

PRESS RELEASE

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative
A Community Conversation: "The Muslim Ban. An Examination of the Underlying Factual, Legal, Religious, Humanitarian, Policy, and Economic Considerations."

May 11, 2017
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Glastonbury Riverfront Community Center

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative will host its second Community Conversation for 2017 on Thursday, May 11, at the Riverfront Community Center, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This Community Conversation, entitled "The Muslim Ban. An Examination of the Underlying Factual, Legal, Religious, Humanitarian, Policy, and Economic Considerations" will explore whether Muslim refugees from Syria pose a threat to our national or individual security, and whether the "Muslim Ban" is consistent with the moral and humanitarian values which have shaped our foreign policy.

Our panel will include the following:

Rev. Dr. David Grafton, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford Seminary. Dr. Grafton will address the religious imperatives to care for refugees in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He will also share his experience of his work with faith-based organizations working with refugees in the US and abroad. Dr. Grafton will also discuss the ethical and moral debate regarding the "Muslim Ban."

Dennis Wilson, a program manager at Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS). Mr. Wilson will address will address some of social, adjustment, legal, employment, education, law enforcement, and economic issues faced by or involving Syrian refugees. Mr. Wilson will provide information concerning whether Syrian refugees are a threat to our national or individual security; disproportionately engage in criminal activities; are a burden on taxpayers; or are disproportionately unemployed or uneducated. Mr. Wilson will also discuss the vetting process and the success IRIS has had over the past few years in settling refugees, with a focus on Muslim refugees, in Connecticut.

Dr. Abigail Williamson, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Policy and Law, Trinity College. Professor Williamson will address current immigration and refugee resettlement policies, the changes introduced by the President's executive orders, and their implications for Muslim communities and immigrant integration in the United States.

Anna Cabot, William R. Davis Clinical Teaching Fellow in the Asylum and Human Rights Clinic at UConn Law School. Professor Cabot will discuss the recent executive order entitled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," commonly referred to as the "Muslim Ban," its current legal status and its constitutionality.

Rev. Richard Allen, Pastor, South Church. Rev. Allen will address the issues he and his parishioners faced in connection with the decision to co-sponsor, with IRIS, a refugee family, and the subsequent trials and tribulations of that sponsorship.

Mohamad Albukaai and Zeyad Al Abass. Mohamad Albukaai and Zeyad Al Abass, and their families, are Syrian refugees who are being co-sponsored by the Congregational Church of South Glastonbury and First Church, respectively. They will talk about the flight of their families, their time as refugees before arriving in the U.S., the vetting process they underwent, and their life here.

The program will be moderated and facilitated by Dean Alfred Carter, an educator, sociologist, and humanist.

There will be a reception, featuring Syrian dishes, from 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

A number of Advocacy Groups will have tables where participants will have the opportunity to learn about the mission and work of the various groups and explore volunteer opportunities. Among the Advocacy groups participating are the following: The Muslim Coalition of Connecticut, Moral Mondays/Black Lives Matter, Leadership Greater Hartford, and Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford.

This is a free event open to all. For additional information, please contact Ellen Carter at 860-659-2921 or elcarter99@aol.com or Leslie Ohta at 202-538-1161 or leslieohta@gmail.com or www.glastonburymlkci.org.

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, that was formed in 2001. GMLKCI's mission is to increase knowledge about, and understanding of, the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, and to provide leadership and active engagement to build an inclusive community. We believe that bringing people together discuss openly and honestly important issues relating to social justice will help build a more inclusive and tolerant community.