



THE SALAAM NETWORK

Striving to make our Beloved Community of Louisville Whole

FALL 2019 OPEN CAMPUS 8-WEEK COURSE PRESENTED BY *THE SALAAM NETWORK* AND THOMAS JEFFERSON UNITARIAN CHURCH (4936 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40222)

November 13, 2019: *Relevance of Islam to Contemporary UU Congregations.*

Presenters: Dr. Joe Brennan, Dr. Riffat Hassan, Dr. Dennis Neyman. **Consultant:** Rev. Dr. Craig Moro

Dr. Joe Brennan: Unitarians have an historic connection with Islam. Michael Servitus (1511-1533) was influenced by Islamic theology especially with regards to the Nature of God and rejected the dogma of the Trinity. Suleiman the Magnificent enacted the Edict of Torda (1568), modeled after Muhammad's Edicts, which honored and protected Christians, and placed the territories of Transylvania under the protection of Ottoman rule rather than leave them under Christian rule where they were oppressed. Due to this protection, the small community of Unitarians prospered.

Dr. Riffat Hassan: I can substantiate the similarities between the six Sources of Inspiration, which guide the UUs and core Qur'anic teachings. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are now recognized as one family called the Abrahamic tradition, and Islam has as much right as the other two religions to be included in the 4th UU Source of Inspiration. The Qur'an puts human beings at the center of creation and affirms all fundamental human rights. Social Justice is pivotal both to UU and Islam. Given the profound emphasis in UU and Islam on creating a just and compassionate world-order, there is a natural alliance between the two traditions. They can achieve so much if they work together.

Dr. Dennis Neyman): I am a life-long UU and describe myself as a Humanist and Peace and Justice activist. Having lived and worked in Iran for over 3 years in the 1970's, I grew to appreciate the culture and lived manifestation of Islam. As a member of *The Salaam Network*, I have learnt much about Islam, and believe that the current 4th Source of Inspiration for the UUs which invites Jews and Christians to bring their cherished teachings into ours, should be changed to include Islam which is the third Abrahamic religion, having much in common with UU's values and commitment to social justice.

Dr. Joe Brennan has degrees in Theology and Social Work. He has worked as Diocesan Director of Catholic Charities in Tampa, and is currently the Director of the Kentucky Labor Institute.

Dr. Riffat Hassan, Professor Emerita of University of Louisville is a pioneer of feminist theology in Islam and Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue in the U.S. She is the Founder of *The Salaam Network*.

Dr. Dennis Neyman has a Ph. D in Special Education, has been an educator and activist has been closely associated with the Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church for many years.