



**Interfaith[®]
Philadelphia**

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

STAND TALL



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This year, our theme—*Stand Tall*—has been both a compass and a challenge. In a world where many feel pressure to hide their differences, we at Interfaith Philadelphia have continued to create spaces where people are invited to show up fully, courageously, and authentically.

At our *Dare to Understand*® Awards this spring, we were honored to celebrate Philadelphia Eagle Britain Covey who exemplifies this spirit. With quiet confidence and deep conviction, Britain, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, unabashedly lives his faith as fundamental to his strength and identity within his team. In a time when many are cautious about sharing what is most sacred to them, his openness reminds us of the power and impact of simply being who you are, without apology.

Whether on a football field, in a classroom, or across a dinner table, we are all waiting for the invitation to be known. I think of a fourth-grade girl in our first interfaith youth program who gathered the courage to ask her Muslim classmate why she wore a headscarf. The question sparked a moment of joyful connection—and two girls, just nine years old, *stood tall* in that exchange.

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OUR MISSION In order to promote social harmony and inter-religious understanding, Interfaith Philadelphia equips individuals and communities for interfaith engagement, builds collaborative relationships, and stands in solidarity with our diverse neighbors.

OUR VISION Since our founding in 2004, Interfaith Philadelphia has challenged people across sectors to dare to understand one another. Our bold vision is to have our region reflect the vibrancy of a religiously diverse democracy, one in which all people are valued, distinctive traditions are welcomed, and people of diverse backgrounds collaborate to shape a just and compassionate society.

That same spirit is present today in all our work—supporting leaders and communities as they navigate complexity, conflict, and change. We are called upon not just when things are easy, but also when things are difficult—when statements and protests fall short and people seek deeper tools for listening, learning, and leading with integrity.

Standing tall doesn't always mean taking the loudest stance. Sometimes it means shortening the chain on your necklace to let your Jewish star shine more visibly. Sometimes it means asking the question you've been afraid to ask or being open to receiving a difficult question with grace.

With your partnership, Interfaith Philadelphia has continued to expand our reach by equipping individuals and institutions across sectors—education, healthcare, ministry, civic leadership—with practical tools to live out our *Passport to Understanding*® practices:

**Be Curious. Venture Out. Welcome In.
Stand Tall. Stand With.**

These are the heart of our work. And in times like these, they are more vital than ever.

To those of you who have walked alongside us this year: thank you. Your support, presence, and belief in this work have helped us build a city—and a world—where more people can live freely, faithfully, and fully.

With gratitude and resolve,

Abby Stamelman Hocky

Abby Stamelman Hocky
Executive Director



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE OF INTERFAITH PHILADELPHIA OFFERS CURATED PATHWAYS AND EXPERIENCES TO BUILD SKILLS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND KNOWLEDGE FOR INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT.

1,394

PARTICIPANTS IN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE PROGRAMS



95% OF PARTICIPANTS FELT MORE CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO NAVIGATE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



Passport to Understanding®

In partnership with Reformation Lutheran Church of Media, this year's *Passport to Understanding*® immersive series helped attendees cultivate compassion, curiosity, and understanding across lines of difference. Following a discussion of the importance of *venturing out*, participants chose to *stand tall* by inviting one another to services or practices of their own communities, such as Sunday morning worship, Torah study, Shabbat services, food distribution, and a virtual global Quaker meeting. The group developed lasting personal connections, and almost all *ventured out*.

"This program embodies everything that its title infers. It has a magical way of getting people from different religions, cultures and countries talking about things that I thought I alone had experienced. This group feels like friends that I have known forever."

Passport to Understanding® Participant

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Everyday Faith

In this multi-session cohort program, individuals explored diverse faith traditions through a “living library” — the personal stories and lived experiences of practitioners. This series, which builds religious literacy, encourages participants to ask curious questions and integrate their learnings into daily life. One woman, a hospice chaplain, practically applied her new knowledge by asking questions about the afterlife and how to support those approaching that transition. This year’s series included Buddhism, Anabaptism, Judaism, and Islam.

Visionary Women: Rooted in Faith, Committed to Justice

Over 40 women from a variety of religious, ethnic, racial, and generational backgrounds explored the intersections of faith, gender, and social justice through visits to religious sites, panel presentations, and small group discussions. Community partners this year were Won Institute of Graduate Studies, Islamic Society of Greater Valley Forge, Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Old Haverford Friends, and Congregation Adath Jeshurun. At the end of the program, four of the small groups had plans for further meetings to continue to develop their relationships.



For the first time this year, alumni of *Visionary Women* were invited for an exclusive program to foster deeper and more meaningful conversations. More than 75 women joined three *Visionary Women 2.0* workshops and living library sessions to expand their skills to ask curious questions, listen to understand, and bridge across disagreement — all necessary for life in a plural world.

“Being part of *Visionary Women* was such a memorable and meaningful experience for me. I truly appreciated the chance to connect with other women—to talk openly about our lives, religions, struggles, and joys in a space that felt safe and supportive. And, one of the best parts? I made a lifelong friend from a different faith, and we’ve continued to share life experiences and new adventures ever since.”

Visionary Women 2.0 Participant



100% OF VISIONARY WOMEN PARTICIPANTS DEVELOPED MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS/ SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS



Workplace Diversity Panel

In partnership with the Bucks-Mont Collaborative, a network of 130 nonprofits in Montgomery and Bucks Counties, Interfaith Philadelphia offered a discussion on religious diversity in the workplace to 70 organizational leaders. Panelists from four faith traditions shared how their practices and worldviews shape everyday life not only in sacred or private spaces, but also in the workplace. The conversation highlighted the practical benefits of supporting religious diversity in professional settings, as connection and awareness can help people feel more at ease with one another, foster healthy work environments, and positively influence creativity, productivity, and retention. The speakers reflected on life cycle events and discussed cultural considerations around holiday celebrations, food, and clothing practices, and participants asked practical questions relevant to their roles, experiences, and organizations.

Difficult Conversations Series

This year, Interfaith Philadelphia expanded the popular *Navigating Difficult Conversations* workshop into a multi-session series to explore not only how to participate in challenging dialogue, but how to prepare for and sustain it.



PREPARING FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

In the first part of the series, participants prepared for difficult conversations by developing an awareness of their strengths and challenges in these situations. They identified skillful responses to tense moments, and practiced strategies for healthy dialogue.

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

We facilitated nearly 20 *Navigating Difficult Conversations* workshops (part two of the series) in school, university, corporate, and congregational settings for more than 350 professionals. These interactive workshops taught them how to listen deeply, engage fully, and exchange viewpoints constructively during conflict.



BRIDGING THROUGH DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Participants in this third component tackled the challenge of finding common ground amidst deep division. In one workshop timed around the holidays, participants explored scenarios focused on the tension of values when choosing between maintaining or severing familial relationships. Attendees shared personal stories, gained new perspectives, and identified shared values on polarizing topics. This new workshop is intended for advanced learning and conflict resolution.

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Civil Conversations On The Road

The Northwest Association of Independent Schools in Seattle, WA engaged Interfaith Philadelphia to lead a skill-building workshop for school administrators. Over 40 participants practiced dialogue skills for engaging with conflict. They examined real-life scenarios encountered in their interactions with students, teachers, and parents and practiced how they might approach these interactions differently using skills learned in the workshop.



Facilitating Civil Conversations

In partnership with the Bucks-Mont Collaborative, this half-day workshop trained teams from 37 organizations to facilitate meaningful dialogue across lines of difference in their workplaces. Nonprofit leaders, social workers, and educators learned and practiced facilitation techniques to overcome obstacles in divisive times. The workshop, which occurred shortly after the United States Presidential transition, provided community members with the opportunity to have candid conversations about issues they face, making the workshop both a practical training ground and a supportive learning community.

Foundations of Interfaith Leadership LIVE

Offered in collaboration with Interfaith America, *Foundations of Interfaith Leadership LIVE* reached nearly 30 individuals from across the country, pairing facilitated skill-building sessions with asynchronous learning. Professionals from disciplines such as healthcare, higher education, community organizing, and religious life practiced skills for interfaith leadership in their universities, workplaces, and religious communities across the country, and received a certificate upon completion.

"This experience has prepared me for future interfaith retreats and helped me reflect on leading conversations, especially with today's conflicts. It feels like essential work."

Foundations of Interfaith Leadership LIVE Participant

Facilitator Training

In order to expand capacity and impact, the Leadership Institute trained over a dozen people from eight faith traditions to facilitate its core workshops. The Leadership Institute Facilitation Team is equipped to offer the following programs in a variety of settings throughout the region:

- Passport to Understanding®
- Facilitating Civil Conversations
- Difficult Conversations Series



Art of Interfaith Understanding

Art of Interfaith Understanding partners with the Office for Community Engagement at the Philadelphia Art Museum to offer a series of tours designed to increase interfaith understanding and facilitate spiritual growth. This year, the series expanded beyond the walls of the Museum to explore the art and architecture of Beth Shalom Congregation (designed by Frank Lloyd Wright) and the stained-glass windows of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel.

TOUR TOPICS IN 2024-2025 INCLUDED:

- Religion and Public Life
- Kinship with Nature
- Connections: Passover and Holy Week Illustrated in Art
- Artmaking as Prayer

YOUTH INITIATIVES

YOUTH INITIATIVES CREATE A WELCOMING SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, ELEMENTARY THROUGH COLLEGE, WHERE INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS THRIVE AND DIALOGUE SKILLS ARE BUILT, SUPPORTING A DIVERSE COMMUNITY FOR THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW.



93% OF PARTICIPANTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO WELCOME IN PEOPLE FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS AND WORLDVIEWS TO THEIR CONVERSATIONS AND COMMUNITIES



Interfaith Encounters Alternative Break

Students from Bryn Mawr College, La Salle University, and Davidson College visited Philadelphia on their fall and spring breaks to discover local faith communities, engage in service projects with *Zones of Peace*, and participate in dialogue workshops. They explored the Glencairn Museum, practiced reading and meditation at the Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center, and shared community meals with several different congregations. Through these unique opportunities, they forged long-lasting relationships with interfaith work and with one another.

100% OF ALTERNATIVE BREAK PARTICIPANTS FELT MORE CONFIDENT IN ARTICULATING THEIR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES TO OTHERS IN AN APPRECIATIVE WAY FOLLOWING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM



Walking the Walk® Youth Initiative



High schoolers from Reformation Lutheran Church of Media, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of Broomall, and the Bahá'í community in Downingtown learned about each other's faith traditions and explored Interfaith Philadelphia's *Passport to Understanding*®. They practiced *standing tall* in their own identities while building friendships across lines of difference through dialogue and exploring new faiths. As the students hosted peers at their houses of worship, they shared the parts of their faiths of which they are most proud.



AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY, STUDENTS SHARED THAT THROUGH MEETING PEERS FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, THEY STRENGTHENED THEIR OWN SENSE OF SELF.

School Partnerships



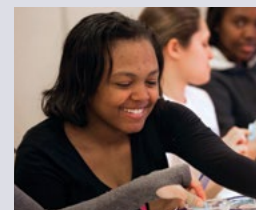
Schools and school districts turned to Interfaith Philadelphia to help their students, teachers, and parents foster interfaith cooperation. Focusing on empathy, cultural competence, and interfaith literacy, these programs prepare students for future leadership in school and beyond. Professional development opportunities provide support as teachers and administrators navigate challenges in the classroom and school community. Programs this year included: *Navigating Difficult Conversations* and *Passport to Understanding*® workshops, panel discussions, and customized consultations.



- Middle schoolers at Gesu School explored the five *Passport to Understanding*® practices to learn how to *stand with* one another, embrace new perspectives, and break down stereotypes.
- C.C.A. Baldi Middle School students participated in a *Be Curious* workshop and learned about Judaism, Islam, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as they began their World Religions course with this “living library.”
- Students at the Crefeld School learned skills for *Navigating Difficult Conversations*, developed interpersonal dialogue skills, and explored their own identities.

“I learned...that religions can be very similar and different [at the same time]. Another thing I learned is that it is okay to ask questions about other religions as long as it is respectful.”

Middle
School
Student



Youth Neighborhood Summer Mosaic

This summer, middle school students from Catholic, Muslim, Mennonite, and Baptist faith backgrounds gathered in South and North Philadelphia for a free, week-long *Mosaic* program. They explored the *Passport to Understanding*® curriculum through arts and crafts, games, discussions, and workshops to learn about the religious and cultural diversity of their peers. The students particularly enjoyed performing skits about hospitality in their faiths and moments when they stood tall at school. This year's programs were hosted in partnership with Gesu School, Philadelphia Praise Center, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community.



RELIGIOUS NETWORKS

PLACES OF WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS SERVE AS PRIMARY COMMUNITIES FOR THE REGION'S RESIDENTS. RELIGIOUS NETWORKS CONVENE THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR COLLABORATION AND BROAD IMPACT.

Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia



The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia was founded in 2006 to build relationships of mutual support, offer a moral and spiritual voice in the region, and identify issues of local concern for dialogue and action. Now comprising 32 senior leaders from diverse religious traditions, the Council represents more than 1.5 million people across the greater Philadelphia region.

- The Council organized a series of *Love Thy Neighbor Walks* during which Council members and dozens of other community members gathered in neighborhoods where immigrant families live, work, and shop for a public demonstration of solidarity and compassion. Walkers connected with neighborhood residents, supported local businesses, and *stood tall* in their support of immigrants around the city. One walk was coordinated in partnership with SEAMAAC, a vital community organization and a *Zone of Peace*.
- Leading up to Election Day, faith leaders from the Religious Leaders Council shared prayers as part of their bipartisan *Peace and Civility* video series. Each week, council members shared weekly prayers and messages to promote understanding and harmony across differences.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS COUNCIL CO-CONVENERS 2024-2025

Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

The Rt. Rev. Daniel Gutiérrez
Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

Rabbi David Straus
Jewish Community Relations
Council of the Jewish Federation
of Greater Philadelphia

Imam Anwar Muhaimin
Masjid Quba



RELIGIOUS LEADERS COUNCIL MEMBERS 2024-2025

Bishop Samuel L. Green
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Imam Mohamed Shehata
Al-Aqsa Islamic Society

Kavneet Singh Pannu
American Sikh Council

Bishop J. Louis Felton
Black Clergy of Philadelphia
and Vicinity

Rabbi Beth Janus
Board of Rabbis of
Greater Philadelphia

Bishop Guy Glimp
Church of God in Christ

Bishop Peter Hwang
Council of Korean Churches
of Greater Philadelphia

Rabbi Eli Freedman
Delaware Valley Association
of Reform Rabbis

Bishop John Schol
Eastern Pennsylvania Conference,
The United Methodist Church

Very Reverend Archimandrite
Avgoustinos Psomas
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America

Rev. Louis Cortes
Hispanic Clergy of
Philadelphia and Vicinity

Rev. Dr. Calenthia Dowdy
Metropolitan Christian Council
of Philadelphia

Imam Muhammad
Abdur-Razzaq Miller
Mosque of Shaikh M. R.
Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

Rev. William Worley
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference,
United Church of Christ

Archbishop Mary Floyd Palmer
Philadelphia Council of Clergy

Dr. Wilson Goode
Philadelphia Leadership
Foundation

Elder Lindsay Brooks
Philadelphia Presbytery of the
Presbyterian Church in America

Christie Duncan-Tessmer
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends

Rev. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace
Presbytery of Philadelphia,
Presbyterian Church USA

Rabbi Abe Friedman
Rabbinical Assembly,
Philadelphia Region

Rabbi Shawn Zevit
Reconstructionist Rabbinical
Association

Lt. Colonel Larry Ashcraft
Salvation Army of Eastern
Pennsylvania and Delaware

Bishop Bryan Penman
Southeastern Pennsylvania
Synod ECLA

Rabbi Dasi Fruchter
South Philadelphia Shtiebel

Dr. Gity Etemad
Spiritual Assembly of the
Baha'is of Philadelphia

Elder Michael Brady
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

Archbishop Borys Gudziak
Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy
of Philadelphia

Rev. Dr. Hojin Park
Won Institute of
Graduate Studies

Zones of Peace

Zones of Peace, an initiative of the *Religious Leaders Council*, elevates the leadership of organizations that pioneer creative responses to violence and protect the communities where Philadelphians live, work, and play. This year, **the Council recognized its 100th Zone of Peace** as the CHARLES Foundation joined this powerful network of houses of worship, schools, and community-based organizations.

In June, the *Religious Leaders Council* partnered for the second year with Penn Live Arts on *Toll the Bell*, a powerful city-wide sound installation for National Gun Violence Awareness Day. This event featured a vigil, a reflective walk, live performances, and the simultaneous ringing of bells across Philadelphia to recognize those tragically lost to gun violence.



Inter-Seminary Initiative

The *Inter-Seminary Initiative* convenes area theological schools and seminaries to foster collaborative relationships that equip future religious leaders for interfaith engagement. This year, the *Initiative* formed a *Deans and Presidents Roundtable*, held a panel discussion on religion and ethics, and piloted a program for newly ordained religious leaders.



PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:

- Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary
- Respect Graduate School
- United Lutheran Seminary
- Palmer Theological Seminary
- Won Institute for Graduate Studies
- Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
- Lancaster/Moravian Theological Seminary

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT



Dare to Understand® Awards: Stand Tall

The annual *Dare to Understand®* Award ceremony honors individuals, communities, and businesses that have championed interfaith engagement and understanding across lines of difference. On May 15, 2025, the spirit of unity, faith, and mutual understanding filled the sanctuary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Chapel in Center City. The 2025 *Dare to Understand®* Award was presented to Britain Covey—Philadelphia Eagles Wide Receiver and Punt Returner, 2025 Super Bowl Champion, and beloved and devoted member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—for his dedication to *standing tall* in faith. Covey shared that the grounding of his faith, scripture, prayer, and quiet consistency helped him and his teammates during their Super Bowl-winning season. Eagles Tackle Laekin Vakalahi spoke about how his spiritual foundations, which were formed in church and strengthened through his missionary work, continue to shape his resilience on and off the field. Following the event, attendees gathered to greet new and old friends while enjoying a Philadelphia-themed reception.



Ride/Walk for Understanding

This year, Interfaith Philadelphia brought back its annual bike ride fundraiser with a 5k option for non-bikers. Riders, walkers, and runners gathered on a rainy day in early May for the *Ride/Walk for Understanding*, a family-friendly fundraising event where attendees raised awareness and support for Interfaith Philadelphia's mission. This event brought in over \$11,000 thanks to supporters, riders, and their families and friends, who braved the stormy weather with smiles.



Strategic Plan

In conjunction with the organization's 20th anniversary, Interfaith Philadelphia embarked upon a two-year strategic planning process with two major components:

- **Board-Staff Working Groups** focused on the strategic questions facing our three core areas of work
- **A National and Regional Thought Leader Convening, *The Home We Build Together*** (pictured on right), to address how interfaith work is essential to sustaining a healthy society, a central component of Interfaith Philadelphia's work

We convened thought leaders from nonprofits, seminaries, foundations, academic settings, and corporations to discuss issues related to "Faith and Interfaith Engagement as Essential to Civil Society." The gathering's takeaways informed the strategic plan. Interfaith Philadelphia is grateful to the John Templeton Foundation for its support of this important work.

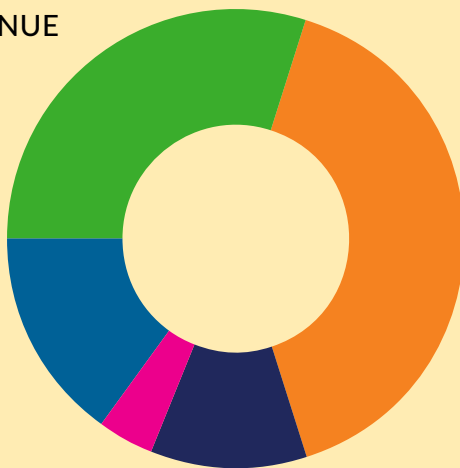
Through listening sessions, focus groups with community leaders and constituents, the Convening, and more, Interfaith Philadelphia solidified its long-term vision. The following are the major commitments from the two-year inquiry:

1. Invest in the next generation.
2. Build thriving communities.
3. Credential professionals in all fields to enhance their effectiveness and mitigate risk.
4. Offer expert consulting services.
5. Build the leadership of the future.
6. Secure financial sustainability.



FINANCIAL REPORT

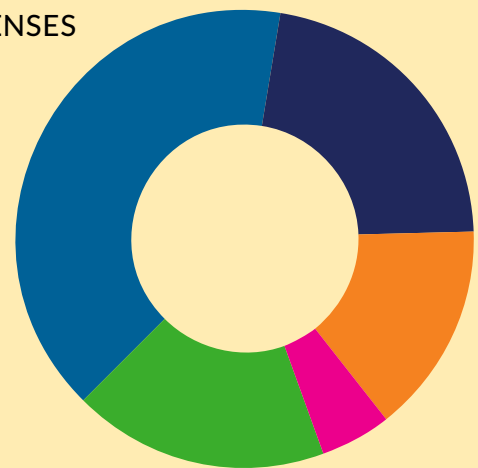
TOTAL REVENUE
\$791,745



REVENUE

Foundations: 40%
Individuals: 30%
Program Revenue: 15%
Religious Communities: 11%
Corporations: 4%

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$783,168



EXPENSES

Leadership Institute of Interfaith Philadelphia: 40%
Youth Initiatives: 22%
Religious Leaders Council: 15%
Inter-Seminary Initiative: 5%
Other: 18%

FUNDER & DONOR REPORT 2024-2025

THANK YOU! WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR
MANY GENEROUS SUPPORTERS.

Trailblazer \$25,000+

American Interfaith Institute

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William* and Debbie Becker

E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

John Templeton Foundation

Pincus Family Foundation

The Michael and Alice Kuhn Foundation

Bruce and Nancy Winn

Changemaker \$15,000+



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Innovator \$10,000+

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Independence



Overbrook
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