

YEAR

SACRED
ROOTS

2025
YEAR IN REVIEW

Contents

Click on page number to jump to section

03

In a Word:
Letter from the
Executive Director

05

In Theory:
About the
organization

08

In Action:
How our principles
translate to programs

20

Final Word:
How you can get
involved

21

In Fiscal Terms:
Finances

22

Stay Connected

In a Word

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

2025 was a year of sustained growth at Sacred Roots.

We increased our programs yet again to **143 events** throughout the year—that'd be about one event every three days if spaced apart equally. At our community's request we started hosting programs every Thursday instead of twice monthly. We hosted 20 unique guest educators from across the United States - scholars ('ulama), artists, teachers, and community members. Our Convergence Convert Conference nearly doubled in terms of registrants. And through the establishment of Fatima's Community Kitchen we **served over 1300 meals** to our neighbors in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago.

Finally, our average attendance per event grew about 32%, demonstrating a broader engagement with our education and service programs.

Our community grew closer together physically and spiritually. Several members and families have made it a point to move closer to our physical location. Many of our young couples welcomed their first children, bringing to life a much more vibrant community with the laughs and cries of our young community members and paving the way for a rich communal future.





Introducing Sacred Roots

Fatima's Community Kitchen has fostered a **deeper relationship with our local neighbors** - both through serving the underserved and through working collaboratively with Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors to cook and distribute meals.

In the following pages you'll find some of the details describing our community's sustained growth. We welcome you to join us to experience for yourself and to contribute to Sacred Roots in 2026 and beyond.

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.





Commemorating Imam 'Ali's Legacy



Core Principles



15th of Sha'ban - Reading Du'a Kumayl

Devotion

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

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

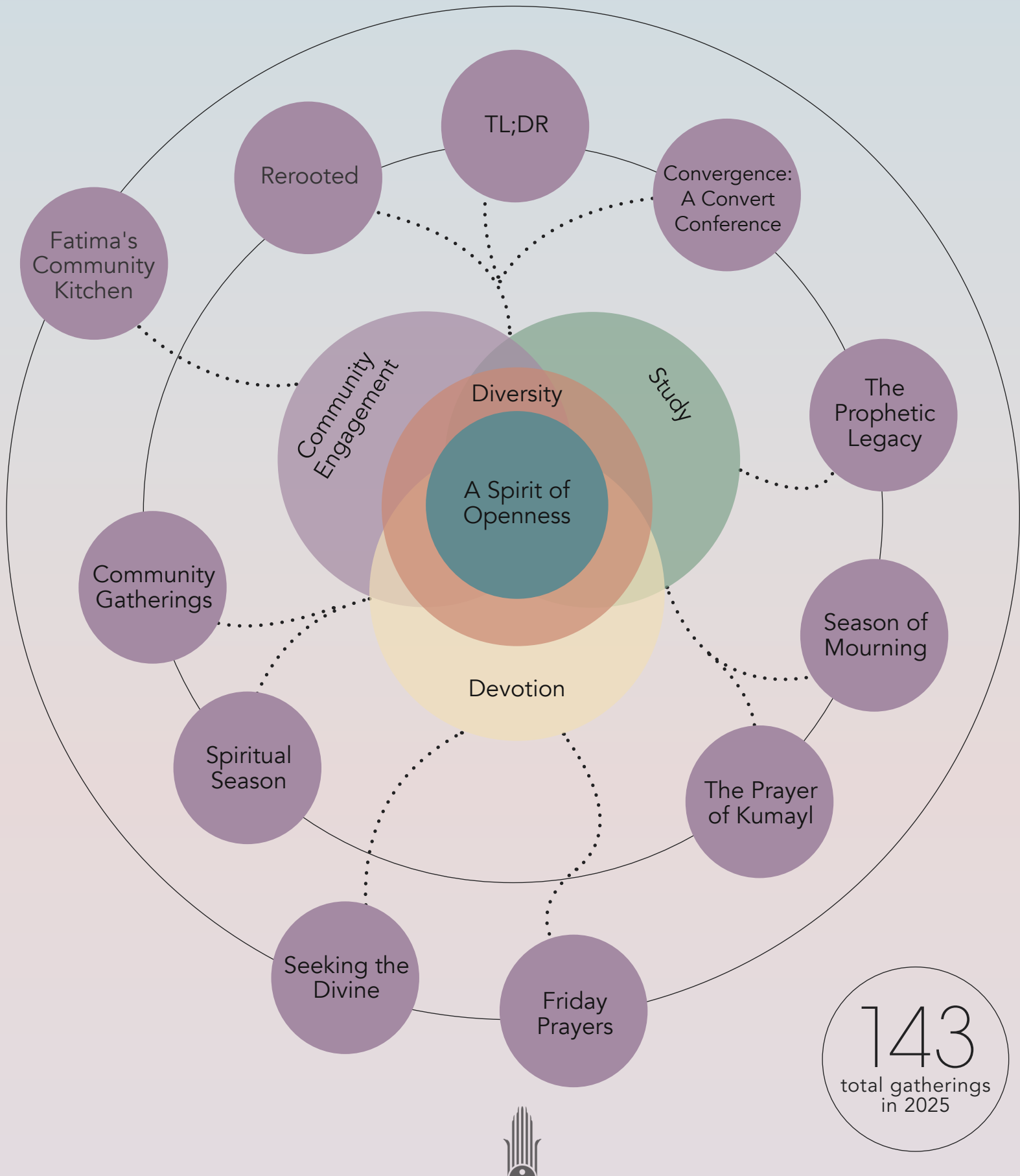
Diversity

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



Serving our Pilsen neighbors

Principles in Action



Devotion



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

The **Friday Prayer** (Salat al-Jumu'ah) provided a weekly touch point for spiritual reminders and socio-political analysis of the world we inhabit – the spiritual path is social in nature.

Thursday evening programs included the recital of **The Prayer of Kumayl**, the prayers of Imam 'Ali son of Husayn from his Psalms of Islam (al-Sahifat al-Sajjadiyyah), and various series on topical social issues such as Crosscurrents: Faith, Politics, and Media.

We punctuated the year with reflections on the teachings of the Family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) through our occasional **Prophetic Legacy** events marking the Birth of the Prophet, the event of Ghadir, and other watershed dates on our sacred calendar.



Devotion



Children's program in Muharram



Each year we have two crescendos of communal spiritual life:

Our 11 **Muharram** lectures entitled: **What is Real? Modern Man and Illusion** connected our hearts and minds with the legacy of Imam al-Husayn and his disciples. Vocalists Hussayn and Salihah Aakil once again brought an original brand of English-language remembrance in verse which deepened our experience through aesthetic expression. We also hosted our first ever woman's only gathering for Imam al-Husayn.

During **Ramadan** we hosted nights of prayer, reflection, and breaking bread (iftar). Our lecture series **Constellations of Meaning** examined the subtleties and depths of meaning of core Islamic concepts and ideas in order to intensify our spiritual quests.

We also held simultaneous **children's programs** through both Muharram and Ramadan programs.



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 several educational initiatives

1. **TL;DR: A Book Guide to Shi'ite Islam by 'Allamah Tabatabai** a summary and discussion of portions of Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i's book Shi'ite Islam which explores major themes of Islamic history, religious thought, and theology.
2. **Call on God: A Workshop on Prayer** to explore salah's spiritual meaning, purposes, and benefits as well as the foundational rules that give it definition and meaning.
3. **Mizan: The Mahdi Part 2: Minor and Major Occultation with Shaykh Mahdi Rastani** which is a follow up to Part 1 that we held the prior year about the Minor and Major Occultations of Imam al-Mahdi.
4. **Rerooted** is a meetup for converts and people interested in Islam that we hold throughout the year. Its topics are specifically oriented toward building the educational, social, and spiritual tools for converts and seekers to build a strong religious life.





*Across the Great Divide
with Dr. David Coolidge*



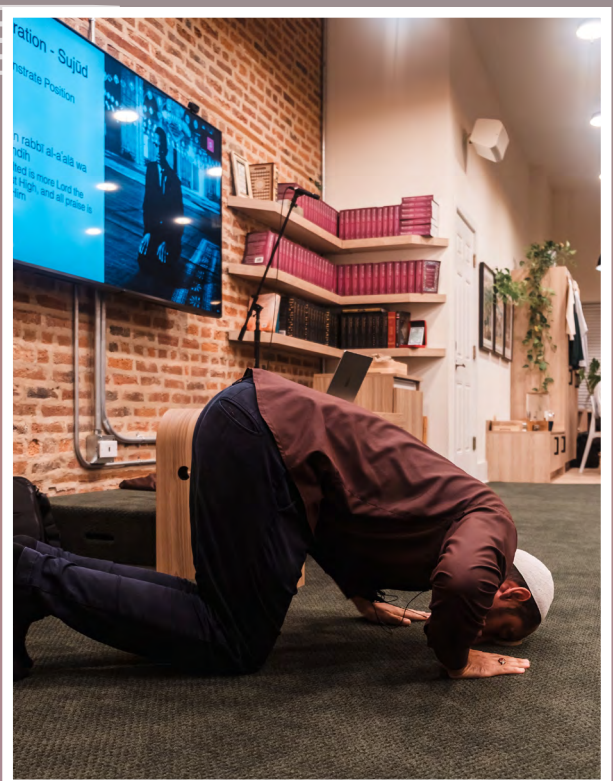
*Community and Modern-'isms'
with Shaykh Azhar Sheraze*



*The Mahdi
with Shaykh Mahdi Rastani*



Crosscurrents



*Call on God:
A Workshop on Prayer*

Study

5. **Pathway to Salah: Sister's Workshop** a woman's-only event with Sister Kauser that reviewed the rules of recitation and the principles of leading prayer in a woman's only setting.
6. **Crosscurrents – Faith, Politics, and Media** explored the nature of the system of news propaganda and the role of the market/commercialism in shaping both the media and the masses.
7. **Cross Currents – Faith, Politics, and Class** examined the history of worker struggle in the US and the pressing need of being critical of our economic system as it hollows out the middle class, deepens poverty, and plays a role in the Genocide against the Palestinians.
8. **Across the Great Divide – 1000 years of Hindu-Muslim Exchange** with Dr. David Coolidge an academic exploration of the history of Hindus and Muslims living side side on planet Earth, and what it means for our global society of the 21st century.
9. **Practical Economics in Uncertain Times – Part 1 Everyday Living** a talk on recent economic news and projections to illustrate the potential downturn the global economy may face in the coming year with an eye to finding solutions we can implement today.
10. **Community and Modern "-isms"** - Shaykh Azhar Sheraze explored the intersection of Prophetic Transmission of Guardianship (Wilayah), Community, and Modern "-isms" and ideologies.



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. This event is the **only national convert conference** in the United States hosted by a Sh'ii community. We are attempting to fill a real gap and we invite others to join us in this endeavor, especially in the current era during which interest in Islam is growing.



We held our conference in October 2025 and hosted 65 converts from the United States and Canada - up from 43 in 2023.



Convergence Conference

Topics and Presenters

Reflective Identity Exploration *Latifa Barnett, Ruqayyah Aakil, and Sasa Aakil*

Essential Islam *Shaykh Rizwan Arastu*

**The Challenge of Liberalism:
Moving Towards a God-Oriented
Worldview** *Shaykh Naveed Ganjani*

The Heart of Dignity *Sayyid Sameer Ali and
Sayyid Sulayman Hassan*

**Remembrance in Verse
Poetry Workshop** *Sasa Aakil*

**Belonging as Resistance -
The Power of Muslim Networks** *Shaykh Jafar Muhibullah*

**Reclaiming the Nest 1 & 2 On
Muslim Family Life** *Latifa Barnett and
Nzinga ElMekki Abdullah-Aziz*

**The Power of the Heart -
Community and Soul Building
Narratives** *Teresa Igler and Abbas Muntaqim*

**The Path Ahead: Cultivating
Spiritual Power** *Ustadhah Naadira Muhibullah and
Shaykh Trenton Carl*



Community Engagement

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

Serving our Society

In Action

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا
وَأَسِيرًا



إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً
وَلَا شُكُورًا

— The Quran
Surah Al-Insaan 76:8-9

For the love of God, they feed the needy,
the orphan and the prisoner,

saying 'We feed you only for the sake of
God. We desire no reward from you, nor
thanks.'

Fatima's Community Kitchen is a monthly initiative to foster mutual aid and care within our community. Each month our community and neighbors cook meals and distribute them in our neighborhood to folks who need a boost. We made over 1300 meals in 2025. This has been one of the most impactful programs in terms of connecting us with our local community.

Sharing Blessings Community Drive
with Azadar e Imam Clinic

Who is Hussain: Winter Care Drive

Support
Sacred
Roots

Sacred Roots 2025



Community Engagement

Building our Community



Throughout the year we held a variety of programs to build friendships: family meetups at the Zoon, The Ramadan Games Strategic Trivia, hikes, meetups at apple orchards, and even a Zabihah Meat program with Shaykh Rizwan. The community is built through building trust, a trust that comes through frequent social interactions beyond the prayer space.

Finally, we have developed a modest mutual aid fund to support our community members who find themselves in a financial bind. Alhamdulillah for all of your support.

Final Word

In 2024 we set a goal that 2025 would be a year of maturation. The prior pages reflect our steps toward that goal. We have grown our community numerically in terms of attendance (a **20% increase in attendance** based on RSVP data which is conservative compared to actual numbers) and deepened our trust and reliance on one another.



In 2026 we hope to continue on the same path. As we continue to grow we will need to count on your expanded support, especially as we look ahead 5 years when we anticipate needing an expanded space to better serve newcomers to the community and the younger generation of children that have been born over the last two years, alhamdulillah.

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!

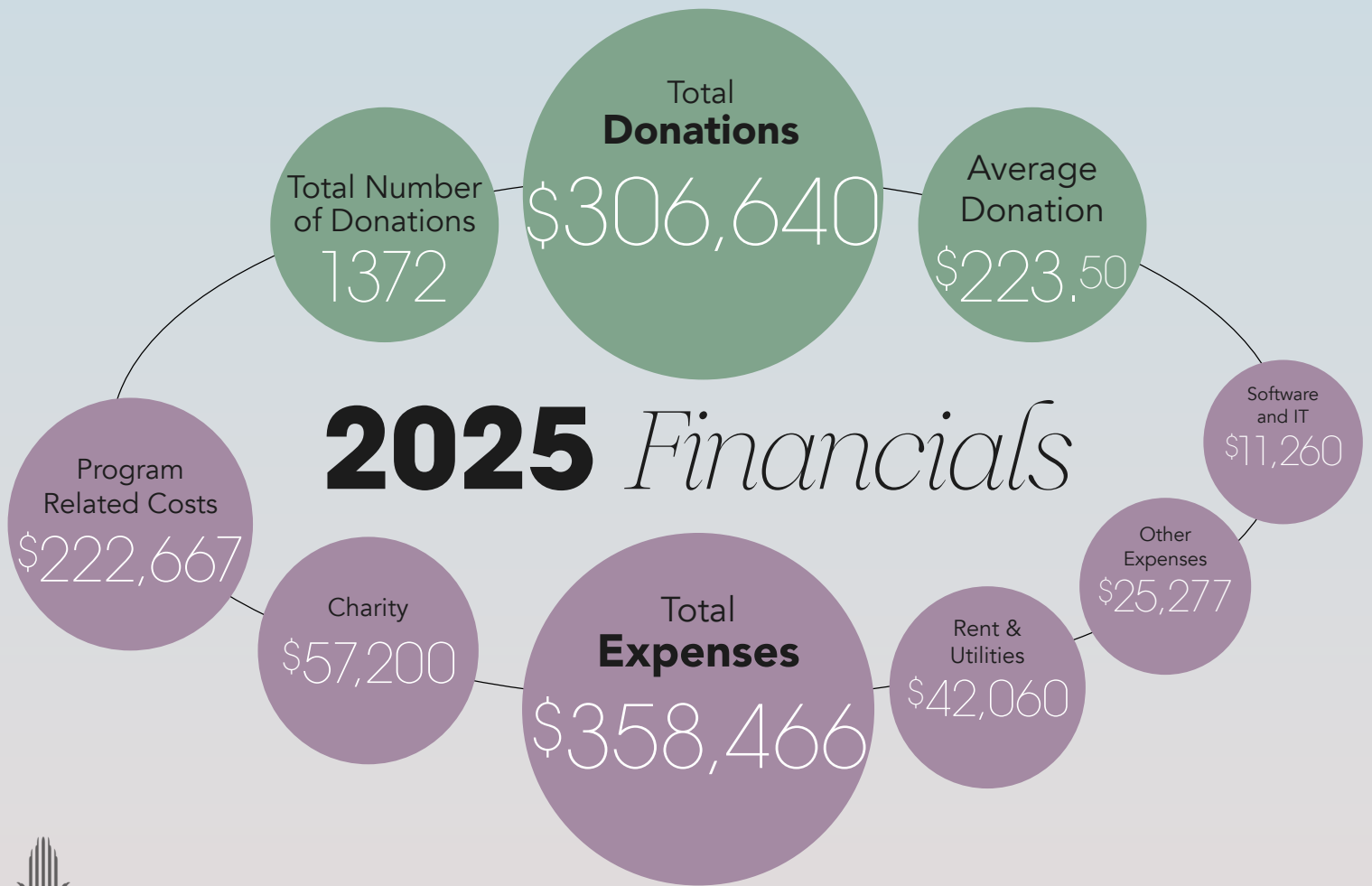
With prayers,
The Sacred Roots Team

**Build and
Sustain**

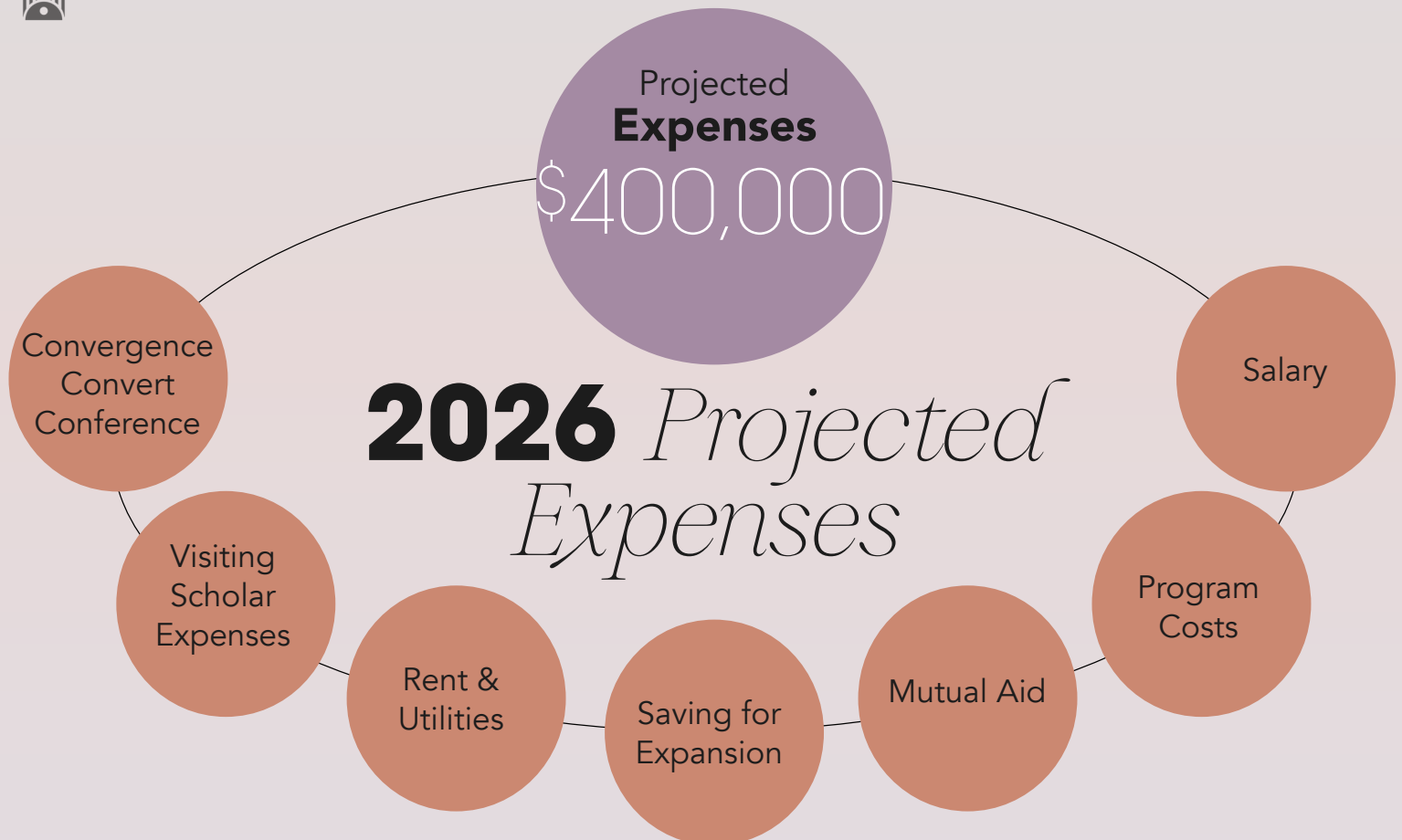
[Back to top](#)



2025 *Financials*

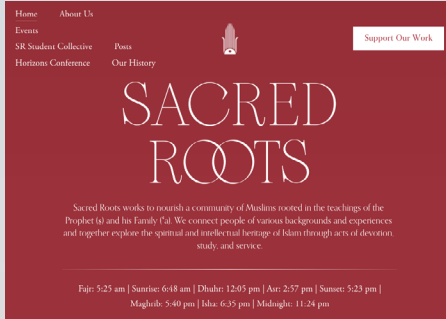


2026 *Projected Expenses*



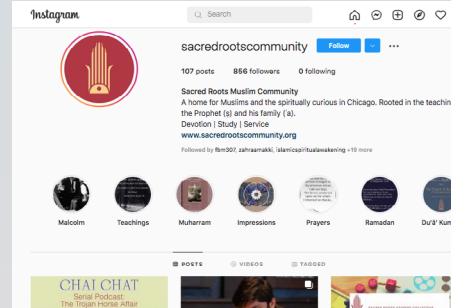
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Click on the images to join us on our
online platforms



Our Website:

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



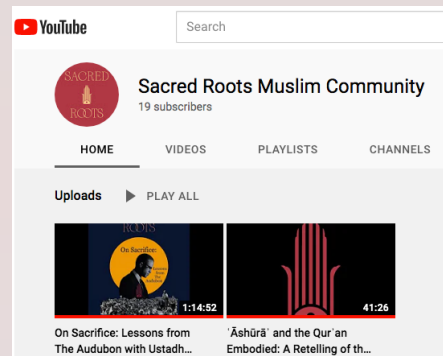
Our Instagram:

@SacredRootsCommunity



Our Facebook:

Sacred Roots Muslim Community



Our YouTube:

Sacred Roots Muslim Community

