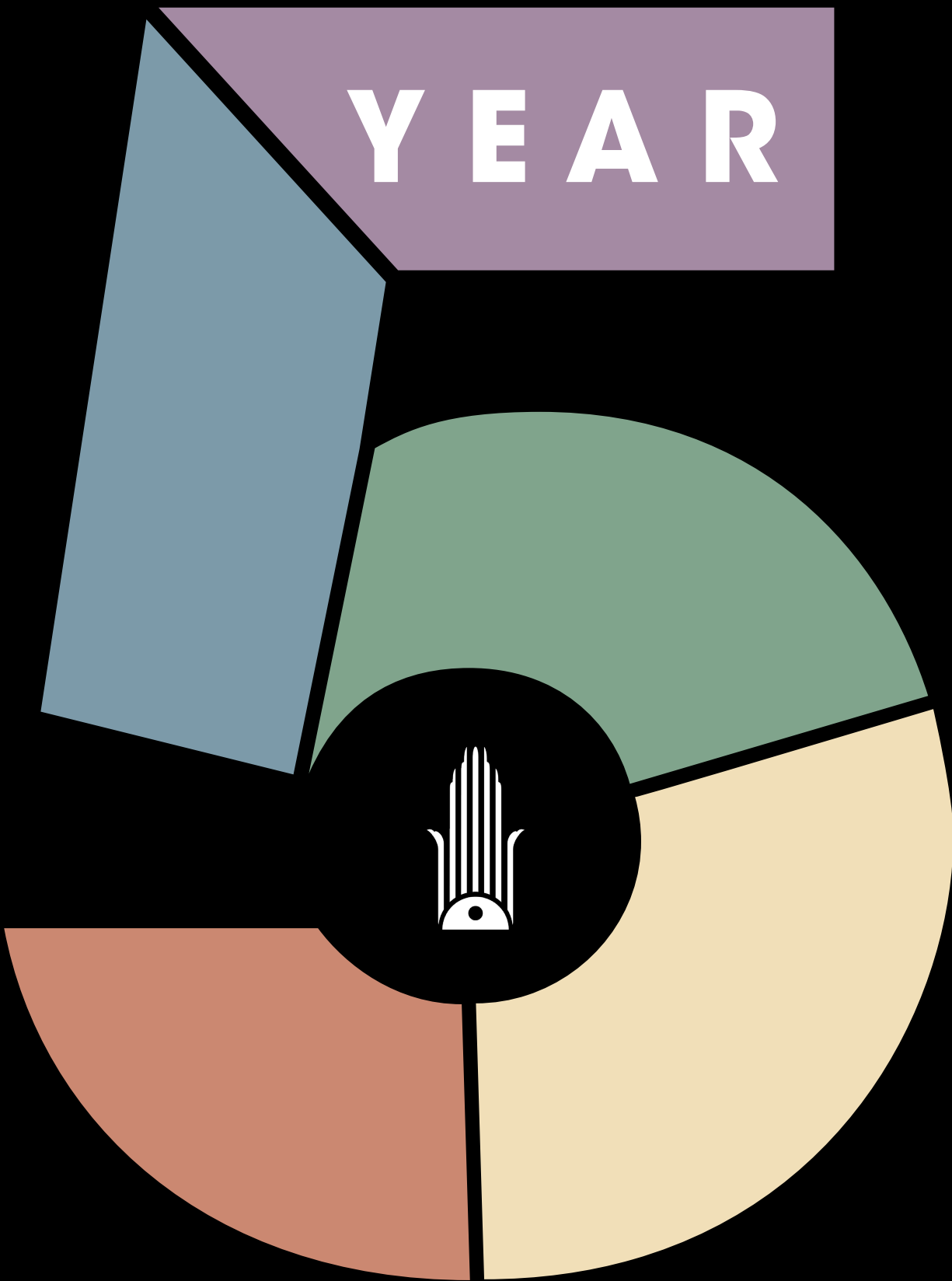


YEAR



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In a Word

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I begin by the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful

After our establishment and launch in 2020, our team navigated virtual community building in the turbulent Covid-Era of 2020 to early 2022. 2022 and 2023 saw the initial stages of establishing ourselves in our space in Pilsen: renovations and an introduction of in-person events to the Muslim community of Chicago.

2024 marked the strengthening of the Sacred Roots seedling. We held our first 'Id al-Fitr prayers which packed the space to its limits. Our core community of volunteers and organizers grew in number and grew in terms of the quality of our relationships together. The sisters community professionally planned and held a 3-week sisters-oriented fellowship with Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji. And we held our second annual Convergence Convert Gathering, hosting over 50 converts from across the US and Canada. Our Thursday Night and Friday Prayer programs grew in number of regular participants.

Perhaps most importantly, the number of young families with young children who communed in Sacred Roots regularly grew: we watched the meeting of parents and the budding of children's friendships which bodes well for Sacred Roots' future.



Children at a Muharram Workshop





You will find in the following pages a brief snapshot of the evolution we collectively undertook in 2024 through a presentation of our events and accomplishments. What is not captured here are the bonds of love that were forged beyond the four walls of Sacred Roots: the many hangouts, dinners, phone calls, and informal study circles that emerged from the exchange of numbers and meeting of hearts at Sacred Roots events.

With prayers for you and yours,

Trenton Carl

Executive Director &
Community Scholar

"So orient yourself to the religion as one
inclined to the Truth - the Divine nature with
which God created humanity."

— The Qur'an,
Surat al-Rum 30:30



Vision

To be a home for Muslims and the spiritually
curious

Mission

Sacred Roots works to nourish a community of Muslims rooted in the teachings of the Prophet (s) and his Family ('a). We connect people of various backgrounds and experiences and together explore the spiritual and intellectual heritage of Islam through acts of devotion, study, and service.



Core *Principles*

Devotion

To foster an atmosphere that embodies commitment to Islamic conduct, etiquette, and decorum

Diversity

To create a culture that fosters meaningful and lasting connections between individuals from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences

A Spirit of Openness

To cultivate an environment that is open to all Muslims, people of other faith traditions, and people without affiliation with a faith tradition

Study

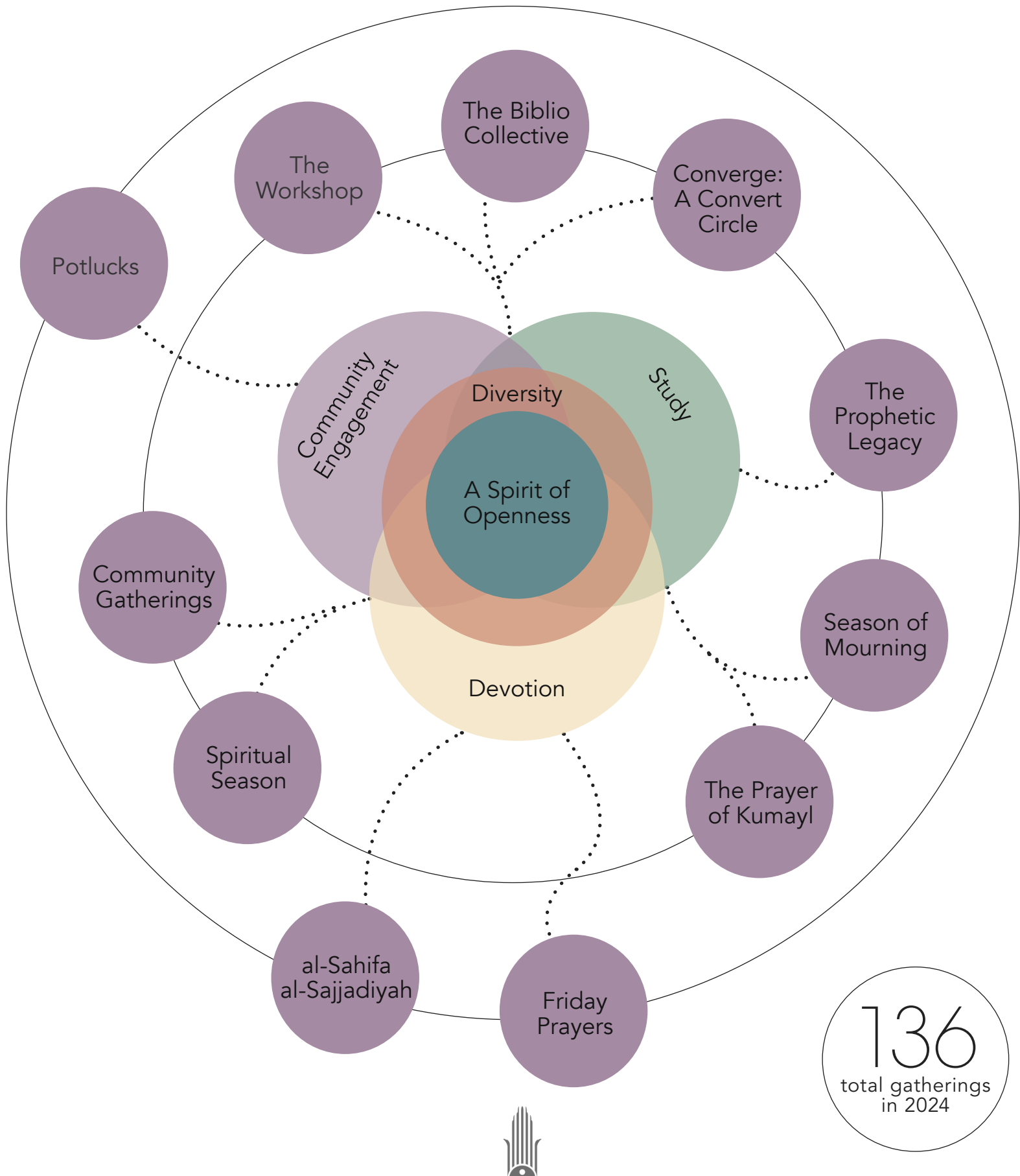
To preserve and navigate the Islamic tradition as lived by the Prophet and his Family

Community Engagement

To engage the needs of our local community



Principles *in Action*



Devotion

To foster an atmosphere that embodies commitment to Islamic conduct, etiquette, and decorum



Building the spirit is the fundamental role of Islam. It is a path toward God and the expression of humankind's highest potential.

The Friday Prayer (Salaat al-Jumu'ah) provided a weekly touch point for spiritual reminders and socio-political analysis alike—the spiritual path is social in nature. Each month we prayed the prayers of the Ahl al-Bayt in congregation: readings of both **Dua Kumayl** and the prayers of Imam 'Ali son of Husayn from his **al-Sahifat al-Sajjaadiyyah**.

We punctuated the year with reflections on the teachings of the Family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) through our occasional **Prophetic Legacy** events, including one even with guest scholar Shaykh Haziq Sheikh.



Devotion

Each year we have two crescendos of communal spiritual life:

Our 11 Muharram lectures entitled **Between Tyranny and the Sacred - How Religion Loses its Edge** connected our consciences with the legacy of Imam al-Husayn and his disciples. Vocalists Hussayn and Salihah Aakil brought an original brand of English-language remembrance and verse which deepened our experience.



During Ramadan we hosted nights of prayer, reflection, and breaking bread (iftar). Our lecture series was entitled **Divine Disclosures: Reflections on Revelation**. We capped off the month with our first ever Salat al-'Eid with a crowd that brought our space to full capacity.



Study

The intellectual heritage of Islam is kept alive through communal curiosity. Exploring texts and teachings of our forebears and applying them to our circumstances brings our religion to bear on our lived reality—a necessary component of spiritual revival.

To encourage active learning, we held three separate book clubs last year:

1. **The Biblio Collective - A Memorandum on Interfaith Harmony in Islam by Shaykh Haydar Hubbullah**
This book helped us explore themes of sectarian discord and harmony and provided us key reflection points for building a stronger, broad based Muslim community.
2. **Sacred Roots Sisters Book Club - God's Emissaries by Shaykh Rizwan Arastu**
Our women's book club explored the narratives of the Prophets to flesh out the challenges and victories of the Prophetic struggles through time.
3. **Sacred Reads: The Stolen Dream by Shaykh Javad Shomali and Zahraa El-Kabengi**
provided us insight into the history of struggles for liberation as well as a narrative that highlighted the towering moral character of Imam Musa al-Sadr



Study



We also held a Chai Chat on Dr. Sherman Jackson's article "Liberalism and the Muslim American Predicament" as part of our exploration of how our society affects our religious practice.

Shaykh Trent taught a seven-part introductory theology class based on Allamah al-Hilli's **al-Bab al-Hadi 'Ashar**.

We also hosted two guest scholars for three separate educational initiatives.

Shaykh Mahdi Rastani joined us via the Mizan Institute to present his two-day course on **The Mahdi** which covered an overview of the source-texts for the concept of the Mahdi in Sunni and Shi'i texts and the overall concept of a "Savior" in religions broadly and Islam in particular.

Shaykh Abdulrahman Cherri taught two parts of his Seven Stages of Spiritual Development course which explored the Islamic understanding of the self, known as "**Islamic Moral Psychology**."



Sacred Roots *Student Collective*



The Sacred Roots Student Collective (SRSC) is a student-led branch of Sacred Roots that aims to provide college and university students with opportunities to explore the spiritual heritage of Islam and to build a community of Muslim students in the Chicagoland area.

SRSC hosted a series of Ramadan programs for the whole community centered on the theme of **Knowledge, Power, and Privilege**. Shaykh Trent presented 3 lectures exploring questions to help us strive to “be maintainers of justice” (Q. 4:135) and be part of building a better, spiritually oriented world: Is privilege a problem? How can we use our power, privilege, and knowledge to do good in the world?



Their Chai Chat program on **Decolonizing the Soul** brought students together to discuss issues related to the material manifestations of their spiritual ideals.

And, importantly, they hosted several relaxed programs for building out student friendships.

Convergence *Conference*

Convergence is an annual gathering for converts to Islam who follow the teachings of the Family of the Prophet—the Ahl al-Bayt. This is a space for new Muslims, veteran converts, and legacy Muslims who later adopted the teachings of the Family of the Prophet.



We held our conference in October 2024 and hosted over 50 converts from the United States and Canada.

We discussed issues from marriage, to converts leaving a legacy to dealing with issues of death and dying as our elders face their mortality. Wisdom was passed down from veteran converts to new Muslims and bonds of trust were built across race, ethnicity, and generation.

**2024
Conference
Recap**





Attendees at Convergence

Convergence *Conference*



We hosted the following educators
and scholars:

Sister Nzinga E. Abdullah-Aziz
Shaykh Anwar Abdulmalik
Shaykh Rizwan Arastu
Sister Latifa Barnett
Shaykh Trenton Carl
Professor Peter Dziedzic
Shaykh Naveed Ganjani
Sayyid Sulayman Hassan
Shaykh Jafar Muhibullah
Dr. Ulrick Vieux



Convergence *Conference*

In addition to our vulnerable conversations and in-depth workshops, we enjoyed meals together and explored the historic Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago.



We have had the blessing of keeping in touch as a cohort and expanded our network of converts across the United States and Canada to provide support to the broader Convert community.

Dialogues on Spiritual Wayfaring

with Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji



Dialogues on Spiritual Wayfaring was a three-week fellowship with Ustadhah Fatemah Meghji built by sisters for sisters. The fellowship included:

Paragons of Piety

A 5-part workshop series entitled "Paragons of Piety" that explored the lives of pious women and their relationships with the Qur'an.

The Circles of Community social series that brought the women of our community together for an informal outing with Ustadhah Fatemah.

Retreat

A capstone two-day retreat in the Indiana Dunes for a weekend of worship, learning, and friendship.



Community *Engagement*



Apple Picking

Our community is geared toward applying Prophetic principles to the spiritual, social, and cultural challenges that beset the American Muslim community.

We held several programs in support of Palestine, including:

Chicago Efforts for Palestine with USPCN and Shirien D. and the **"Posters for Palestine"** event prior to marching in the city.

We held a workshop with Chi-Care to discuss the Muslim imperative to fight food insecurity in Chicago: **Food For Thought: Tackling Food Insecurity in Chicago.**

We held several programs meant to fight the isolation of contemporary society, by bringing people together for socializing and ideating around their community. Our community exists beyond the 4-walls of the community center itself. The center is just the vector for enhancing our relationships. The people are the engine of Sacred Roots and 2024 was a year of growing friendships.

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Looking Back

September 2019 - February 2020

The birth of the idea behind Sacred Roots; identifying our potential future community, and exploring Chicago looking for a Space

March 2020

Recognizing the challenge of COVID we launch our project as a virtual community

April 2, 2020

Our first event: On the Path to Mercy I: Preparing Spiritually for the Month of Ramadan

August 15-16, 2020

We launch Horizons, a (virtual) initiative focused on key issues related to cultivating the Muslim community in the United States

August 24, 2020

Our first series of Muharram Lectures begins "Karbala, Community, and Liberation"

February 20, 2021

Our first commemoration of Malcolm X's Martyrdom: On Sacrifice: Lessons from The Audubon with Ustadh Ubaydullah Evans

February 25, 2022

Our first in-person event at our space in Pilsen - Sacred Roots Student Collective Chai Chat: Mental Health in Islamic Communities

April 2022

Our first in-person series of Ramadan Gatherings

August 1, 2022

Our first in-person series of Muharram Lectures

June 24, 2022

Our first Friday Prayer

May 2023

We complete renovations and A/V system installation

October 27 - 29, 2023

We launch our first Convergence Convert Gathering

Final Word

2025 is set to be a year of maturation. Our community has grown significantly and is strongly multi-generational and multi-ethnic while maintaining its spirit of openness to newcomers. In the early days of 2025 we have had the most interest in newcomers and the most new conversions in the space than in years past.

This year we plan to:

- Strengthen our organizational and planning capacity
- Expand our programs for children
- Begin a regular mutual-aid service for our neighborhood
- Begin the process of saving for an expansion (and perhaps parking) in the medium term
- Build on our successful Convergence Convert Retreat from 2024 through hosting another annual retreat and visiting convert-heavy communities as a means of supporting the national community
- Deepen our bonds with our core audience and continue the work of bringing newcomers into the fold.

Sacred Roots is fostered by the prayers and financial support of our community. As such, we kindly ask that you consider financially supporting Sacred Roots. Your generous donations allow us to effectively meet our community's growing needs and enhance the potential of the Chicago Muslim Ecosystem!

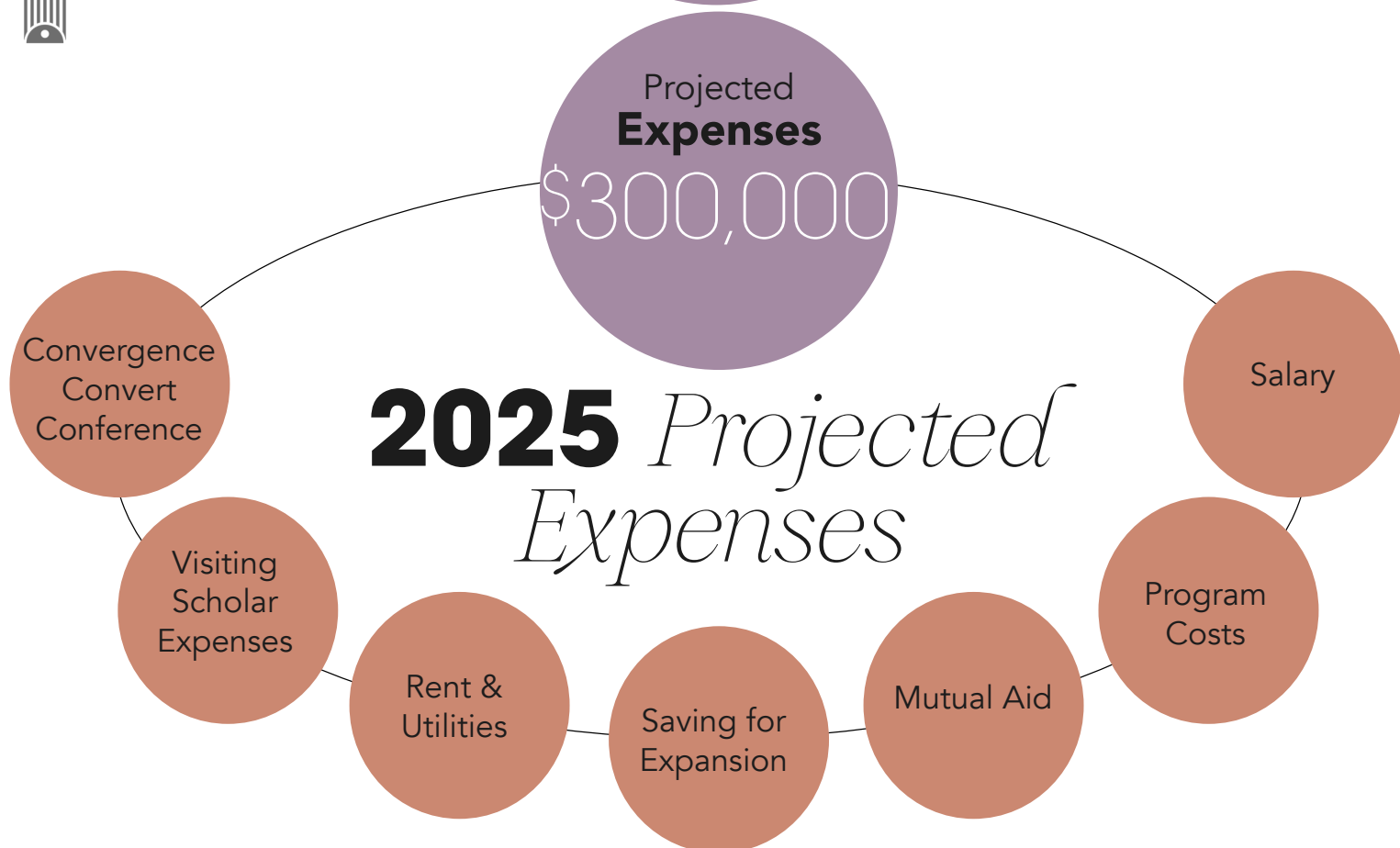
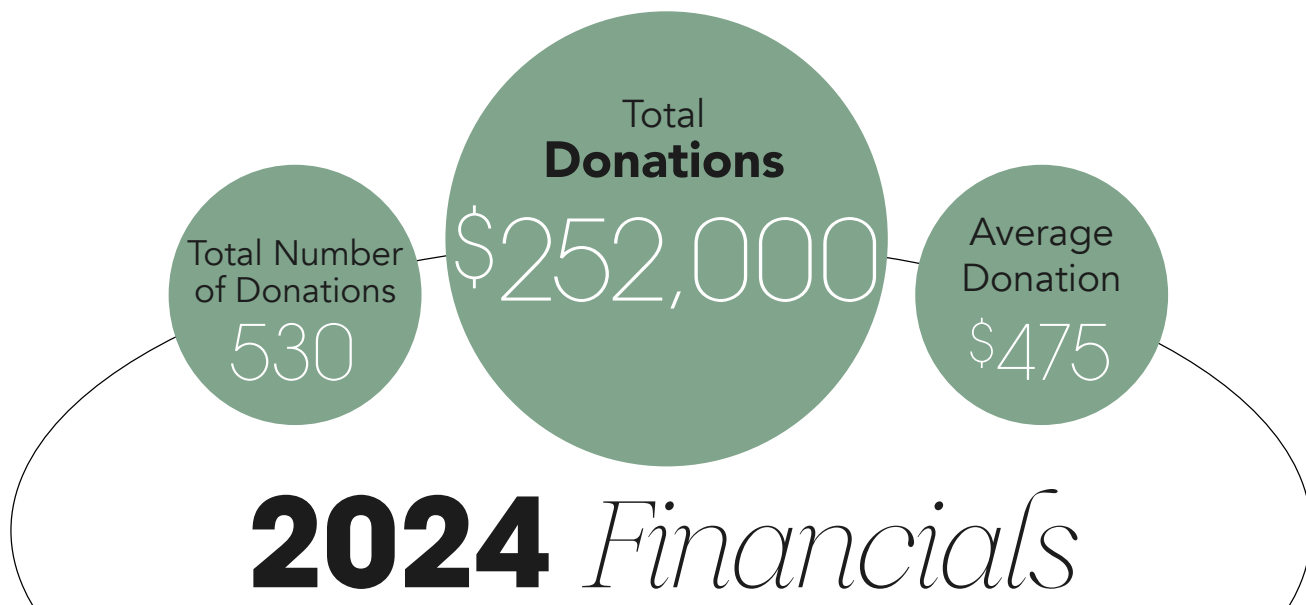
With prayers,

The Sacred Roots Team



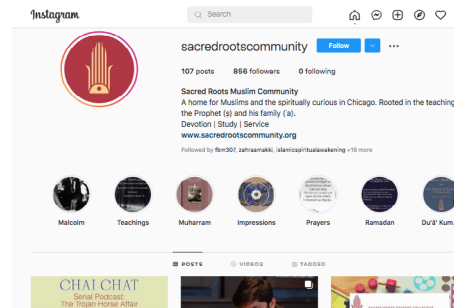
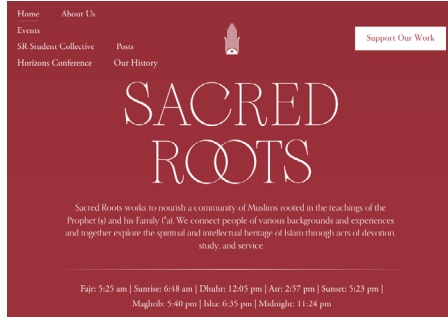
**Build and
Sustain**





Stay Connected

Click on the images to join us on our
online platforms

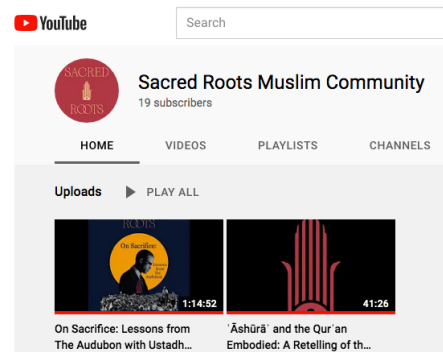


Our Website:

Find our event
calendar and prayer
times, support our
work, sign up for our
mailing list, and more

Our Instagram:

@sacredrootscommunity



Our Facebook:

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