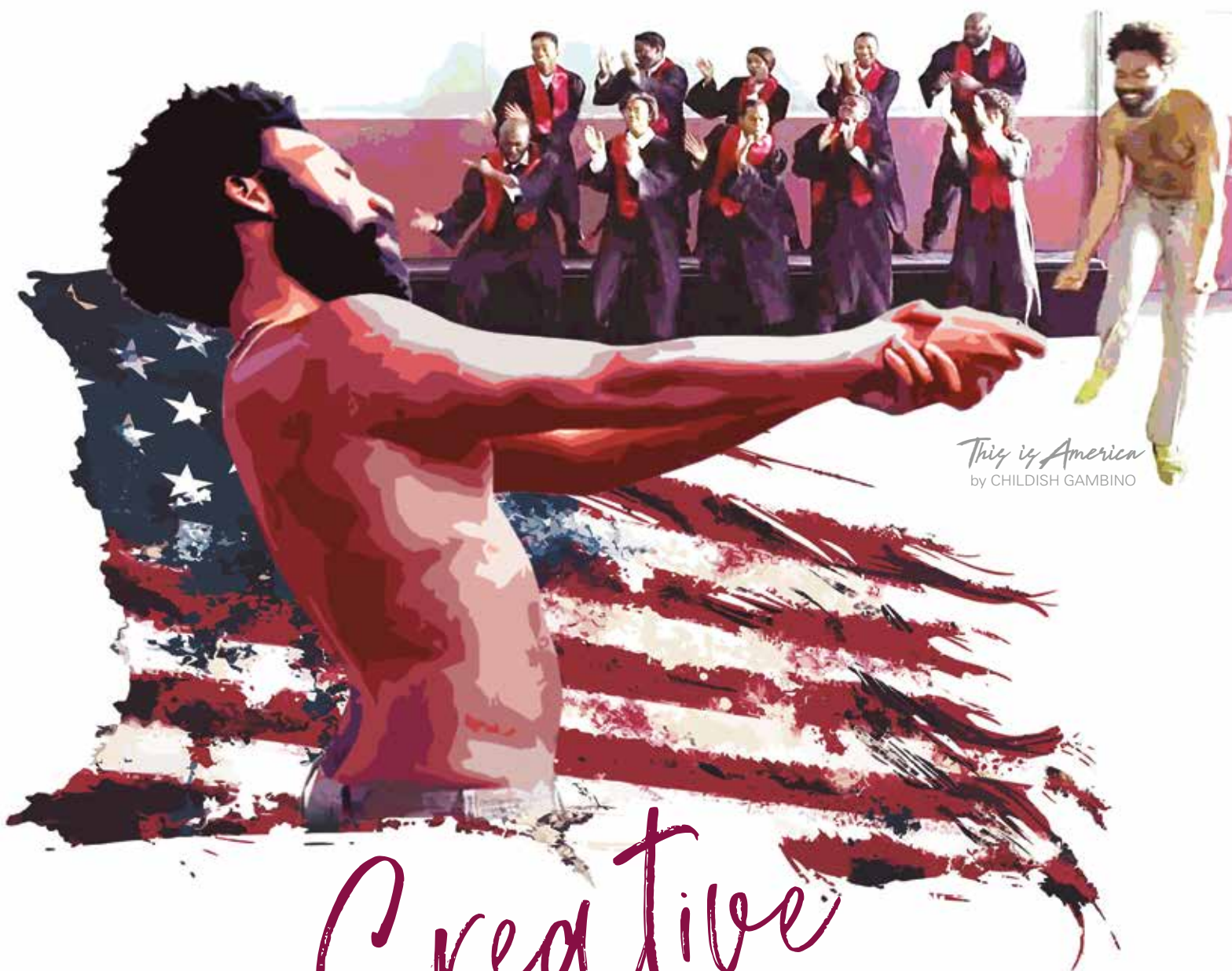


Understanding

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



This is America
by CHILDISH GAMBINO

Creative
CONVERSATIONS
the arts and religious differences

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

the arts and religious differences

*“So you’re the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war?!” Tradition says that when President Abraham Lincoln was introduced to Harriet Beecher Stowe, he greeted her with these words, acknowledging that **Uncle Tom’s Cabin** had strongly shaped people’s attitudes toward slavery. Whether or not the quote is apocryphal, it reminds us that art has the potential to result in social change.*



That is the case with not only literature, but also all other kinds of artistic media, including television and music.

In the 1970s, the popular television show *All in the Family* made people laugh but also brought the country to reflect more deeply on issues relating to racism, homosexuality, women’s liberation, and the Vietnam War. Wednesday morning water-cooler conversations at work took on a new tenor. More recently, Childish Gambino’s 2018 song *This Is America* won Grammy awards for Record of the Year, Song of the Year, Best Rap/Sung Performance, and Best Music Video. Within the first minute of the video, Gambino takes a handgun and shoots a man in the back of the head. Nobody who sees the video or listens to the song can ignore issues of gun violence in the United States.

Art allows us to reflect on tough issues in a non-confrontational manner. It does so in part because it taps into our emotions and it creates an alternate space for discussion. Rarely do logic and facts drive us to change our attitudes and actions. Music, theatre, film, art exhibitions, and literature can frame complicated issues in personal ways that touch us on an emotional level and inspire us to take action when we otherwise may not do so.

Last semester at the Center, we focused on the importance of crucial conversations, emphasizing that both outrage and silence are unhealthy responses to conflict. During the semester, we conducted four training sessions, each of which provided skills for improving contentious relationships and transforming heated debate into meaningful dialogue. Over 110 individuals participated.

This semester, we have no less need for crucial conversations. Yet as we celebrate the opening of the Susan S. Goode Fine and Performing Arts Center, we are pleased to highlight ways in which the arts inspire these kinds of conversations.

“The arts and humanities teach us who we are and what we can be.” Ronald Reagan noted.

“They lie at the very core of the culture of which we’re a part.”

Norman Mailer went a step further, claiming,

“The final purpose of art is to intensify, even, if necessary, to exacerbate, the moral consciousness of people.”

How do we create conversations about important issues that matter? Join us this semester as we look at religion, social change, and civil rights through the lens of the arts.

RHYTHM & BLUES Tore Down the Walls of Segregation

STEVE BUCKINGHAM

September 16 | 7-8:30 PM

GREER ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CENTER | ROOM 155

This presentation explores the effect that music, particularly blues, jazz, rhythm & blues, rock 'n' roll, and soul music, had on integration in the United States. Throughout the Civil Rights Movement, music played a significant role in bringing many people together in a common cause. As former UN Ambassador and Civil Rights activist, Andrew Young, stated, "You could say that music played a bigger part in the movement than the courts."

Four-time Grammy winner, veteran music producer, record company executive, and studio musician Steve Buckingham explores this subject through archival films and photos, interviews, and extensive use of music.

FREEDOM SONGS Soundtrack FOR THE Civil Rights Movement

STEVE BUCKINGHAM

December 5 | 7-8:30 PM

GREER ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CENTER
ROOM 155

Grammy award-winning producer Steve Buckingham returns to showcase his film *Freedom Songs*, with never released original footage. Beginning with performances by the great Jackie Wilson, known as "The Black Elvis," Buckingham uses film clips to discuss the artists and key figures who broke down racial barriers in the 1960s.

PROTEST MUSIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE: Robert C. Nusbaum Essay Contest

A liberal arts education brings students to see connections between classroom learning and real-life issues. In encouraging that, the Center regularly creates project-based partnerships with VWU courses in order to help students recognize how religious freedom issues not only run through the curriculum, but also shape their daily lives and have broad impact at local, national, and global levels.

This semester the Center is working with Dr. Bryson Mortenson, Assistant Professor of Music & Director of Choral Music, and his WES 200 course on "Protest Music," as his students write on the role that specific protest music played in seeking to effect social change.

Judges determine the two best essays and the student winners are recognized and each receive an award at a reception in the Center on Friday, December 6. Please stop by the Center's office suite in Clarke Hall anytime between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to congratulate the winners.



WHEN CHRISTIANS CLASH

A PLAY AND TALKBACK

The Christians

October 31 11 AM

November 1, 2 7:30 PM | November 3 2 PM

GOODE FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Directed by Dr. Sally Shedd, Batten Professor of Theatre

\$5-10 | vwu.tix.com | Free to VWU students, staff, faculty

What happens when a pastor's sincere revelations and theological convictions put him at odds with his staff? His congregation? His wife?

*Lucas Hnath's play **The Christians** takes religious faith seriously and, in an evenhanded manner, invites the audience to reflect on what happens when people of good intent disagree on matters of ultimate importance.*

Presented by the VWU Theatre Department in conjunction with the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom and the VWU Music Department.

TALKBACK SESSIONS

The Center for the Study of Religious Freedom is pleased to host two talkback sessions immediately following the October 31 and November 3 performances. These sessions offer a safe space for discussing issues raised in the play.

ON-DECK PROGRAM

Thursday, October 31

Center Director **Dr. Craig Wansink** and **Dr. Sally Shedd** lead a discussion focused on the major points of tension in the play.

Sunday, November 3

A panel of three clergy discuss the challenges of dealing with theological divisions among congregants. And they reflect on "keeping the peace" while remaining true to their personal convictions and beliefs.

*Panelists include **Rev. Kim Hodges**, Pastor of Lynnhaven Colony United Church of Christ in Virginia Beach, and **Rev. Greg West**, VWU Chaplain and an ordained United Methodist Minister.*



Saturday, November 2 12-5:30 PM

VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

The *One Love Festival* was created to be a snapshot of what world peace would look like, even if only for one day.

This year, the festival takes place during the day, beginning with **Christy Coleman** speaking at noon in the Goode Center and then moving to the Batten Center for drumming, music, poetry, and spoken word.

Saturday, November 2 2-5:30 PM

JANE P. BATTEN STUDENT CENTER | MARLIN GRILLE

Largest Drum Circle in the World, Music, Spoken Word, Poetry, and More

Drum Your Dream (DrumYourDream.com) organizer **Arthur Lopez** once again creates the largest drum circle in the world. Coordinated with drummers from across the globe, Lopez leads a rhythm-based shared experience for peace. Everyone is invited to join this worldwide drumming experience, regardless of musical ability or experience. Hand percussion instruments are provided, or bring your own.

Performances including live music, spoken word, and poetry readings are also featured. If you would like to perform at the event, please email Kelly Jackson at kjackson@vwu.edu or call 757-455-3129 for details.

One Love participants are invited to return to the Goode Center in the evening for "The Christians," the fall production of the Virginia Wesleyan Theatre Department. Discounted tickets for Saturday evening may be purchased at the festival.

HOW SHALL WE REMEMBER?

The American Civil War Museum Grapples with the Legacies of Slavery and the Confederacy



Saturday, November 2 12-1:30 PM
SUSAN S. GOODE FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

In recent decades, museum collections and interpretations reflect that American history and culture have been undergoing considerable transformation. Lessons that were learned a generation ago have been challenged by new or expanded narratives that include the

voices and experiences of previously marginalized people. Join **Christy Coleman** as she shares new scholarship about the depiction of our collective past, discusses questions around the display of Civil War symbols in public spaces, and reflects on issues of historical memory.

Christy Coleman grew up in Williamsburg, Virginia and earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Hampton University. She currently serves as CEO of the American Civil War Museum in Richmond, Virginia, where she has been instrumental in furthering discussion around the Civil War, its legacies, and its relevance to our lives today.

Sponsored by Pax Christi Hampton Roads in partnership with the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom



NEXUS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

USING FOOD TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF THE NEXUS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE SERIES

Nexus launched in 1999 as an open, honest dialogue between Jews and Christians about their faith, their differences in theology, and the things that they share in common. Over the years, Nexus has evolved to include a wide diversity of faith perspectives, and to support small group discussions. This fall, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Nexus Interfaith Dialogue series, join us for the following "Thanksgiving" celebration and, in the process, try some new foods.

Monday, November 18 7-8:10 PM
JANE P. BATTEN STUDENT CENTER | PEARCE SUITE

How Food Communicates Religious Values

From Dates and Matzah to Graham Crackers and Welch's Grape Juice

Food is more than fuel. It is one of the most powerful expressions of identity for both individuals and groups. It communicates values, it is used symbolically, and it marks social and theological boundaries.

Have you ever wondered why Hindus don't eat beef, why Jews and Muslims don't eat pork, or why most of us don't eat cats? Do you know the religious origins of Welch's grape juice and graham crackers?

Join us for lively discussion as friends from a variety of religious traditions, along with VWU students in WES100 Religious Food Fights, give bite-sized talks, each exploring why certain foods are theologically meaningful and others are strictly prohibited. Sample distinctly "religious" foods and participate in discussions on how food brings us together and separates us.

A dessert reception immediately follows the program.

Sponsored in partnership with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and Hands United Building Bridges



HEALING AND HOPE

AN EXHIBITION AT THE NEIL BRITTON GALLERY

Nov. 21–Dec. 13

AWARDS RECEPTION **Thursday, November 21** | 6–8 PM

**VB
STRONG**

An angry city employee fatally shot twelve people and wounded four others on May 31, 2019, on what many now see as the darkest day in the history of Virginia Beach. Words fail in adequately responding to something so dark and chilling.

In talking about trauma in general, Christopher Stowe, who teaches glassblowing as a means of therapeutic art, says, “Art itself is meant to stimulate conversation and take on difficult social topics and I can think of no nobler mission for art than that of healing.”

From November 21 to December 13, the Neil Britton Art Gallery at VWU is hosting a juried exhibition of artwork on the theme of “Healing and Hope.” The exhibition—hosted by Professor John Rudel—is featuring artwork from area high school students who—through art—creatively respond to tragedy, fear, and loss in an age of gun violence, lockdown drills, and a media landscape of perpetual violence.

On Thursday, November 21, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., please join us for the opening awards reception at the Neil Britton Gallery in the Henry Clay Hofheimer II Library.

Tuesday, November 5 | 11–11:50 AM

BLOCKER HALL | AUDITORIUM

GOOD TROUBLE: Lessons from the Civil Rights Playbook



CHRISTOPHER NOXON

In his new book *Good Trouble*, illustrator and journalist Christopher Noxon uses words and vivid pen-and-watercolor illustrations to revisit episodes from the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. He dives into the real stories behind the front lines of the Montgomery bus boycott and the Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins and notable figures such as Rosa Parks

and Bayard Rustin, all while exploring the parallels between the civil rights movement era and the present moment. Join Noxon as he shares essential lessons that modern-day activists and the civically minded can extract and embrace in order to move forward and create change.

Christopher Noxon is a journalist and illustrator who has written for the New Yorker, The Atlantic, Salon, and The New York Times Magazine.

Sponsored in partnership with the Community Relations Council of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, the Lee & Bernard Jaffe Family Jewish Books Festival of the Simon Family JCC, through the Jewish Book Council

When Prayer Goes to the Movies



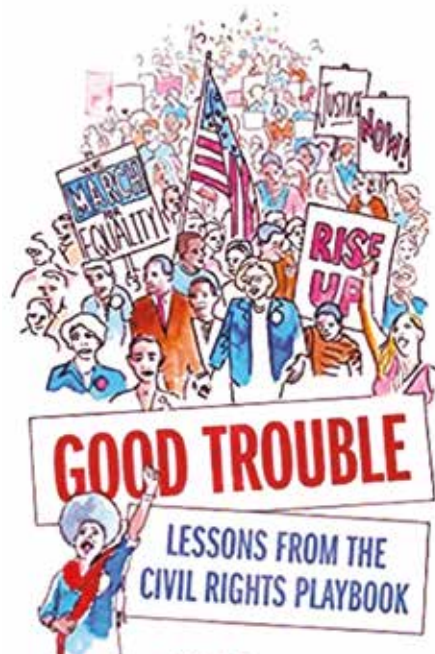
DR. TERRY LINDVALL

Monday, October 21 | 7–8 PM

BLOCKER HALL | AUDITORIUM

Sometimes the arts serve religion; the work of Bach and Michelangelo stand out. Other times religion seems to serve the arts; movies portray religion in a variety of ways. *God on the Big Screen*, the latest book from Dr. Terry Lindvall, focuses on how movies use prayer in a variety of ways, ranging from the silly to the irreverent to the deeply profound. Join Lindvall as he travels from classic silent-screen films to Will Ferrell’s *Talladega Nights* and the recent *Bad Times at the El Royale*. See how prayer is portrayed Hollywood-style and why that matters.

*Dr. Terry Lindvall is Virginia Wesleyan’s C.S. Lewis Endowed Chair in Communication and Christian Thought. He teaches Christian history and the relationship between religion and the arts. **God on the Big Screen: A History of Hollywood Prayer from the Silent Era to Today** (NYU Press, 2019) is his ninth published book in the last nine years.*



FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING

and Religious Persecution in CHINA

Thursday, October 17 | 7-8:50 PM
GOODE FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

There is huge money to be made in China from organ transplants. Prices charged to foreigners range from \$30,000 for corneas to \$180,000 for a liver-kidney combination. And while everywhere else in the world, people need to wait months or years for an organ transplant, waiting times in China are incredibly short, a matter of days. All of this happens in a country that has a strong cultural aversion to organ donation. So where do the organs come from?

Some point to members of Falun Gong. Falun Gong is the name of a spiritual practice that combines exercises with meditation. Those of us in Coastal Virginia are familiar with Shen Yun, a traditional Chinese dance troupe that performs frequently at Chrysler Hall and was founded by a group of expatriate Falun Gong practitioners who now live in the United States. Because China banned Falun Gong in 1999, referring to it as an “anti-society cult” and a “cancer in the body of society,” the Chinese government has routinely rounded up Falun Gong practitioners and sentenced them to “reform” camps. In those camps they experience systematic blood tests. Some are tortured to death. Some simply disappear. The mutilated corpses of others have been returned to families who have said that organs have been removed. Questions surround all of this.



In the Peabody Award-winning documentary *Human Harvest*, Nobel Peace Prize nominees David Matas and David Kilgour investigate the organ harvesting trade in China and present research that—if accurate—points to one of the world’s worst crimes against humanity.

After a viewing of the film, **David Matas**, who is also a renowned human rights lawyer, **Dr. Ann Corson** from *Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH)*, along with a local Falun Gong practitioner speak and answer questions. In 2016, DAFOH was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for its decade-long efforts to raise awareness and inform the medical community about unethical organ harvesting. Please join us for a deep discussion about a controversial issue.



ANTIQUITY IN ANTIQUITY

HOW ANCIENT ISRAELITES AND GREEKS UNDERSTOOD WHERE THEY CAME FROM

ON-DECK PROGRAM

Thursday, September 26

11–11:50 AM

CLARKE HALL | THE LIGHTHOUSE

The peoples of ancient Israel and Greece lived in a world that they already understood to be very ancient and they took delight, as we do, in describing the exploits of heroes of old.

Without either the ability or inclination to research as modern historians do, however, ancient historians relied on traditional sources of knowledge, and on systems, like genealogies and lists that organized that knowledge. As a result, they created inherently fluid visions of the past, which was repeatedly reshaped through competitions between storytellers.



Dr. Andrew Tobolowsky

researches religions of the ancient Mediterranean, particularly highlighting the unique connections between the classical Greek world and that of the ancient Israelites. He is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the College of William & Mary.

Sponsored in partnership with the Virginia Wesleyan Classics Department



ON-DECK PROGRAM

Thursday, November 21, 11 AM-12:30 PM

SUSAN S. GOODE FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

TRANSGENDER AND CHRISTIAN A Coming Out and Coming Home Story

AUSTEN HARTKE

Too often the world tells LGBTQ+ people that they have to choose either their identity or their faith, but what if there were a third option? Join author Austen Hartke as he shares his experience coming out as a transgender Christian, from his childhood in non-affirming churches to the Bible stories that gave him strength as an adult in seminary.

Sponsored in partnership with Women's and Gender Studies at Virginia Wesleyan

Virginia Wesleyan students are invited to an informal coffee and conversation time with Hartke at 4:00 p.m. on November 21 in *The Lighthouse: Center for Exploration & Discovery* in Clarke Hall.



LIFE Matters

In "Life Matters," members of the Wesleyan community offer autobiographical reflections on their emotional, intellectual, and spiritual experiences. These deeply personal talks create meaningful opportunities for greater understanding and connection, encouraging each of us to think about what has shaped us and given our own life meaning.

11-11:50 AM

JANE P. BATTEN STUDENT CENTER | PEARCE SUITE

Please feel free to bring a bag lunch or purchase lunch in the Boyd Dining Center.



Tuesday, October 22

Denise Wilkinson

VWU Professor of Mathematics and Director of Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning



Tuesday, November 19

Greg West

VWU Chaplain and an ordained United Methodist Minister

The series is sponsored in partnership with the Chaplain's Office and the Center for Innovative Teaching and Engaged Learning at Virginia Wesleyan University.

CONSTITUTION DAY

The U.S. Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787. As we commemorate the signing, test your constitutional knowledge by taking a 10-question quiz at www.constitutionfacts.com.

September 10 - October 1

THE CONSTITUTION PAST AND PRESENT
HENRY CLAY HOFHEIMER II LIBRARY

An interactive book display highlights a variety of constitutional issues and history.





WE HAVE AN OFFICE REFRAIN –

*Collaboration is messy,
but the end result
is always much more
beautiful than if we had
just done it ourselves.*

A SIGN HANGS IN OUR OFFICE THAT SAYS “NO PROGRAMS WITHOUT PARTNERSHIPS.”

It is in relationships with students, program participants, campus and community partners, members of local and national groups, and our generous donors, that we are inspired and sustained. Those meaningful interactions form the heart and soul of the Center and enable us to grow and expand our impact. However you may be involved in the life of the Center, we are grateful for the opportunities that you give us to draw attention to and advance our mission.

Craig and Kelly

Interfaith partnerships & Kettering Foundation

Dr. Syed Ismail and Saher Mirza – friends from the Islamic Center of Tidewater – joined us at the Kettering Foundation Faith-Based Research Exchange in Ohio as 30 of us from across the nation focused on the important role that faith organizations can play in addressing shared challenges and building stronger communities.

First time & long-time

For the first time in its 83-year history, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) has expanded its physical presence beyond its Richmond home base, setting up an office on Virginia Wesleyan's campus, further establishing VWU as a central hub in Coastal Virginia for building regional collaboration and cooperation. We also express our gratitude for the VCIC's 20-year long partnership with the Nexus Interfaith Dialogue initiative.

United Jewish Federation of Tidewater

We are grateful for the partnership with the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater and with Community Relations Council Director Robin Mancoll. Their partnership brings world-renowned speakers to our campus and connects us locally in meaningful ways.

Community Solidarity

In January, we were part of a summit that brought the community together in solidarity against increases in hate speech and acts of violence. The summit was hosted by the local multi-faith clergy group Hands United Building Bridges and was held at the Simon Family Jewish Community Center. In March, many of the same people who had participated in the summit sorrowfully filled the Islamic Center of Tidewater to mourn the massacre of Muslims in New Zealand.

Iftar

In May, we joined with both Muslim communities in Coastal Virginia and the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities to host an Iftar, the meal that breaks the fast at sunset during Ramadan. We were heartened by the fellowship, by words from VWU President Scott Miller, and by the presence of several members of our faculty and staff.

SEPTEMBER

- 10 **The Constitution Past and Present: An Interactive Book Display**
SEPTEMBER 10 - OCTOBER 1
Hofheimer Library
- 16 **Rhythm & Blues Tore Down the Walls of Segregation**
Steve Buckingham
Grammy Award-winning Producer
Monday, 7-8:30 PM | GESC, Room 155
- 26 **Antiquity in Antiquity: How Ancient Israelites and Greeks Understood Where They Came From**
ON-DECK PROGRAM
Dr. Andrew Tobolowsky
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies,
College of William & Mary
Thursday, 11-11:50 AM
Clarke Hall, The Lighthouse

OCTOBER

- 17 **Forced Organ Harvesting and Religious Persecution in China: A Time for Questions**
Dr. Ann Corson, DAFOH
David Matis, Human Rights Lawyer
Thursday, 7-8:50 PM
Goode Fine & Performing Arts Center
- 21 **When Prayer Goes to the Movies**
Dr. Terry Lindvall, VWU Professor of Communication and Christian Thought
Monday, 7-8 PM | Blocker Hall, Auditorium
- 22 LIFE MATTERS: **Denise Wilkinson**
VWU Professor of Mathematics & Director of INTEL
Tuesday, 11-11:50 AM
Batten Center, Pearce Suite
- 31 **When Christians Clash**
A Play and Talkback
ON-DECK PROGRAM
Dr. Sally Shedd, VWU Professor of Theatre
Dr. Craig Wansink, Director of CSRF
Thursday, 11 AM-12:50 PM
Goode Fine & Performing Arts Center

NOVEMBER

- 2 **One Love Festival**
Saturday, 12-5:30 PM | Virginia Wesleyan University
- 2 **How Shall We Remember? The American Civil War Museum Grapples with the Legacies of Slavery and the Confederacy**
Christy Coleman
CEO of the American Civil War Museum
Saturday, 12-1:30 PM
Goode Fine & Performing Arts Center

- 2 **Largest Drum Circle in the World and Live Music, Spoken Word, Poetry Readings**
Arthur Lopez, Drum Your Dream
Saturday, 2-5:30 PM
Batten Center, Marlin Grille
- 3 **When Christians Clash**
A Play and Talkback
Rev. Kim Hodges, Pastor, Lynnhaven Colony UCC; **Rev. Greg West**, VWU Chaplain and ordained United Methodist Minister
Sunday, 2-4 PM
Goode Fine & Performing Arts Center
- 5 **Good Trouble: Lessons from the Civil Rights Playbook**
Christopher Noxon, Illustrator and Journalist
Tuesday, 11-11:50 AM
Blocker Hall Auditorium
- 18 **How Food Communicates Religious Values**
From Dates and Matzah to Graham Crackers and Welch's Grape Juice
NEXUS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE
Monday, 7-8:30 PM
Batten Center, Pearce Suite
- 19 LIFE MATTERS: **Greg West**
VWU Chaplain & United Methodist Minister
Tuesday, 11-11:50 AM
Batten Center, Pearce Suite
- 21 **Transgender and Christian: A Coming Out and Coming Home Story**
ON-DECK PROGRAM
Austen Hartke, Author
Thursday, 11 AM-12 PM
Goode Fine & Performing Arts Center

DECEMBER

- 5 **Freedom Songs: Soundtrack for the Civil Rights Movement**
Steve Buckingham
Grammy Award-winning Producer
Thursday, 7-8:30 PM
GESC, Room 155
- 6 **Soup on Friday Celebration**
OPEN HOUSE
NUSBAUM ESSAY AWARDS
Friday, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM
Clarke Hall, CSRF Office Suite

Support for the On-Deck programs provided by The Lighthouse: Center for Exploration & Discovery at Virginia Wesleyan University

ALL CSRF EVENTS ARE FREE,
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
AND ARE HELD ON THE VWU CAMPUS

We appreciate your trust and support in our common mission. If you are able, please use the enclosed envelope, or visit vwu.edu/giveonline to make a donation. Designate your gift to the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom (CSRF) and indicate what CSRF initiative you would like to support.

Understanding RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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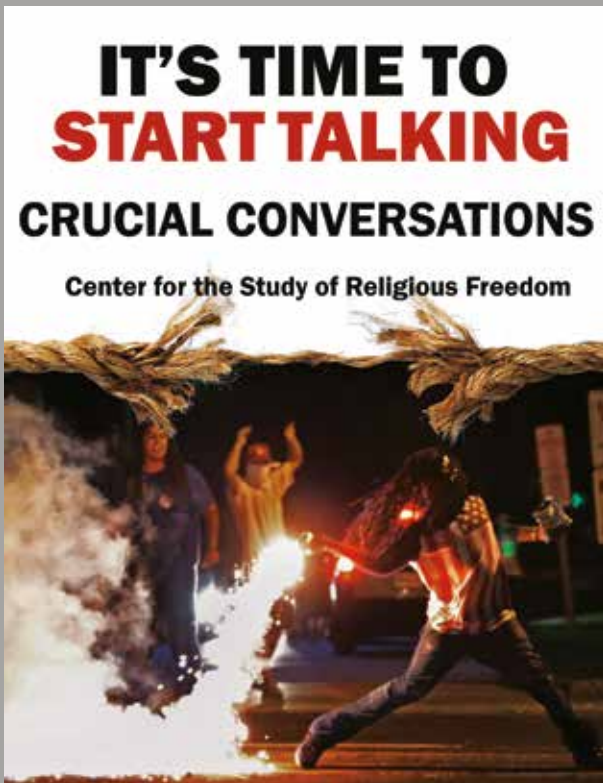


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In spring 2019, Virginia Wesleyan students in Professor Sharon Swift's ART 204 Digital Art course competed to visually interpret and create artistic representations of the Center's spring semester theme "Crucial Conversations: No More Time for Outrage or Silence." These are the first place Winners.



MICKELLA RAST '19



BETHANY ARRINGTON '21