

Interfaith Communities for Dialogue (ICD) – Who We Are & What We Do (as approved on 19 April 2021)

Who we are:

ICD was founded by visionary volunteers in 2004. It is a network of faith-based and associated organizations dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and positive relationships among diverse people in and around Fairfax County through education, engagement, and support. The vision of ICD is that the diverse people of our community value, include and support one another. ICD's core values are inclusiveness, integrity, equity, mutual respect and trust. Any faith-based or associated organization that shares and demonstrates a commitment to the ICD mission, vision, and values is eligible to become an Organizational Member of ICD. To enhance its vision and to effectively achieve its goals and objectives, ICD partners with other organizations and/or government entities.

Current Organizational Members:

Annandale United Methodist Church	MakeSpace
Baha'is of Fairfax County East	Peace Lutheran Church
Congregation Olam Tikvah	Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia
Dar Al Hijrah Islamic Center	Ravensworth Baptist Church
Durga Temple	The Sikh Foundation of Virginia
John Calvin Presbyterian Church	

As per our Bylaws (April 2021), the Board of Directors is the sole decision-making authority on behalf of ICD. The Board has three standing committees: Engagement; Education; and Capacity Building. Each Standing Committee develops an annual plan which may include ongoing and one-off programs. These plans are expected to be in alignment with medium- and long-term goals articulated in the strategic plan and are subject to Board approval.

What we do:

Since 2004, ICD programs have focused on individuals and communities. Our goal is to (a) improve knowledge and understanding of various faith communities, and (b) improve the practice of mutual respect and fellowship among community members. A variety of activities, such as community dialogues, book discussions, and visits to various houses of worship have been undertaken. We have learnt collaboratively about different faiths, explored their commonalities in depth, built relationships across faith groups, and engaged in a variety of service projects.

- *The Engagement Committee* helps build relationships and understanding among the diverse segments of the community. Its activities may include service projects, interfaith meals, and other social events.
- *The Education Committee* helps promote knowledge and understanding of differences and commonalities among the diverse faiths and cultures in our community. Its activities may include dialogues and topical discussions, youth education, adult education, visits to houses of worship, etc. Some programs may be aimed at specific groups or focus on topics of continuing relevance and interest to the broad community.
- *The Capacity Building Committee* helps expand the financial and human resources available to sustain ICD activities and enable it to achieve its goals.

During the past year, we have organized a series of four workshops on racism and systemic bias. We believe that people of all faiths must bear witness to and oppose the racial inequality and brutality facing people of color in this country. These workshops have provided participants a basic understanding of systemic racism, and how it is manifested in education, health, housing, and police and judicial systems. They also discussed actions to address racism at the individual, community, and societal levels. We plan to continue this effort in the coming months.

We invite you to join our efforts to build a caring and mutually-respectful interfaith community in Fairfax County!
Contact: interfaithcd@gmail.com or [Find us on Facebook Here](#). Thanks!

Examples of ICD activities since 2004

A. Community Dialogues on various topics:

Learning about different faiths:

- Introduction to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity
- How we worship in the Abrahamic Faiths
- Exploring Misunderstood Passages from Abrahamic Religious Texts
- Sacred Scripture: How do you understand your own
- Sacred Texts as instruments of Peace or Hate.
- Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really think
- Women and Islam
- An interfaith conversation with Muslim women
- What Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs Believe (film + discussion)
- Muslims in America: Facts vs Fiction (film + discussion)
- Islam -- Knowledge over Fear (panel presentations + discussion).

Exploring common aspects of our faiths in depth:

- Death and Dying
- The Question of Suffering
- The Role of Women in our Traditions
- Creation, then and now
- What is the Meaning of God Today?

Building relationships across faith groups:

- Working together for a better community
- Building relationships across religious lines
- Welcoming and supporting refugees in our midst.
- Helping Communities Heal After a Hateful Event.

Addressing community concerns

- Four-part workshop series on systemic racism.

Book discussions:

- The Faith Club: a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew: three women Search for Understanding
- Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America
- Viral Hate: Containing its Spread.

Visits to houses of worship:

- Visits to a Christian church, a Jewish synagogue, a Muslim mosque, a Hindu temple, a Sikh gurdwara, and a Baha'i house of assembly, to observe, interact, and learn.

B. Improving the practice of mutual respect and fellowship among community members:

Vigils and attendance at various houses of worship, to show solidarity and support against hate crimes, bigotry, and discrimination. Examples: visit to a Christian church, a Jewish community center, a Muslim mosque, and a Sikh gurdwara; and participation in the annual inter-faith 'Unity Walk' in Washington DC for 9/11 victims.

Attendance at community events. Examples: attendance at Holocaust remembrance (Jewish), Diwali celebration (Hindus), Taste of Islam (Muslims), Interfaith Prayers at a local mosque, and visits to a variety of cultural events, museums, film festivals, picnics, and fairs to learn more about and interact with people of different faiths.

Participation in service projects. Examples: feeding the homeless, sheltering the poor in the winter, contributing to food banks, collecting clothes for charitable donations, and volunteering for various 'Day to Serve' interfaith activities and projects.

Participation in informal dinners at local restaurants, 5-6 times a year; dinners celebrating Iftar (Muslim), Shabbat & Sukkot (Jewish); & at homes of community members, 4-5 times a year (sometimes with discussion of suitable topics, interfaith or one faith).

C. Common features of ICD program activities:

The focus is to build and nurture interfaith understanding and relationships based on mutual respect among different faith groups. The target audience is individuals or groups and communities at the grass roots level.

The planning and organization is done by members of the ICD Board of Directors (formerly known as the ICD Steering Committee), which is presently composed of representatives of eleven faith groups or houses of worship. We have members from the Christian (Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran), Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, and Baha'i faith communities. Volunteers from various ICD Member Organizations help with various activities.

Participation at ICD events, on a voluntary basis, is generally open to the public. Announcements are made through websites, flyers, newsletters, posters, etc. Registration is done through our email/FB/website. Attendance varies from about 30-150 at each event. interfaithcd@gmail.com or [Find us on Facebook Here](#)