

Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference 2026 Call for Proposals

2026 Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference

This conference is designed as an interdisciplinary, interfaith gathering that brings artists, scholars, faith leaders, and community practitioners into conversation. Sessions range from academic and theological reflection to artistic performance, participatory workshops, and community-based practice.

Theme: Art as Witness, Catalyst, and Calling

Hosted by Tri-Faith Initiative

Omaha, Nebraska | Thursday, June 11, 2026

The Tri-Faith Initiative invites proposals from artists, activists, educators, scholars, theologians, performers, and community leaders for the 2026 Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference, which will explore this year's theme: "**Art as Witness, Catalyst, and Calling.**"

This national gathering will examine the power of the arts to bear witness to injustice, inspire social change, foster spiritual and cultural expression, and build bridges across differences. We welcome diverse, interdisciplinary, and creative proposals that reflect the intersections of race, religion, identity, and justice through the arts. For a fuller description of the conference vision, sample agenda, and program context, please see the [Conference Prospectus](#).

Throughout history, artistic expression has been a central component of movements for equity, freedom, and faith. From protest posters and poetry to sacred ritual, dance, and film, art gives voice to the silenced, challenges systemic oppression, and helps communities grieve, imagine, and heal. This year's theme centers the arts as:

- A mirror reflecting cultural narratives about race, faith, and justice
- A practice of resistance, spiritual expression, and storytelling
- A catalyst for community-building, empathy, and social transformation

We Invite Proposals For:

- **Workshops and Presentations:** Interactive sessions, lectures, or facilitated conversations on the role of art in racial justice, interfaith collaboration, healing, organizing, or education.
- **Performances:** Music, dance, spoken word, theatrical pieces, and multimedia performances that embody the conference theme.
- **Art Installations and Exhibits:** Visual or digital art exhibits that explore themes of identity, liberation, and spirituality. Collaborative or participatory art is encouraged
- **Film Screenings:** Feature-length or short films, documentaries, or narrative works exploring race, religion, identity, and justice. Selected films may be followed by facilitated discussion with the filmmaker or respondents.

- **Panel Discussions:** Thoughtful conversations that bring together multiple voices from different disciplines, communities, or spiritual traditions.
- **Community Practice or Ritual:** Artistic practices rooted in spiritual, cultural, or ancestral traditions that invite collective reflection, connection, or healing.

Theme Overview

1. Race and Art: Telling Untold Stories

From the Harlem Renaissance to the murals of the Movement for Black Lives, artists of color have transformed canvases, performance spaces, and public walls into declarations of identity, dignity, and dissent. This thread of the conference will examine how:

- Art challenges racist narratives and promotes truth-telling.
- Creative expression affirms the visibility and humanity of marginalized communities.
- Music, poetry, visual, and performing arts serve as tools of resistance and healing.

2. Religion and Art: Expressing the Sacred

Art has always been central to religious expression—whether in the stained glass of cathedrals, the calligraphy of sacred texts, or the meditative repetition of chant and dance. This strand will explore:

- How religious traditions use art to convey the divine and foster communal identity.
- The spiritual dimensions of contemporary art and artists' explorations of persona faith.
- Art as a medium for interfaith connection and theological critique.

3. Art as a Vehicle for Social Justice

Art is not merely a mirror to society; it can be a hammer to shape it. Throughout history, social movements have leveraged the arts to inspire, unify, and mobilize. This area of focus will highlight:

- Protest art and creative activism as engines for change.
- Community-based arts initiatives that empower voices and build solidarity.
- The evolving role of artists as civic leaders and cultural organizers.

4. Intersectional Creativity: The Art of Complexity

To engage in justice work is to recognize the complexity of identity. Intersectionality—acknowledging how race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion interact—demands nuanced expression. This component will explore:

- How art captures the layered experiences of those living at multiple margins.
- The use of art therapy and expressive arts for community healing and liberation.
- Innovative multimedia projects that blend disciplines to challenge systems of oppression.

Proposal Guidelines

Your submission should include:

1. Title and Format (Workshop, Performance, Exhibit, etc.)
2. Description (250–500 words) outlining the focus, format, and how it aligns with the conference theme.

3. Presenter Bio(s) (100–200 words per person)
4. Technical or Space Needs (e.g., AV, performance space, display equipment). Film proposals should include runtime, screening format (feature/short), and preferred discussion structure.
5. Links to Sample Work (if applicable: portfolio, video, articles, etc).
6. Intended Audience (Who will benefit? Are there experience, age, or accessibility considerations?)

Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Demonstrate relevance to interfaith, racial, and social justice work
- Center marginalized voices and lived experiences
- Encourage audience participation or community engagement
- Bridge theory and practice in meaningful ways
- Reflect artistic and cultural diversity

Deadline to Submit: March 16, 2026

Notifications will be sent by approximately March 20, 2026.

Decision-making Process

- A committee representing diverse religious, racial, and professional backgrounds is gathered.
- The committee checks the proposal for relevance to the conference (race and religion prioritized, but **must** touch upon race OR religion, with **HIGHEST priority relating to this year's theme of "Art as Witness, Catalyst, and Calling"**).
- The committee rates the relevance to theme, uniqueness, and strength of proposal.
- The committee weighs the balance of topics and areas of interest to provide opportunities for all.
- The committee tries to ensure both professional speakers and emerging speakers have opportunities to present. Space is limited. We anticipate 12 sessions throughout the day.
- In shaping the program, the steering committee considers balance across perspectives, disciplines, and experiences, and welcomes proposals from returning RRSJ presenters alongside new contributors.

Questions?

Please contact:

Dr. Lucas Schulte

Director of Education and Outreach

Tri-Faith Initiative

Email: rrsj@trifaith.org

URL: www.trifaith.org

We look forward to receiving your proposal and co-creating a vibrant, inspiring, and justice-centered conference experience.

* Indicates required question

1. Name(s) of presenter(s) *

2. Email(s) of presenter(s) *

(Note: if multiple presenters, please include emails for each presenter--starting with the email of your designated point person. Please ensure that the email provided for your designated point person is actively monitored.)

3. Phone number(s) of presenter(s) *

(Note: if multiple presenters, please include phone numbers for each presenter--starting with the phone number of your designated point person.)

4. Professional biography/ies (200 words per biography) *

5. Optional: please include a professional weblink (eg. LinkedIn, your staff page, your professional website, etc.)

Proposed Session Information

Breakout sessions will be focused on professional learning, community engagement, and provide key takeaways for participants. **Each breakout session is 45 minutes.** We welcome the following types of presentation formats:

- **Education Sessions (45-minute time slots, 30-minute presentations or panels with a 15-minute Q&A) -Presenters**
share their work, innovations, or new opportunities. The presenters are responsible for leading the conversation, providing new and varying perspectives, and offering practical applications of their work. The education sessions can be held as brief individual presentations (e.g., TED talks) or panels.
- **Conversation Sessions (45-minute time slots)**
 - Presenters lead a facilitated conversation in which participants will discuss an issue or challenge, in order to help examine or solve the problem. The proposal should include the conversation topic and engaging questions for discussions. This session type should be highly interactive with planned activities for participant engagement, and the proposal should describe specific activities as well as specific discussion questions.
- **Workshops (45-minute time slots)**
 - Presenters engage participants in an activity related to the conference topics. Workshops should be structured with collaboration between the presenter and participants and between participants. In the proposal, please clearly describe the activities in which participants will engage.
- **Visual and Performing Arts (45-minute time slots)**
 - Presenters will develop a creative display of visual or performing arts that directly engages a conference topic. They will be available to discuss their presentation with conference participants. Space requirements and other accommodations may be specified in the proposal.
- **Film/Multimedia session - (45-minute time slots)** Feature-length or short films, documentaries, narrative works, or a multimedia session exploring race, religion, identity, and justice. Selected films/multimedia experience may be followed by facilitated discussion with the filmmaker/artist or respondents.
- **Other** – If you have an idea and you are not sure how it fits, please propose it!

6. Session format (see above descriptions) *

Mark only one oval.

- Education session
- Conversation session
- Workshop
- Visual or performing arts
- Film/Multimedia session
- Other:

7. Title of Session *

8. Session Summary (200 words) *

9. Key Takeaways, Value, or Learning Outcomes *

10. Which audio/visual or technical support will you need for your session? (Select all that apply.) *

If you're unsure what you'll need, please select what you think applies and share details in the comment box. Our team will follow up with presenters as needed.

Check all that apply.

- Projector or large screen (to show slides, images, or video)
- Audio playback (sound for video, music, or computer)
- Handheld microphone(s)
- Lavalier (clip-on) microphone(s)
- Headset microphone (s) (if available)
- Laptop connection (HDMI / USB-C/other — please specify)
- Reliable internet access
- Electrical outlets/power access
- Lighting adjustments (for performance, film screening, or visual art)
- Space for movement or performance (dance, theatre, ritual, etc.)
- Assistance with setup or technical operation during the session
- None/minimal technical needs

11. Please describe any additional technical, spatial, or accessibility needs not listed above:

12. Any other needs or requests? *

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