

AN INTERAITH LITURGY FOR HEALING AND UNITY

Friday, December 4, 2015

St. George's Episcopal Church – Fredericksburg, VA

7 o'clock in the evening

Welcome

The Rev. Joe Hensley

Tonight's service brings together elements of two faiths, Christianity and Islam, as a sign of the possibility of togetherness. Other faiths may be represented here, as well. We welcome everyone to join in these prayers as you feel comfortable or to participate with listening hearts. You are also welcome to remain after the service in silent prayer.

Opening Prayer in Arabic

Fredericksburg Muslim Council

Sura Al-Fatiha ("The Opening") is the first chapter of the Quran. Its verses are a prayer for God's guidance and stress the Lordship and Mercy of Allah.

Together in English:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful:
All Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Universe
The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
Owner of the Day of Judgement.

You alone do we worship, and You alone we turn to for help
Guide us to the straight path;
The path of those on whom You have bestowed your grace, not
(the way) of those who have earned Your anger, nor of those who
went astray.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 1:68-75

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies

Leader: Gracious God, we acknowledge the imperfection of human judgment. We acknowledge that we make mistakes. We acknowledge that our highest institutions, in which we put our confidence, are fallible, just as we as individuals are fallible. We acknowledge that you are the ultimate source of all justice. **People: We ask for humility and grace.** *(silence)*

Leader: Creator God, we pray for all who govern and all who are invested with power to make decisions for our community.

People: Give them strength and courage to seek your truth and your justice. *(silence)*

Leader: God of all life, you value all human life and command us to do likewise. **People: Help us to honor life as you do.** *(silence)*

Leader: History-changing God, in the words of the ancient prophet Amos, we ask that "justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Spark human action to prevent human injustice. Bless us and our efforts to do your work of peacemaking and justice. Strengthen us to be instruments of your love, your peace and your justice.

People: Amen, Ameen, Ashé, so be it.

Additional Prayers from Every Heart and all Faiths

Seated

Prayers may be offered, silently or aloud, in whatever form your heart or tradition offers. During this time of freely offered prayer and during the song that follows, you are also welcome to light a votive candle as a symbol of your prayer. The words of the song are: "Peace. Salaam. Shalom" which are words for peace in English, Arabic, and Hebrew. Please join in the words which are repeated as a chant.

At the conclusion of the service the people say together:

Almighty and Merciful God, who created humanity in all its wonderful diversity: help us to be peacemakers and inspire us to repel evil with good. Help us to love our neighbors, to welcome the stranger, and to turn enemies into friends. Guide us as one community as we travel the path of justice, peace, and understanding. Amen.

Leader: As salamu alaykum! **People: Alaykum salaam!**

Leader: God's peace be with you! **People: And also with you!**

Everyone is welcome to come downstairs to Sydnor Hall (stairwells and elevators are located in the corners of the church) for refreshments and a chance to greet one another.

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and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Psalm 145 verses 2-11 (unison)

- ² Every day I will bless you,
and praise your name forever and ever.
- ³ Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.
- ⁴ One generation shall laud your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
- ⁵ On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- ⁶ The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,
and I will declare your greatness.
- ⁷ They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- ⁸ The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ The LORD is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.
- ¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your faithful shall bless you.
- ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
and tell of your power.

Reading from the Quran Chapter 49, Verse 13

O mankind! We created you male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know and honor each other (not that you should despise one another). Indeed the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most righteous.

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Litany for Healing and Justice

Leader: Creator God, we gather together in community. We gather as people of conscience and as people of faith. We gather from different corners of our community bringing together the diversity of your people in one place: different cultures, ages, genders, and life experiences. But we gather here tonight in one spirit and with one purpose.

People: We join our hearts, our spirits and our minds. (silence)

Leader: Almighty God, we come with troubled hearts. We are perplexed and we are disturbed. We are anxious and we are concerned. We are carrying heavy burdens and we know we need the strength that only you can give. **People: We lift up our burdens and ask for strength. (silence)**

Leader: We pray for all who are suffering in the wake of violence. While we cannot fathom the depth of their anger and sorrow, we lift them up in prayer and ask that your healing powers continue to work in their hearts.

People: We ask for healing and justice on their behalf. (silence)

Leader: Comforter God, we pray also for the people of the world asking for your continued presence with them, amidst their pain and division.

People: We ask for restoration. (silence)

Leader: Miracle-working God, we continue to put our faith in your love for creation and in your divine justice. We ask for your peace, which passes all understanding and we pray that your justice, which surpasses human imperfection, be done on earth. **People: We long for your peace and justice. (silence)**

Leader: Omnipotent God, we know that all things are possible for you. We know that a way can always be made for your love and your justice. We know that you can make the sun to cast out the darkness at any time.

People: We pray that your light will shine on us and cast out the darkness of this world. (silence)