

## About the Artist

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Nisha Purushotham is a multi-instrumental musician, artist educator, and singer-songwriter. From the age of 7 through 18 she studied Western Classical piano, learning and performing a repertoire of works from the Baroque, Romantic and Classical periods. Over the past 12 years she has studied Afro-Caribbean percussion with Caribbean master drummers in the US and Cuba. In 2006, 2008, and 2010 she was selected by the Rhode Island and Massachusetts State Councils on the Arts to study tabla, an Indian drum, with master percussionists from India. In 2000, Nisha began The Rhythm and Roots Project which builds relationships, inspires creative expression and nurtures cultural education through workshops rooted in traditional rhythms and folk songs of West Africa, the Caribbean and North America. Since its inception The Rhythm and Roots Project has engaged hundreds of participants in over 50 schools, universities, non-profit and arts organizations, churches, and retreat centers throughout the North East of the United States. In 2009, Nisha released her debut CD, Living Water available at her website.

## Experience of Participants

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Nisha Purushotham, musician, educator and activist has the unique gift of weaving into the hearts of others the joy of making music while sampling the richness of the culture residing within the sounds. Nisha is an excellent resource for any congregation, organization or youth group seeking a new and experiential way to enjoy the rhythms of our neighbors near and far.

*Gary Richards, Pastor  
New Covenant UMC, East Hartford, CT*

Working with Nisha was such a great experience. Through her I learned that a drumming group not only creates music, but creates a bridge between cultures.

*Cheryl Goodney, Youth Member  
Aldersgate UMC, Worcester, MA*

In a manner that can only be described as miraculous, Nisha helped the young people of Grace Church connect with themselves, with each other and with Scripture through the use of Afro-Caribbean drumming. Simply transformational.

*Jorge Lockward, Global Praise Director  
General Board of Global Ministries, of the UMC,  
New York, NY*

Nisha is a gifted musician with an amazing ability to create connections between people of all ages, abilities, experiences, ethnic backgrounds and languages. Her instructional style embraces the differences of all involved and allows each individual to shine through while maintaining the cohesive nature of the group.

*Alicia Vélez-Stewart, Member  
Open Table of Christ UMC, Providence, RI*



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# Building Community Across Cultures



The Rhythm and Roots Project offers workshops to congregations seeking to:

- create liturgy reflective of a spectrum of cultural experiences
- build cross-cultural relationships within their congregation and community
- pray and act in solidarity with the world.

**For churches with a multicultural congregation,** liturgy that reflects diverse perspectives nurtures authentic cross-cultural community building where all have voice and respect for different ways of experiencing God and the world.

**For churches based in multicultural neighborhoods,** a commitment to multicultural worship and ministries may attract neighbors and create opportunities for the church to be enriched by local cultural resources.

**For churches with largely homogeneous populations,** cross cultural worship experiences can raise awareness of and create a sense of solidarity with global neighbors, particularly those oppressed and marginalized.

## Rhythm and Embodying the Word

***Rhythm and Embodying the Word*** celebrates characteristics of rhythms and songs of Africa and the African diaspora and explores ways this global music can enliven worship experiences. Activities include training in hand drumming and lessons in West African and Afro-Caribbean rhythms. Participants also explore ways of using the drum and simple vocalizing techniques in prayers and readings of the Psalms, Genesis, Exodus, the Prophets, the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Revelations.



## Many Voices, One Spirit

***Many Voices, One Spirit*** introduces songs of the Spirit from African, Caribbean, and North American traditions. Participants explore ways of integrating global music into various parts of worship including the call to worship, prayers of confession, intercessory prayers, communion, scripture readings, and transitional moments. After experiencing and examining the cultural context of these songs of the Spirit, participants dialogue about the songs' relevance to their own spiritual journey.

## Story Circles



***Story Circles*** embolden participants to experience the power of their own story and its relevance to the stories of others. Story Circles build and strengthen relationships across the borders of race, gender, class, and culture. The Story Circle process consists of periods of community drumming, silence, group singing, and individual sharing that center on a theme, symbol or reading. The process creates safe space for creative expression, personal sharing, and deep listening.

All workshops can be tailored to the seasons of the Christian year and/or needs of local churches. For more information or to book a workshop please contact Nisha at:

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