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RHODE ISLAND VOICES OF FAITH:
THREE FAITHS - ONE VISION FOR PEACE

“They shall sit, every person under their grapevine and under their fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has so declared.” (Micah 4:4)

Rabbi Amy Levin, Temple Torat Yisrael, East Greenwich and President, Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island together with **Imam Farid Ansari**, Muslim American Dawah Center of RI, Providence and President Rhode Island Council for Muslim Advancement and **Dr. Reverend Donald Anderson**, Executive Minister Rhode Island State Council of Churches will be arriving together in Jerusalem to participate in the [First International Jerusalem Symposium on Green and Accessible Pilgrimage](#) on 22 April.

Rabbi Levin, Imam Ansari and Reverend Anderson represent “Three Faiths – One Vision for Peace”, a collaboration of religious leaders from Rhode Island who are making their pilgrimage to Jerusalem together for the first time.

The following extract is taken from their website:

<http://www.rivoicesoffaith.org/three-faiths-one-vision-for-peace.html>

We offer the wisdom of each of our Abrahamic faiths in the hope that our sacred texts will promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, humility and peace among us:

Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world. (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the Children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

Take not life, which Allah (God) has made sacred. (Holy Quran, chapter 6 Verse 15”)

About Voices of Faith and Three Faiths - One Vision for Peace:

Rabbi Levin:

Voices of Faith is rooted in interfaith work that has been gaining momentum over the last several years. From the time that Reverend Don Anderson began his work as the Executive Minister of the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, he has reached out and developed interfaith partnerships of unprecedented depth here. Reverend Anderson and I, and later Imam Ansari, began to meet more or less regularly. Sometimes we were coming to together to address a particular issue, sometimes we were just keeping in touch and getting to know each other better.

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Through time, we have stood together at press conferences expressing our respective faiths perspectives on contemporary issues, we mounted an exhibit on the history of Islam in the United States that was mounted at my synagogue, and we have issued public statements, the most recent of which is the Three Faiths: One Vision for Peace text which draws upon the common denominators of the sanctity of each human being and compassion for vulnerable populations that is common to Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Imam Ansari:

For several years Amy, Don and I have been working together responding to different issues within our community. Our relationship has resulted in a great deal of trust and respect for one another. We all agreed that we should develop a way of expressing that to the community and the result was "Voices of Faith". Our vision is to present to the world how we can support one another and yet have our differences.

What are you hoping to accomplish from your visit to Israel and participation in the symposium?

Rabbi Levin:

Israel has spiritual significance to all three of our faiths. One of the principles that inspires our work together is the premise that religion should foster mutual respect, stewardship of God's creation and creatures, and humility before the God to whom we all worship. There are a number of experiences and outcomes we look forward to from our upcoming trip to Israel: we hope to lay the groundwork for a visit to Israel with many more of our Voices of Faith colleagues; we hope to learn from others engaged in work similar to ours and draw inspiration from them.

Imam Ansari:

What I personally expect to accomplish is to experience what life is really like in Jerusalem; to get a first-hand look at its people and way of life. It will afford me an opportunity to visit one of the holiest places in Islam.

We have been working together for several years and this is the fruition of our works and a blessing for all of our works. This is also the manifestation of the trust and faith we have in each other as human beings, although we have different faith traditions.

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Dr. Reverend Anderson:

It is my hope that the three of us will grow in our already strong relationship as we seek more opportunities to demonstrate the common threads that are shared by all of our faith traditions. Meeting with like-minded faith leaders from around the globe creates an environment that stimulates that kind of creative visioning. It is also my hope that this is only a beginning for us regarding international interaction. Next year we would like to bring a group of interfaith clergy from Rhode Island to this event. Sharing this type of experience builds trust and understanding that will find in expression in further cooperative efforts here in Rhode Island.

What will you offer the symposium?

Rabbi Levin:

We hope that the example of our own collaborative work will inspire others and help dispel the assumption that religion divides rather than brings people together. I lived in Israel for twenty years and in a very profound sense, I am looking forward to showing my dear friends and colleagues my home.

Imam Ansari:

I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this symposium so others can see our vision of working together to strengthen the ties among the faith communities within our country and abroad. We all must be responsible to improve our environment internally and externally, socially and morally.

Dr. Reverend Anderson:

Rabbi Leven, Imam Ansari and I have been working together on numerous projects over the last several years. Those cooperative efforts have resulted in strengthening our relationships. As we share our experience with participants of the symposium our prayer is that others may be stimulated to consider more multi-faith activity in their own context. We certainly are on a steep learning curve ourselves, but we have begun to identify some elements of meaningful multi-faith cooperation that we look forward to discussing as part of the symposium.

Rabbi Amy Levin

Temple Torat Yisrael, East Greenwich
President, Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island

Rabbi Amy Levin has served Temple Torat Yisrael of East Greenwich, Rhode Island since the summer of 2004. Rabbi Levin grew up in New Jersey and worked as the Education Director of a collaborative Hebrew High School program for three Conservative congregations in New Jersey before making aliyah in 1981.



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Rabbi Levin was the second woman to be ordained by the Schechter Institute of Jewish studies, the rabbinic seminary of the Israeli Masorti (Conservative) Movement and served as a congregational rabbi in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Levin has served as a mentor for senior rabbinical students at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York who are fellows of the Legacy Heritage Rabbinic Fellows Program from 2008 through 2012 and is currently President of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island, a member of the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards and a co-founder of a new interfaith effort based in Rhode Island called Voices of Faith.

Imam Farid Ansari

Muslim American Dawah Center of RI, Providence
President
Rhode Island Council for Muslim Advancement

Imam of Muslim American Dawah Center. Member of the Providence Police Advisory Council and former member of Governor's Commission for Police and Community Relations. Graduate of the "Leadership for a Future" training program 2005 and Graduate of Leadership Rhode Island 2012. In 2011, Imam Ansari was awarded The Rhode Island Council of Churches "Heroes of Faith" award. Imam Ansari attended City University of New York and studied at Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt.

Reverend Dr. Donald Anderson

Executive Minister
Rhode Island State Council of Churches