfaith dialogue" until a Hartford Seminary professor learned of his work and described it as such. Inspired and curious, he Googled "interfaith dialogue" and discovered Hartford Seminary as the top listing. Feeling God's call, he began to explore HartSem's programs and prayed with Veronica that he be guided, despite the many obstacles in his way, including leaving his family and finding the funds not only for tuition but for travel expenses.

*"Jos is about the only place in the north where Christians are majority in number. So it was the aftermath of the crisis of 2001 that my brother was murdered, because there was tension between the two camps and every opportunity was seen as an avenue to inflict pain on the other."*

on military bases and educated in military schools, and during that time Ezekiel traveled to the palace to see if he could establish a relationship with his estranged grandfather. The grandfather, who was Ezekiel Abdullahi's namesake and was elevated to Emir in 1957, embraced the young man and established a friendly relationship that lasted until his death in 2009, but never reconciled with the son who converted.

### A Military Career

Ezekiel went on to study engineering at the Air Force Technical Institute and was commissioned as an officer. He specialized in MIG 21 fighters and received training in the United Kingdom, Russia and Andrews Air Force Base in the U.S. in the early 1990s. During all this time relationships in Nigeria between Muslims and Christians were

weeks of bloodshed in which Christian and Muslim gangs attacked one another. The military was sent in to quell the aggression, and Ezekiel asked himself, "How can I be responsible for killing other Nigerians?" He began planning his retirement.

### Brother's Murder

By 2004 hostility reached a crescendo in Jos, where Ezekiel's mother, brother and sister lived. While his brother was making his way home from the Muslim side of town, he was attacked by five youths, and was killed and beheaded before Mrs. Babagario's horrified eyes. "This violence was about a Federal Government appointment in 2001," Ezekiel explains, "where a Muslim was appointed by the State governor to represent Plateau State at the Federal level and the Christian politicians objected to it, so they incited their followers

and his commanding officer, he entered Baptist Theological Seminary in Kaduna, where he eventually earned his B.Th.

In 2006 he retired from the Air Force and became interim pastor when the senior pastor of his church took leave to pursue a Ph.D. For three years Rev. Babagario preached religious tolerance, even inviting an imam to attend a wedding ceremony, and gathering Islamic scholars and Christian clergymen to join a discussion group.

Today Ezekiel emphasizes that he blames the country's politicians for inciting or encouraging inter-religious hostility. "I am concerned that people may get the impression that I am against Islam or feel I am painting the religion in a bad light. Most of the religious crises were fueled by politicians (both Christians and Muslims) for selfish and

"I couldn't believe how quickly I heard from people at Hartford Seminary when I sent an email inquiry," he now says. "David Barrett (Director of Public and Institutional Affairs) wrote back to my initial email in about five minutes, and Vanessa Avery would respond to my questions and provide material with such kindness and promptness. In Nigeria it could take weeks, or months, to get a response."

His prayers were answered when Ms. Avery, who was admissions manager, wrote to tell him about Hartford Seminary's distinctive International Peacemaking Program, which covered all expenses, including airfare. "I felt like I'm sitting like a prince, everything has been done for me," he says. This nine-month certificate program was designed to teach leaders from countries that



*The Babagario home was destroyed by fire in April 2010. The family, who lost all their possessions, plans to rebuild next year.*

experience inter-religious conflict about strategies for peacemaking through interfaith dialogue. It has brought 19 peacemakers to campus since 2005.

#### **Peace and Discovery in Hartford**

Despite objections from his mother, who couldn't forgive the Muslim youths who killed her second son, Ezekiel traveled to Hartford in September 2009 and was immediately struck by the peace and freedom here. "This is such a safe place, I never worry that someone will attack me when I leave the classroom because I'm Christian, or because Muslims are fighting each other, as the Shi'a and Sunni do in Nigeria. I have never experienced peace in my life until I got here."

However, it was something of an adjustment to see how informal and open Americans are. "I was shocked to hear students address professors by their first names, and to see how casually everyone dressed, even faculty." But he loved classroom discussions, where professors "allow you to bring your own ideas,

allow you to lay your stupidity on the table, examine it together and shape it to give you a new direction.

"I got a true picture of Islam, much different from what I learned at Baptist Seminary, where we read books about Islam written only by Christians. Here we read texts by both Muslims and Christians and are encouraged to make up our own minds about what we read."

The nine-month experience was so enlightening that he decided to pursue an M.A., and returned briefly to Nigeria in April 2010 to see his family before beginning study for that degree.

#### **Violence Hits Home Once More**

As he was traveling home, religious violence struck Kaduna once more. The Babagario house is situated in the middle of a Muslim neighborhood as an active expression of the family's commitment to interfaith peace. In fact, the mosque across the street drew water and electricity from the Babagario home.

Unfortunately, when a local Islamic scholar learned that Ezekiel was studying Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in the U.S., he issued a fatwa against "this infidel who is defiling our sacred book by reading it." So when fighting erupted, the fatwa fueled the flames, and the Babagario house was destroyed by fire. When Ezekiel receives his degree in June 2012, he will return to rebuild the family's home.

#### **Future Plans**

This dedicated peacemaker looks ahead to applying his M.A. degree at the Interfaith Mediation Center, an NGO in Nigeria, which he learned about from Hartford Seminary Faculty Associate Yehezkel Landau, who visited the Center earlier this year. Rev. Babagario would also like to pursue a doctorate in curriculum design and instruction so that he can bring peacemaking and interfaith dialogue programs into his country's secondary school curriculum and dispel the ignorance and prejudice that breed violence.

Perhaps the most personal testimony of his passion for interfaith dialogue comes from his mother, who at first objected to his efforts at peacemaking. She has given her blessing to his studies and work. "I have seen the light," she told her son. "She never wants any mother to go through what she went through," he explains. "She has made peace with three of the five boys who killed my brother, and hopes that the other two will return home so that she can show her forgiveness."

Rev. Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario's story can inspire us, as well as remind us to appreciate all the blessings we enjoy here. "Americans take the peace and freedom they have here for granted." It reaffirms that Hartford Seminary is indeed a "place for peace."

*Amy Robinson is a member of Hartford Seminary's Board of Trustees and a consultant in marketing communications.*

# Lilly Endowment Awards Hartford Seminary \$700,000 for Congregational Studies Project



James Nieman, Academic  
Dean and Professor of  
Practical Theology

**H**artford Seminary has received a \$700,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to enlarge the conversation of engaged scholars studying congregations and to develop a website that disseminates resources for and insights from congregational studies.

The new grant will support the Engaged Scholars program, which is coordinated by the Congregational Studies Project Team, a national coalition of scholars and researchers who share an interest in congregations. The program provides funding and mentoring for academic fellows that helps them refine research engaged with the faith life of congregations. James Nieman, Academic Dean and Professor of Practical Theology at Hartford Seminary, will be the project director.

Entitled “New Circles of Learning for Engaged Scholars Studying Congregations,” the project will start in January and continue through December, 2015. It extends and expands work carried out during two earlier Engaged Scholars grants in 2004 and 2007.

The previous grants invited younger scholars and religious leaders, whose focus is on the practices of local communities of faith, to

enter into a program of research and networking. The program sought to promote responsible research engaged with faith communities and then broaden this pool of relationships to include other clergy and scholars who would benefit from wider support networks in trying to explore and understand congregational life.

The new project will modify that earlier mentoring work, with a significant outreach to groups underserved in the first six cohorts of fellows. In addition, it sets in motion the development of a new web-based educational resource, designed in collaboration with the Boston University School of Theology, which will make the insights of congregational studies accessible to interested parties in any location.

“Hartford Seminary is a leader in the study of congregations, which promotes the well-being of communities of faith. Our Hartford Institute for Religion Research provides nationally recognized reports on the health of congregations and religious leadership,” said Heidi Hadsell, President of Hartford Seminary. “We are deeply appreciative of the support of Lilly Endowment for this new project, which will allow the project team to engage diverse ethnic and religious

groups, institutions and faith communities in congregational studies and to share the information globally.”

“Once again, Hartford Seminary faculty are developing research programs that will dramatically improve our understanding of the religious scene,” Hadsell said.

Supplementing the ongoing impact of the Engaged Scholars fellowship program, an important dimension of this new project will involve developing a web-based learning resource that expands the circle of scholars engaged in congregational studies far beyond what has previously been attempted.

To develop the website, the team will hire a website director who will work with the Information Technology and Media Services of Boston University. Nancy Ammerman, Professor of Sociology of Religion at Boston University and former faculty member at Hartford Seminary, will be the coordinator of this portion of the project.

The website will offer new resources of three types: (a) written articles and/or audio podcasts by team members, fellows, and others, focused on current topics or issues related to congregations, (b) case studies and interpretive

tools, in written or video form, that can become part of online learning experiences or used for classroom instruction, and (c) vocational and leadership stories (video or written) that explore the role of studying congregations in the lives of scholars and leaders. “By so doing, our aim is to generate an extensive, committed audience of users who want to share in the site’s learning potential. A modest set of online community tools using social media also will be introduced,” Nieman said.

This new phase of the project also continues the highly popular fellowship program. During this round of fellowships in particular, the Project Team will seek participants specifically in fields such as practical theology, history, constructive theology, and biblical studies with special attention to those teaching in institutions focused on theological education. The grant provides funding for three cohorts of three fellows each, and running 18 months for each cohort.

Each of the fellows will provide a report on his or her fellowship activities and accomplishments. This will likely include an article to be published in a place appropriate to their academic guild, as well as some combination of an account of their study of congregations that is oriented toward a broad public audience of leaders and others concerned about the well-being of congregational life, insights to be shared on the project website, and a syllabus or other resources for instructional use.

“Through the selection

of grant fellows and mentoring by members of the Congregational Studies Project Team, the fellowship portion of the project will intentionally incorporate a national scale of involvement. More than this, the website resource will connect with a very wide range of audiences interested in congregational studies, not simply on a national scale but potentially on a global one,” Nieman said.

For more than thirty years, the Congregational Studies Project Team has been a national leader in exploring congregations, and now is involved in mentoring pre-tenure scholars interested in learning how better to understand faith communities.

In addition to Nieman and Ammerman, the other members of the Project Team are: Anthea Butler, University of Pennsylvania; Lawrence Mamiya, Vassar College; Gerardo Marti, Davidson College; William McKinney, formerly of the Pacific School of Religion; Omar McRoberts, University of Chicago; Joyce Mercer, Virginia Theological Seminary; Robert Schreiter, Catholic Theological Union; R. Stephen Warner, University of Illinois, Chicago; and Jack Wertheimer, Jewish Theological Seminary.

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*Heidi Hadsell, President  
of Hartford Seminary*

# The Michael R. Rion Lecture: How a Courageous Remnant Can Change the World



Bob Edgar, president and chief executive officer of Common Cause, delivered the biennial Michael Rion Lecture on October 26, 2011, speaking on “How a Courageous Remnant Can Change the World.”

The lecture, named in honor of Michael Rion, a former Seminary president, honors an individual who embodies a dedication to ministry in daily life and is committed to service to others.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE TALK:

“I believe God is calling average, ordinary, common folks to do above-average, extraordinary and uncommon things to insure a future for our fragile planet. In our lifetime we can end the poverty that kills, heal the earth and live as brothers and sisters in peace, if, and this is a big if, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and all faiths, find new ways to live and work together.

“Using my experience as a pastor, politician, academic and social activist, I will challenge everyone to understand that we are the leaders that we have been waiting for! We are the courageous ethical remnant God has called to be the prophets and disciples in these troubled times.

“As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., often reminded us: ‘You and I will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.’”



Bob Edgar chats with William Cronin, chair of the Seminary Board of Trustees, prior to the lecture



Bob Edgar shares a laugh with Heidi Hadsell, President of Hartford Seminary



Mike Rion, right, talks with Lew Robinson during a reception prior to the lecture.



## Indonesian Officials Visit



Left to right, H. Marsudi Syuhud and Dr. Said Aqil Siroj

Dr. H. Marsudi Syuhud, general secretary of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest independent Muslim organization, and Professor Dr. Said Aqil Siroj, general chairman of NU, visited Hartford Seminary in September to discuss a partnership in education. NU and Hartford Seminary agreed to an exchange of students for the Master of Arts and International Peacemaking Program that will begin in 2012.

Right: Seminary President Heidi Hadsell discusses a memorandum of understanding with Dr. Siroj and Mr. Syuhud.



## TINA DEMO TO HEAD RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS AT HARTFORD SEMINARY



Hartford Seminary President Heidi Hadsell has appointed Mary C. (Tina)

Demo as Director of Recruitment and Admissions at Hartford Seminary, effective October 31.

Tina has 30 years of senior level higher education leadership experience in the areas of enrollment management and student affairs.

As Dean of Enrollment Management and Director of Admissions at Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, CT, she spearheaded initiatives that resulted in increased enrollment and improved academic quality.

As Dean of Student Affairs at the college, she designed and implemented programs that improved retention and provided for and increased student leadership opportunities.

Most recently, Tina was Senior Consulting Associate at Higher Ed Strategies, LLC, East Windsor, CT.

Tina has a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from Saint Joseph College and a Master of Arts in Counseling from the college.

Tina lives in New Hartford, where she is on the Board of the Bakerville Library. On a personal note, she loves to travel to Italy to visit her relatives.

# AN ARC OF HOPE: MUSLIMS, INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT, AND PEACEBUILDING AFTER 9/11

On the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terrorists' attacks, Hartford Seminary offered a special program that examined the impact of these attacks, with special attention to the American Muslim community, the current interfaith religious landscape, and policy dilemmas confronting American officials and their allies.

The program opened with an Abrahamic interfaith prayer by Dr. Reza Mansoor, a Hartford Seminary trustee and past president of the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut, The Rev. Dr. James Nieman, Academic Dean and Professor of Practical Theology at Hartford Seminary and Rabbi James Rosen of Beth El Temple of West Hartford.



The keynote speaker was Professor Bruce Lawrence of Duke University, on the topic "From Axis of Evil to Arc of Hope - Muslim Futures after 9/11."



Nicolas Mumejian, a Ph.D. student at Hartford Seminary, spoke on "Peacebuilding and Profiteering: A Juxtaposition of Evangelical Engagement with Muslims since 9/11."



Professor Ingrid Mattson of Hartford Seminary spoke on "The Ethical Maturation of the American Muslim Community after 9/11."



Audience members listen during the presentations.



Professor Timur Yuskaev of Hartford Seminary spoke on "9/11 and American Muslim Political Theology."

## American Congregations Study

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changed in the past 10 years.

The Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership (CCSP) conducted the FACT 2010 survey, and analyzed responses from 11,077 randomly sampled congregations of all faith traditions in the United States. The survey updates results from surveys taken in 2000, 2005, and 2008 and is the latest in CCSP's series of trend-tracking national surveys of U.S. congregations. Overall, the FACT survey series includes responses from more than 28,000 congregations.

David A. Roozen, Director of the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership and Professor of Religion and Society at Hartford Seminary, said that "This is a significant report that offers a quick, if not somewhat sobering, check-up for congregations and religious leaders who support congregations. It presents many of the most significant mechanisms that encourage vitality and growth, and also several of the most challenging circumstances that lead to decline."

"Congregations are the organizational foundation of religion for their members and one of the strongest threads in the civic fabric of an American society that is, today, under stresses of historic proportions. Overall, this report says they continue to be key players in society, but they need to be more intentional in their worship and response to conflict, and open to technological innovation and the increasing diversity of American society," Roozen said.

The report offers findings in these categories:

**Innovative Worship:** The surge in contemporary worship continued, to more than 40 percent of congregations that

always or often use electric guitars or drums in their worship in 2010. Also, both innovative and contemporary worship are catalysts of spiritual vitality.

**Religion Goes Electronic:** A third of congregations reported that their use of modern technology grew more than 10 percent. The more a congregation uses technology, the more open it is to change.

**Racial/Ethnic Congregations:** There has been a dramatic increase in racial/ethnic congregations, many for immigrant groups. In 2010, three in ten congregations reported that more than 50 percent of their members were members of minority groups, up from two in ten in 2000. One clear impact of the increase in minority congregations is that they inject a strong dose of growth and vitality into American religious life.

**"Congregation is More Than Worship":** Despite the overall erosion in congregational vitality and size from 2000 to 2010, there has been a slight increase in member-oriented and mission-oriented programming.

**Financial Health:** The number of congregations with excellent financial health declined from 31 percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2010. Eighty percent of congregations reported that the recent recession negatively affected their finances.

**Congregational Conflict:** Almost two of every three congregations experienced conflict in 2010. In a third of the congregations, the conflict was serious enough that members left or withheld contributions, or a leader left. Conflict is corrosive – it leads to attendance decline and financial stress.

**Demographic Details:** The average percentage of participants over 65 has increased at the same time as the average percentage

of 18-34 year olds has declined. Racial/ethnic congregations buck this trend, with significantly higher proportions of young adults among their participants than white congregations. Among historically white congregations, the membership of the typical Oldline Protestant congregation

they offer voter education or registration campaigns.

**Church Attendance:** The average weekend worship attendance at a typical congregation declined from 2000 to 2010. Median weekend worship attendance at the typical congregation dropped from 130 to 108 during the past decade.

*"Congregations are the organizational foundation of religion for their members and one of the strongest threads in the civic fabric of an American society that is, today, under stresses of historic proportions."*

is much older than that of Evangelical Protestant congregations. For 75 percent of Oldline Protestant congregations, less than 10 percent are young adult. This aging of congregations is significant because as congregations age, their capacity for change erodes.

**Interfaith Engagement:** A little more than one in ten congregations surveyed in 2010 indicated they had shared worship across faith traditions in the past year, 13.9 percent in 2010 versus 6.8 percent in 2000. A special report on congregations' interfaith engagement is available at [www.faithcommunitiestoday.org](http://www.faithcommunitiestoday.org).

**The Electoral Process:** There has been a reversal between Oldline and Evangelical Protestantism in political action, through voter registration or education programs, in the past decade. While the use of the political process declined from 2000 to 2010 among Oldline Protestant Congregations, to 11.9 percent, it surged among Evangelical Protestant congregations, to 25.8 percent. The Black church also continues to use the political process, with 55 percent saying

More than one in four American congregations had fewer than 50 in worship in 2010.

**Spiritual Vitality:** Fewer congregations report high spiritual vitality – from 42.8 percent in 2000 to 28.4 percent in 2010. This decline in spiritual vitality is true across the board – including denominational family, race and ethnicity, region and size. Among the trends that negatively impact spiritual vitality are decreasing financial health, shrinking worship attendance, aging membership and high levels of conflict. One unexpected finding is that spiritual vitality rises considerably higher at the liberal end of the theological continuum than the very conservative end.

In conclusion, Roozen said, "Despite bursts of innovation, pockets of vitality and interesting forays into greater civic participation, American congregations enter the second decade of the twenty-first century a bit less healthy than at the turn of the century."

Links to view the report and related material are available at: [www.faithcommunitiestoday.org](http://www.faithcommunitiestoday.org).

**Joy Allan**, M.A. '51 sends greetings from Fife in Scotland, and writes, "I am very fortunate to be still very active in my church and community, and enjoy travelling with friends. Hartford was very different in my day, but it was the most exciting and life enhancing period of my life. I travelled the length and breadth of your country, and have returned many times since. The new technology allows us to communicate with ease, and if anyone from the dim distant past still vaguely remembers me, do get in touch. With my good wishes and prayers for Hartford's continuing good work." Joy's email address is [jallan905@talktalk.net](mailto:jallan905@talktalk.net).

Akiko Arai, wife of the Rev. **Toshitsugu Arai**, S.T.M. '60, writes from Kawasaki, Japan that though he has been recently hospitalized, they both pray "for Hartford Seminary and its mission, not only in its own community, but globally as well." Toshitsugu was most recently the Ecumenical Coordinator of the Nippon Christian Academy in Tokyo.

The Rev. **Frank Brooks**, M.Div., '53, visited campus with his son this past June while back east for his 65<sup>th</sup> Deerfield Academy reunion. Retired from full time parish ministry for 18 years, Frank

presently volunteers as Parish Associate at the Bentwood Trail Presbyterian Church in Dallas, TX.

Upon learning of the death of the Rev. Bill Inderstrodt, B.D. '52, the Rev. Dr. **Jay Ebersole**, B.D. '63, wrote to the Alumni Office, reflecting on the lasting relationships he, Bill and others shared, "60 years of our incredible friendships as young seminarians, as married couples, as pastors, loyal alumni, and with such precious memories." Like the Inderstrodt's, Jay met his late wife, Eleanor, while students at the Seminary.

The Rev. Dr. **Ned Edwards**, D.Min. '04, is the Chaplain at Chatham Hall, an Episcopal boarding school in Chatham, VA. In addition to pastoral responsibilities, Ned also teaches religion, this past semester offering courses on the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, and world religions. He's especially fond of leading Beatles Worship in Chapel, and reports "life is good!"

When the Hartford Seminary Library, with the help of the American Theological Library Association, began offering free online access to the extensive ATLA database to Seminary

alumni/ae, many were in touch to say hello and express appreciation, including the Rev. **Skip Ferry**, M.Div. '71, **Lady Mandalika**, G.C. '10, the Rev. **Francis Acquah**, G.C. '06, **Marisa Brown Ludwig**, WLI '05, the Rev. **Richard Rinker**, M.Div. '55, **Brian Alston**, M.A. '01, and the Rev. Dr. **Karen Bailey-Francois**, D.Min. '05. For information on accessing the ATLA database, please email [jlee@hartsem.edu](mailto:jlee@hartsem.edu).

**Jacky Manuputty**, M.A. '11, and a graduate of the Seminary's International Peacemaking Program, reports from Indonesia that since September of this year, sporadic fighting "has erupted between Muslims and Christians in Ambon, my lovely hometown. In such condition, we're hardly able to encourage interfaith groups to promote peace in the public space." To brothers and sisters in the wider Seminary community, Jacky asks "please pray for us to continuously work for upholding peace in our hometown."

After serving as Archivist at the Franklin College Library, where she supervised the history collections, both of the college and the American

Baptist Churches in Indiana, **Mary Alice (Wagner) Medicott**, M.A. '48, was awarded an honorary LL.D. by the college. She continues to reside in Franklin, IN, and has two daughters and four grandsons.

The Rev. **Paul** '54 and **Joanne** '54 **Varga** are enjoying retirement in Maine, returning to the town of Falmouth and the church there where they were married. In the years between, the Vargas served churches in Walpole, MA, and Portsmouth, VA, near where Paul grew up. In 1991, Paul retired, and he and Joanne became resident members of the Community of Jesus, an ecumenical Christian monastery in Orleans on Cape Cod.

## Robertson Receives Distinguished Graduate Award

James K. Robertson Jr., a Trustee at Hartford Seminary and graduate of the University of Connecticut School Of Law, has been awarded the Distinguished Graduate Award by the law school's Alumni Association.

Robertson, a partner with the law firm Carmody & Torrance in Waterbury, CT, received the award at the annual meeting and awards dinner of the Alumni Association in October.

Robertson is an adjunct faculty member at Hartford Seminary and is teaching "The Problems of Evil" in the winter/spring semester.



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*There are many ways to make a smart, tax-deductible gift to Hartford Seminary. Contact Jonathan Lee, D.Min.'10 at 860.509.9556 or [jlee@hartsem.edu](mailto:jlee@hartsem.edu)*

# HARTFORD SEMINARY OFFERS FIRST PROGRAM TO EDUCATE MUSLIM COMMUNITY LEADERS

Recognizing the importance of educating Muslim leaders for leadership in the American context, Hartford Seminary now offers a Graduate Certificate in Imam and Muslim Community Leadership.

The certificate, offered in cooperation with the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Herndon, VA., is the first formal education program offered specifically for imams and Muslim community leaders in the United States.

The program is designed for already experienced imams and Muslim community leaders. It combines the Seminary's expertise in congregational studies and religious leadership, through its Hartford Institute for Religion Research, with its expertise in Islam and interfaith relations.

By the end of the program, students will be better prepared to encounter the theological, pastoral and organizational challenges of providing excellent religious leadership to the growing Muslim community in the United States.

"Once again, Hartford Seminary is a pioneer in theological education and innovative partnerships," President Heidi Hadsell said. "For more than 100 years we have offered education in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. In the last decade we have launched Islamic Chaplaincy and Building Abrahamic

Partnerships programs. Now we are meeting the educational needs of imams and Muslim community leaders in the United States."

"It is vitally important to prepare religious leaders to lead their faith communities in the American context. Hartford Seminary is a key player in this effort, through our various interfaith initiatives and now through this certificate in community leadership," Hadsell said.

"Ten years ago Hartford Seminary started its Islamic Chaplaincy Program at the request of the military and others who were in need of additional trained Muslim chaplains. The program has blossomed and trains chaplains for service in the military and at colleges, hospitals and prisons," Hadsell said.

"Now we see a similar need to provide leadership education for Muslim community leaders, and this program with IIIT is designed to fill this need," she said.

"We value our partnership with Hartford Seminary in this unique program," said Dr. Jamal Barzinji, vice president of IIIT. "We look forward to being the seminary's off-site campus not only for this jointly-sponsored certificate program but also for expanded instructional activities in the future," he said.

Following completion of a pilot program that brought together a dozen imams and community leaders in the

Washington, D.C., area for leadership education, Hartford Seminary and IIIT have signed a five-year agreement that adds the program to the Seminary's academic offerings.

The program will require imams and community leaders both to take courses in various academic disciplines and to take field education that provides practical experience.

"This graduate certificate program seeks to enhance the ability of Muslim imams to better lead and serve their communities within the American social context. For that purpose, Hartford Seminary indeed offers the right set of courses and a unique group of scholars to teach them," said Iqbal Unus, director of The Fairfax Institute at IIIT.

The program includes a unique course that provides the Muslim leaders an opportunity to reflect theologically on their leadership practices with colleagues, thereby improving their ability to lead.

The first session of the course, titled "Reflection on Ministry Experience," was taught by James Nieman, Academic Dean and Professor of Practical Theology at Hartford Seminary, and Larry Golemon, a consultant and researcher in theological education who is co-author of "Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Practical Imagination."

"I'm very excited about this. It genuinely breaks

new ground in terms of Muslim theological education," Nieman said.

- 1) Nieman said the course is unique because: It is a way of building upon a leader's existing experience as a basis of learning
- 2) It teaches the discipline of reflecting theology on an experience from an Islamic perspective
- 3) It does this in a collegial atmosphere, combining both imams and other Muslim leaders
- 4) It does this with the specific aim of helping them be more effective leaders in the American context

By giving imams and community leaders the opportunity to reflect on actual situations, the course helps fulfill one of the goals of the graduate certificate program, which is to help participants explore what it means to be an imam or community leader in America.

Nieman pointed out that imams in the United States are asked to do many things that may not be expected of imams in other countries. They may have more pastoral and administrative duties. This course helps them consider and anticipate their additional responsibilities.

Further information on the Graduate Certificate is available at [www.hartsem.edu](http://www.hartsem.edu).

The Hartford Seminary community has lost the following beloved member. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his friends and family.

The Rev. **Earl Kragt**, M.A. '67, died on October 16, 2011 in Spring Lake, MI. With his wife, Hazel, M.A.

'67, the Kragts served as missionaries in the Philippines from 1955 to 1967. After serving as a local church pastor, Earl went to China as a teacher at the Taiyuan University, and then worked for Resources and Referrals for China in Berkeley, CA. In later years he was an interim minister for

the Presbyterian Church (USA). His obituary noted "Earl's life and work was defined by his love for the Lord, his interest in the scriptures, and a deep love for the Chinese people." In addition to his wife, the Rev. Kragt is survived by five children and eight grandchildren.

## Library Shelving: Meeting a Challenge Grant

The H.W. Vance Foundation of Hartford has agreed to provide \$25,000 to complete the purchase and installation of mobile shelving in Hartford Seminary's library, once the Seminary raises \$50,000.

Please act now to help us raise the matching funds.

Gifts of any amount that can help us reach our \$50,000 goal are vital steps to trigger the \$25,000 challenge grant.

The Seminary's Library is at the heart of our school's mission to increase understanding among students, faculty, religious leaders, journalists, researchers and the general public. All have access to, and make use of, the Library's rich resources.

The mobile shelving project includes the purchase and installation of ten new mobile carriages. The need for this shelving is acute: there are current Library holdings which cannot be entered into circulation because of space limitations, and new acquisitions are on hold for the same reason.

Once the project is complete, we will be able to move 21,000 volumes into circulation, expanding the entire Library collection by 30% -- a significant increase that benefits all our patrons.

You may send a contribution to The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lee, Chief Development Officer, Hartford Seminary, 77 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105. Please put "Library Shelving" in the memo line. You also may contribute online at [www.hartsem.edu](http://www.hartsem.edu).

Thank you for your support of the library at Hartford Seminary.



### Jane Inderstrodt, Seminary alumna and church administrator

Jane Sattler Inderstrodt, Hartford Seminary alumna and former church administrator, died on Monday, October 10 in Topsham, Maine. She was 89.

Jane received her Bachelor's in the College of Arts and Sciences from American University in Washington, D.C. She received her Master's degree in Religious Education from Hartford Seminary in 1951 where she was asked to be a member of the faculty before returning to Washington, D.C., two years later.

Jane went on to work for the Baltimore Conference of the United Methodist Church, where she worked with 500 churches developing childhood and junior high education.

It was at Hartford Seminary that she met

her husband of 57 years, William (Bill) Inderstrodt, who also was attending Hartford Seminary. They were married on Feb. 6, 1954, in the Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., the same church Jane attended regularly, with her minister and Bill's co-officiating in a Quaker service the couple had written. It was the beginning of a splendid marriage and partnership which would last more than 57 years.

Bill and Jane's first pastorate was at the Westmoreland Congregational Church in Washington, D.C., followed by pastorates in Washington, CT, for 16 years, Danbury, CT, for eight years, and finally at First Parish Church of York, Maine, until they retired in 1993.

After Bill's retirement from the pastorate in York, Jane was chaplain of The Kings Daughters

of the Elijah Kellog Congregational Church in Harpswell, Maine, where Bill was interim minister and they also had their summer home.

Jane held many positions in the church including Instructor at Hartford Seminary and President of the Board of Directors, United Church Board of World Ministries, and President of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ.

Jane was a part-time teacher of religious education at Berkley Divinity School at Yale, and involved in the Elderly Housing Management programs of the Samaritan Corporation of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ.

Jane held leadership positions in the national Office of Communications for the United Church of Christ, helping to coordinate fund raising for the Katrina Disaster Response. She promoted Equality Maine for legalization of same sex marriage, as well as educational scholarships for women.

In 2001, Bill and Jane moved to The Highlands in Topsham, as both continued their very busy lives of giving back to the greater community.

Jane was predeceased by her husband, who died in May. She leaves behind many friends from her and her husband's 57 years of ministry, along with a nephew and two nieces.

## 2012 JANUARY INTERSESSION & WINTER/SPRING SESSION

Hartford Seminary's January Intersession will run from Monday, January 9 through Friday, January 13. The Winter/Spring 2012 semester will run from Monday, January 23 through Thursday, May 10. The Seminary's courses are open to the public and carry three graduate level credits. Individuals who do not wish to take courses for credit may apply to take courses as an auditor. Many classes fill up quickly, so participants are urged to register early to ensure a place in their courses of choice.

For those enrolled in a three-credit course, the cost is \$1,800. The non-credit audit fee is \$575. A special audit fee of \$385 is available for: those who are age 60 and older, persons 55 and older receiving disability income, graduates of Hartford Seminary degree programs or the Certificate of Professional Ministry (cooperative M.Div.), donors of \$250 a year or more, Hartford Seminary Adjunct Faculty, and up to three specially designated members of churches that participate in the International Peacemaking Program of the Seminary. There is a limit of one course per academic year to receive the special rate except persons age 60 and older, for whom there is no limit.

To register, please contact the registrar's office at (860) 509-9511. Her email is registrar@hartsem.edu. To see specific course syllabi prior to the semester or learn more about Hartford Seminary and its faculty, visit our website, [www.hartsem.edu](http://www.hartsem.edu).

### JANUARY INTERSESSION

## Preparing Islamic Legal Documents NEW

Monday, January 9 - Saturday, January 14 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., plus additional evening hours to be arranged

This course focuses on skills needed for success in Islamic Chaplaincy and other programs where practical matters of service to Islamic communities, congregations and individuals are important. Students will be exposed to practical information and training in the preparation of Islamic legal documents. The topics under consideration include writing contracts and completing other legal obligations in the U.S. context. *Talal Eid, Adjunct Professor of Arts of Ministry and Imam and Executive Director of the Islamic Institute of Boston*

## Theology, Ethics and Practice of Conflict Transformation and Peace Building NEW

Monday, January 9 - Saturday, January 14, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., plus additional evening hours to be arranged

In light of youth-led revolutions in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, what are the skills needed for conflict transformation and peace building? Using a case method approach, this course will teach seminary students and religious and community leaders the theory and practice of pro-active conflict intervention especially appropriate for congregations, community organizations and local communities. *Robert Evans, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Ethics and Executive Director of Plowshares Institute, Simsbury, CT*

### WINTER/SPRING SESSION

### ARTS OF MINISTRY

## Ministry in a Multicultural World

Mondays, from 5:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m., beginning Jan. 23 (11 weeks)

This course explores an invitation to discipleship rooted in serving others and will focus on ministry in everyday life – in the home, at work, out in the community as well as in communities of faith, and in the world beyond. It is designed for those who feel called to ministry and to service, but not to formal ordination. *Miriam Therese Winter, Professor of Liturgy, Worship and Spirituality, and Benjamin Watts, Faculty Associate in the Arts of Ministry and Senior Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, New London*

## Cutting Edge Social Ministries: Bearing Witness to the Love and Justice of God NEW

Wednesdays, from 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 25 (15 weeks)

Churches, Mosques and Synagogues impact their communities and build membership strength through a wide variety of creative, contemporary ministries of care, justice and transformation. Through readings, research, field trips and conversations with leaders in the Greater Hartford region, we will examine examples of congregations and collaborations seeking to bear witness to the love and justice of God. *The Rev. Dr. Edward Horstmann, Adjunct Professor of Arts of Ministry and Senior Minister, Immanuel Congregational Church, Hartford, CT*

## Seven Approaches to Congregational Renewal NEW

Section 1: Tuesdays, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Jan. 24, Feb. 14, March 6, March 27, and April 17 (May 8, make-up if needed)

Section 2: Thursdays, from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 26 (15 weeks)

After a quick review of the theologically prescribed tasks of the local church and prevailing wisdom about organizational innovation, the class will dive into the rapidly growing (and desperately needed) literature on congregational renewal. Indeed, we will read, comparatively analyze and discuss, from the point of view of one's own ministry setting, seven different approaches to congregational renewal. *David Roozen, Professor of Religion and Society*

### DIALOGUE

## Understanding Catholicism

Online, beginning Monday, Jan. 23

Roman Catholicism is the largest Christian denomination in the world. In this course, we examine the history, theology, tradition, ecclesiology, and ethics of the Roman Catholic Church. The course will stress the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to ecumenical and interfaith relations, in particular Catholic-Muslim dialogue. *Minlib Dabll, Adjunct Professor of Dialogue*



## ETHICS

### Global Ethics

*Thursdays, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., beginning Jan. 26 (Seven sessions, to be determined)*

Learning to live together is the challenge of our age. This course looks at Jewish, Christian and Muslim ideas of community and universality in light of our global situation. It considers what universalist ethics look like when not based on religious assumptions, and examines what such ethics have to offer religious moral discourse. *Heidi Hadsell, President and Professor of Social Ethics*

### Introduction to Islamic Law

*Online, beginning Monday, Jan. 23*

This course will provide a critical overview of the history and practice of Islamic law. *Ingrid Mattson, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations*

## HISTORY

### Muslims in American Religious History: Comparative Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Politics

NEW

*Thursdays, from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. beginning Jan. 26 (15 weeks)*

What makes Muslims an American religious minority? How have they shaped American religious history together with other groups? How have religious minorities participated in the American republic? And what can they learn from each other's experiences? This course is an exploration into the history and contemporary life of a particular religious minority in conversation with parallel stories of other groups. *Timur Yuskaev, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Islam*

## RELIGION AND SOCIETY

### Women, Religion and the Future of USA Churches

*Online, beginning Jan. 23*

Setting the context for on-line discussion of women in the future of USA congregations and denominations, the course will begin with a brief overview of women in world religions. Attention will be focused on the history of women's participation and leadership in American Christian churches over the last two centuries, to stimulate a discussion of what themes and trends might be predicted for the 21st century. *Adair Lummis, Faculty Associate in Research*

## SCRIPTURE

### Hebrew Bible Survey I

*Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., beginning Jan. 24 (15 weeks)*

An introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures, this course will apply historical-critical methods of study to develop a framework for understanding the origins of the texts and the relationship of the texts to one another. Attention will be given to contemporary theories of biblical interpretation. Survey I will cover the materials in the Torah and Prophets (Genesis-Kings). *Uriah Kim, Professor of Hebrew Bible*

### Major Themes of the Bible and the Qur'an

*Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., beginning Jan. 24 (15 weeks)*

This course will study in depth the worldviews of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Qur'an. *Steven Blackburn, Faculty Associate in Semitic Scriptures and Librarian*

### Jesus and Paul on Poverty and Economic Justice

NEW

*Wednesdays, from 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 25 (15 weeks)*

This class engages New Testament texts (and early Christian communities' own struggles with poverty, status, and class differences) as a springboard for deep discussions of the moral life around issues of poverty and economic justice. *Diana Swancutt, Adjunct Professor of New Testament and Associate Professor of New Testament at Yale Divinity School*

## THEOLOGY

### History of Christian Spirituality: Beginnings to 1500

NEW

*Saturdays, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., Feb. 4, Feb. 11, March 3, March 10, March 17, April 21 and April 28*

In response to widely documented illiteracy about religious history, this course invites students to delve into the lives, contexts, beliefs, texts, and spiritual practices of dedicated Christian men and women during the first 1500 years of Christianity. *Elizabeth Dreyer, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Professor of Religious Studies at Fairfield University*

### The Problems of Evil

NEW

*Tuesdays, from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. beginning, Jan. 26 (15 weeks)*

How could a good and powerful God create a world full of innocent suffering and moral evil? Does that God still care, and, if so, what is God's role in our experience of evil and suffering? This course will consider attempts to reflect on the problem in popular culture and personal experience, and survey responses to the problems of evil offered by the leading thinkers in several disciplines, classic and contemporary. *James K. Robertson, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Master of Arts graduate of Hartford Seminary*

### The Triune God in Christian Life

*Mondays, from 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. beginning, Jan. 26 (15 weeks)*

This course explores what contemporary Christians mean when they say that God is triune. Class discussions will focus on three questions: Why do Christians say that God is triune? How may teachings about God's trinity shape Christian reflection and action in everyday life? How may everyday experiences inform Christian conversations about God the trinity? *Edward Waggoner, Visiting Professor in Theology and Ethics*



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## **Christian-Muslim Encounter: The Theological Dimension**

NEW

*Tuesdays, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., on Jan. 24, Feb. 14, March 6, March 27 and April 17 (May 8, make-up if needed)*

What has been the nature of Christian and Muslim perceptions of each other and their own self-understanding in light of the other, in various times and contexts? Drawing upon many genres of historical and contemporary literature, students will examine this two-sided question, ways in which political issues have colored theological interpretation and examples of theological dialogue between Christians and Muslims today. *Lucinda Mosher, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Studies*

## **WORSHIP & SPIRITUALITY**

### **Practical Kabbalah: Jewish Mysticism, Meditation, and Morality**

*Tuesdays, from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 24 (15 weeks)*

This course will explore various aspects of Jewish spirituality and their interconnection: how

mystical interpretations of the Hebrew Bible (in the Zohar) influence our understanding of Scripture; how the observance of commandments relates to the interior life of the heart and soul; theoretical and practical aspects of Kabbalah, including meditative exercises; and the implications of Jewish mysticism for tikkun olam, the mending of our broken world. How these insights might impact on Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations will also be addressed—are there affinities on the mystical level that can be tapped for interreligious peacemaking? *Yehezkel Landau, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Relations*

### **The Essential Writings of Howard Thurman**

*Thursdays, from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 26 (15 weeks)*

This course is a study of the major writings of Howard Thurman, the mystic, prophet, poet, philosopher and theologian, who promotes the idea that out of religious faith emerges social responsibility. *Benjamin Watts, Faculty Associate in the Arts of Ministry and Senior Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, New London*

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