



NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 | Issue 12

December 2023 | Jumada al-Awal - Jumada al-Thani 1445



“O you who believe, be patient and persevere, strengthen each other and be firm, always be mindful of God, so that you may prosper.” [Aal ‘Imran, 3:200]

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“A group of my Ummah will continue to prevail and they will never be harmed by those who forsake them, until the Hour begins.” [Ibn Majah]

News Release

Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration Promotes Unity and Gratitude in Warren

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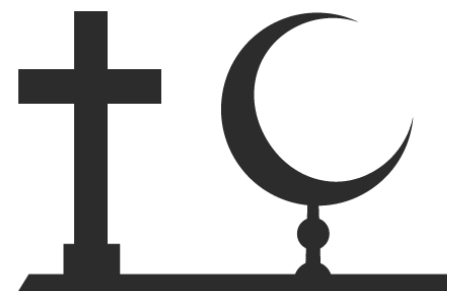
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Monthly Family Dinner

Bring your family and friends to spend an evening with your community.

Wear Your Hijab With Strength and Pride During Difficult Times

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Interfaith Relations

IONA, proudly participated in a religious panel discussion

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News Release

Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration Promotes Unity and Gratitude in Warren

[Warren, MI, November 17, 2023] – On Thursday, November 16, Imam Mustapha Elturk, Ameer of IONA, joined an inspiring Interfaith Thanksgiving event organized by the Interfaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit (IFLC). Held at St. Faustina Catholic Church in Warren, the gathering aimed to bring the community together in a celebration of unity and gratitude.

The evening featured engaging presentations from various faith leaders, fostering a diverse and harmonious environment. Representatives from numerous faiths, including Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and others, shared their perspectives and reflections. Among the esteemed speakers were Paula Drewek, Pastor Melissa Claxton, Nasy Sankagiri, Imam Abdou Zindani, Michel Keslacy, Raman Singh, and Chaplain Michael DeRienzo. The event was attended by a diverse audience, including the newly elected Mayor Lori Stone. (Continued on page 5)



Mustapha Elturk
Ameer

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Michigan Coalition for Human Rights Celebrating Human Dignity and Justice

[Warren, MI-11-13-2023] – The Michigan Coalition for Human Rights (MCHR) convened its prestigious 43rd Annual Award Dinner last night at Marygrove College, marking a momentous occasion in advocating for human dignity, justice, and equity. The event commenced with an inspiring invocation delivered by Imam Mustapha Elturk, Ameer of IONA, and an esteemed advisory board member.

Keynote Speaker and Address

Erin Keith, Managing Policy Council for the Detroit Justice Center, delivered a powerful keynote address, underscoring the Center's commitment to partnering with communities to foster economic opportunities, transform the justice system, and advocate for fair and equitable cities.

Imam Elturk's Invocation

During his invocation, Imam Elturk offered heartfelt prayers for the Palestinians enduring hardships in Gaza and the West Bank, urging an end to dehumanization and conflict. Drawing inspiration from the story of Moses leading the Israelites to freedom, he invoked the spirit of liberation, hoping for freedom and peace for the Palestinian people in the Holy Land.

Awardees

The Michigan Coalition for Human Rights honored Kim Hunter with the Environmental Activist Award; Alexandria Hughes for the Youth Activist Award; and Andrew Sarpolis for the Zerafa Peace Activist Award.

Mission and Vision of MCHR

The Michigan Coalition for Human Rights remains steadfast in its commitment to raising awareness, fostering advocacy, and promoting education on human rights and environmental issues. MCHR stands resolutely against any forces that suppress human dignity, freedom, and justice, both locally and on a global scale.



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Antisemitism - Part 1

What is antisemitism?

In brief antisemitism may be defined as “hostility towards or discrimination against Jews as a religious or racial group.” Technically speaking, this term is a misnomer because Jews are not the only Semitic people; Arabs too are Semites, even though the term “Antisemitism” is never applied to hostility or discrimination against Arabs. However, since the term “Antisemitism” is now universally understood as denoting irrational hatred and prejudice against the Jewish people.

The Qur'an neither teaches nor condones antisemitism

According to the Qur'an, the entire human race shares a common ancestry traced back to Adam. This fundamental teaching underscores the notion that all individuals, regardless of differences in race, class, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, or any other markers of identity, belong to the same human family.

The Qur'an asserts, *“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.”* (Qur'an, 49:13)

The verse emphasizes the common origin of humanity from a single pair (male and female, Adam and Eve) and the subsequent division into various peoples and tribes. The diversity among human beings, encompassing differences in ethnicity, language, and culture, is portrayed as a purposeful design of God. The purpose of this diversity is to encourage mutual understanding and interaction among people.

In his farewell address, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him, pbuh) reinforced this principle. He addressed the people, stating, “O people! Your Lord is One, and your father is one; all of you are from Adam, and Adam was made from the earth. The noblest among you in God's view is the one who is most pious. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, neither is the white superior over the black, nor is the black superior over the white, except in piety.”

The verse and the statement of the Prophet (pbuh) establish a criterion for honor or nobility, asserting that the most honorable or noble in the sight of God is the one who possesses *taqwa*, righteousness, piety, or God-consciousness. This highlights the idea that one's character and conduct, particularly in terms of adherence to ethical and moral principles, determine a person's true worth.

The measure of nobility or virtue is not rooted in racial or ethnic distinctions but rather in the depth of one's piety and devotion to God. The human diversity is a divine plan aimed at fostering mutual learning and appreciation.

In light of these teachings, there is no religious or moral justification for a Muslim to harbor hatred towards individuals or communities based on racial or religious differences. The Jews, furthermore, are particularly close to Muslims because they are the descendants of the monotheistic community established by the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who holds a highly esteemed status in the Qur'an as a “friend of God” and a “leader of humankind.”

The Qur'an recognizes the “Children of Israel” as a chosen community, blessed by God both materially and spiritually. This acknowledgment in the Qur'an reflects a sense of commonality and shared heritage between Muslims and Jews. The mention of

Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) receiving significant attention in the Qur'an underscores the reverence given to him as a central figure in the monotheistic tradition.

The common lineage and shared spiritual heritage are highlighted to promote unity and discourage discrimination or animosity based on religious or racial distinctions. This inclusive perspective aligns with the broader Islamic principles of compassion, justice, and recognition of the intrinsic worth of every individual, regardless of their background or faith.

It is true that the Qur'an criticizes the “Children of Israel” for their repeated transgressions against divine commandments and their resistance and opposition to prophets. Criticisms of the Jews are not inherently racial but rather ethical. More specifically, the Qur'an criticizes the Jews of Medina, who were contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), for their opposition to Islam and for their violations of the peace-and cooperation treaty with the Muslim community.

Importantly, these critiques are not racially based, rather they are framed within the moral principles that are universally applicable. The Qur'an consistently emphasizes ethical conduct, justice, and adherence to divine guidance for all individuals, regardless of their religious affiliation. The criticism is not rooted in their identity as Jews; instead, it is tied to their actions, particularly their breach of promises and other unrighteous behaviors, as outlined in the Torah.

Crucially, the Qur'an maintains a consistent and impartial moral stance. It recognizes and praises the faithful and righteous individuals among the “People of the Book,” which includes Jews and Christians. Conversely, it does not hesitate to admonish Muslims when they fall short of the moral standards set by the Quranic teachings. This impartial approach underscores the universal nature of the moral guidance provided in the Qur'an, applicable to individuals of all backgrounds.

Anti-Semitism has no precedence in the Islamic tradition or in Muslim history

The historical record of Muslim-Jewish relations confirms the fact that, as a whole, Muslims had not been inherently antisemitic. Muslim societies, particularly before the twentieth century, demonstrated greater tolerance and respect toward their Jewish populations compared to Christian societies of a similar era. This tolerance is seen in various aspects of daily life, including coexistence in cities and shared spaces.

It is certainly true that non-Muslims had a second-class status under Muslim rule. This acknowledgment reflects a historical reality. Non-Muslims, including Jews, often had a different legal status compared to Muslims in various Islamic empires. This second-class status, however, is contextualized by noting that such a distinction was not unique to Muslim societies. It was a prevailing norm in pre-modern societies globally.

Historically speaking, antisemitism had always been a uniquely Christian problem, and its roots can be traced to the New Testament itself. This Christian antisemitism, deeply embedded in theological interpretations for many medieval Christians, posed challenges to the existence of Jewish communities within Christian societies, some of whom periodically sought to exterminate all Jews based on theological grounds. This theological hostility often manifested in acts of violence and persecution.

Continued on page 5

News Release

Exploring Common Ground: IONA's Role in Fostering Interfaith Understanding at Macomb Community College's Panel Discussion

[Warren, MI, October 19, 2023] The Islamic Organization of North America, IONA, proudly participated in a religious panel discussion at the Albert L. Lorenzo Cultural Center of Macomb Community College on Tuesday, October 17, 2023. Imam Mustapha Elturk, Ameer of IONA, joined Rev. Dr. Louis Prues from Presbyterian Village of Michigan, to provide insights into the theological commonalities and differences between Islam and Christianity, with the event skillfully moderated by Dave Tarrant, Director of MORE (Macomb Organization for Retiree Reinforcement).

The discussion highlighted several parallel beliefs between the two religions, including the practice of fasting and the concept of monotheism. While both religions worship one God, they diverge on Christianity's trinity doctrine and the Islamic views of God's oneness. The roles of prophets were also discussed, noting the finality of prophecy with Jesus in Christianity and Muhammad in Islam.

A significant part of the dialogue centered on the figure of Jesus, acknowledged in both religions as destined to return to Earth with differing missions. The panel contrasted Christian beliefs in the crucifixion and divine sonship of Jesus with the Islamic view of him as a messenger and prophet.

The conversation also touched upon the eschatological beliefs common to both faiths, including the existence of an Afterlife, Heaven and Hell, and the concept of divine forgiveness. Additionally, the panelists delved into the origin of the human soul and the innate nature of humanity's relationship with the divine, exploring how both religions understand life's inception and the inherent knowledge of God.

The innate capacity of humans to discern morality and exercise free will was discussed, with a focus on the idea that humans are imbued with a divine quality that enables them to navigate life's moral landscape. The panelists discussed the belief that humans are tested through trials, which serves as a means to recognize and affirm their faith.

The topic of war and its justification terms

was also addressed, with an emphasis on the need for just causes to warrant such actions, a principle that both religions agree upon. The discussion underscored the complexities of modern warfare and the importance of careful religious and ethical consideration before engaging in conflict.

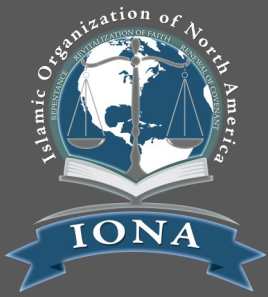


From Left to Right: Imam Mustapha Elturk, David Tarrant, Rev. Dr. Louis Prues

This event underscored the value of interfaith dialogue in promoting understanding and respect among diverse religious communities, highlighting common ground while acknowledging and respecting doctrinal differences.

IONA is honored to have participated in such a meaningful conversation, highlighting the power of interfaith dialogue in a world in need of empathy and understanding. As part of its ongoing mission, IONA will continue to engage in and support such discussions, promoting peace and unity through shared knowledge and respect for all faiths.

END



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Dear Sisters – Wear Your Hijab With Strength and Pride During Difficult Times

We're all pretty much hearing the same thing.

Loving warnings from our family and/or friends to be careful when we go out and about into the world in our hijab. Posts on social media advising hijab-wearing Muslim women to be careful and consider their surroundings. Muslim women expressing fear and concern to be out and about in their hijab and visibly Muslim.

This isn't the first time, nor will it be the last time.

Islamophobic and bias incidents against Muslims are on the rise (as are anti-Semitic incidents). Targeted hate against the backdrop of relentless bombing in Gaza is on the rise, steaming off of social media pages and in real life.

Our dear sisters. We feel you. We are with you. We are you.

Some of you may be too young to have gone through this, but there are others who remember this very feeling post 9/11, when so many of us were fearful of our safety and targeted for being visibly Muslim. That fearful feeling paralyzed many of us for far too long. We've spent a long time since rebuilding; finding ourselves, our voices as Muslim women, and growing our confidence in who we are, our faith and relationship with Allah (S), our place in the communities in which we live, our power and in wearing hijab.

Now it is different. We know who we are. We are stronger. We don't allow our citizenship and our rights as citizens of this land to be questioned, nor do we feel the need to compromise the love we have for the cultures and traditions of our motherlands. We are a major driving force in our communities. And so while many may try to shake and question our position and safety and even our identity, we need to stay the course and stand firm in our belief and unwavering self confidence and self worth – because without that, what do we have?

Do not let ANYONE make you feel less. You are a woman of God.

As Melanie wrote on Instagram:

"After 9/11 we were told not to be seen in our hijabs. To be small. To hide. Don't make too much noise - 20 years later, where did that get us? All it did was make us shrink. We lost pieces of ourselves. Our souls died, and we found ourselves in relationships, jobs, friendships - where we weren't fully seen. Pieces of us showed up. Fragments.

"Today, we cannot teach our children the same thing. We cannot not be seen. Hijab is beautiful. It is the source of light humanity needs today, now more than ever. We are beacons of light, truth and strength.

"My beautiful sisters, wear your hijab with pride. Be all of yourself. Don't hide parts of yourself. Will there be rough days? Of course. But it is those moments that will make you the warrior you were always meant to be."

At Haute Hijab, in the pages of this blog and in the content we create on our social media pages, we've *always* been committed to supporting you on your hijab journey and your journey as a Muslim woman of strength, fortitude and power. We hold incredible power as Muslim women, an "invisible force-field that comes from within and the long line of distinguished Muslim women upon whose shoulders we stand."

Consider the stories of Nusaybah bint Ka'b, Al Khansa, Nana Asma'u, Fatima Al-Fihri, Lubna of Cordoba and more. As Melanie writes, "We come from a long line of leaders, innovators, educators, warriors, artists, caregivers and scholars. They were outspoken, thoughtful and highly ambitious. They didn't wait around for men to tell them what to do. They leaned into their relationship with their creator ..."

In times like these, we must draw strength from the women who came before us. We must trust in our Lord and His protection around us. Yes, we must be careful and vigilant, but also courageous and proud. Being visibly Muslim is a choice filled with all the emotions, feelings and strength of conviction that you have shared with us for years. We know things can be scary. We know you'll have to make these decisions for yourself. We're not here to judge.

But we also know that Allah (S) is with us, and we are with you. This *dunya* was never meant to be easy. It is a test, and we face it with all the love and strength we can muster. As you go about your daily routine, as you walk to classes on your college campus, or wait at the bus stop to go to school, or drop your kids to school, or go to the grocery store, or take part in a protest, begin with *Bismillah* and *Ayatul Kursi*.

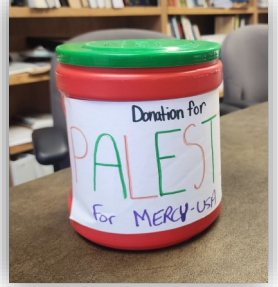
Our dear sisters, take heart and trust in yourself. We are with you. And above all, trust in Allah (S).

Courtesy HauteHijab.com

Youth Corner

Noor Circle Girls Embark on a Creative Journey, Raising Over \$500 for Gaza

The Noor Circle Girls of Youth of Ummah have once again demonstrated their unwavering commitment to philanthropy and creativity. This dynamic group of young contributors raised over \$500 in support of the people of Palestine/Gaza through a fun and inventive initiative.



Amidst an engaging rock-painting session, these vibrant young individuals showcased not only their artistic talents but also their dedication to making a difference. The creative project, where fun met generosity, served as a testament to their ability to blend amusement with benevolence effectively.

The funds raised by these young philanthropists will contribute directly to aiding the people of Palestine/Gaza, underscoring their commitment to making a meaningful difference.

The Noor Circle Girls firmly believe that even at a young age, one can merge enjoyment and generosity for a noble cause. Their initiative not only supported a humanitarian effort but also served as an inspiration to others, proving that compassion knows no age.

Kids Corner

Islam Honors Mothers

A man came to the Prophet and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, who is the person who has the greatest right on me with regards to kindness and attention?" He replied: "Your mother." "Then Who?" He replied: "Your mother." "Then who?" He replied: "Your mother." "Then who?" He replied: "Your father." (Ahmad and Abu Dawud)

The Qur'an also discusses the immense honor and respect due to both parents, and especially to mother.

"And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years, give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination." (Luqman, 31:14)

The verse starts by highlighting the struggles mothers endure during pregnancy, childbirth, and the subsequent nurturing of their children. It speaks of the physical and emotional hardships that mothers undergo, emphasizing the period of breastfeeding which typically lasts for two years. This phase is presented as a time of vulnerability and immense effort for the mother, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and appreciating these sacrifices.

The verse then instructs people to express gratitude both to God and to parents. It stresses that gratitude to parents is like being thankful to the God, indicating the importance of honoring one's parents. The phrase "unto Me is the final destination" reinforces the idea that ultimately, all actions and expressions of gratitude return to God as the ultimate destination and purpose.

Overall, this verse highlights the important role of parents, particularly mothers, and encourages individuals to display gratitude, respect, and kindness towards them as a fundamental aspect of faith and moral responsibility.

Antisemitism - Part 1 ... continued from page 3

Muslims, in contrast, did not grapple with a similar theological predicament. The Qur'an acknowledges Jews and Christians as "People of the Book," recognizing their shared Abrahamic heritage. This perspective allowed Muslims to coexist with Jews and Christians without a theological mandate to exterminate these religious "others".

Unlike the widespread massacres of Jews under Christian rule, Muslim lands did not witness anything remotely comparable. The historical record lacks instances of mass persecutions of Jews based on religious grounds in Muslim-majority regions.

Consequently, nothing even remotely comparable to the widespread massacres of Jews who lived under Christian rule ever took place in Muslim lands. In fact, Muslims and Jews suffered similar treatment in the wake of the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula.

Even in the aftermath of the Reconquista, where both Muslims and Jews faced expulsion, the expelled Jews found refuge in Muslim lands. This historical episode highlights a stark difference in the treatment of minorities, with Muslim societies providing sanctuary to those displaced.

No Muslim society would have justified or endorsed the kind of Nazi policies that led to the Holocaust during World War II. This underlines a distinction between the historical treatment of Jews in Muslim-majority regions and the genocidal policies carried out by the Nazis.

In summary, the historical antisemitism was rooted in Christian theological interpretations, leading to violent persecutions against Jews. In contrast, Muslim-majority regions did not experience comparable theological challenges and, consequently, did not engage in widescale massacres of Jewish communities.

Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration ...continued from page 2

Imam Elturk's message centered on the significance of gratitude in the Islamic faith, emphasizing that gratitude to God remains pivotal in both good and challenging times. He reflected on the unwavering resilience of the Palestinian community in Gaza amid ongoing conflict, underscoring their steadfast faithfulness to God despite immense hardships. Imam Elturk concluded his speech by observing a moment of silence in honor of all innocent lives lost.

Father Bogdan Milosz, Pastor of St. Faustina Parish, concluded the service with a compelling message of compassion, emphasizing the importance of outreach and unity among diverse communities.

Reflecting on the significance of the event, Imam Elturk highlighted, "Although not an Islamic tradition, gratitude to God is central to our faith." He further added, "IONA has been an active participant in the Warren Interfaith Thanksgiving celebration since its inception in 2010 by the Interfaith Center for Racial Justice, where I served on the board. This event beautifully showcases Warren's diversity and stands as a call for compassion and unity."

The Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, followed by a reception, left a profound impression, demonstrating the ability to find common ground and celebrate shared humanity during the Thanksgiving season.

END

Islamic Organization of North America

Presents
**MONTHLY FAMILY
DINNER**

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an evening out with your community!

7:00 PM

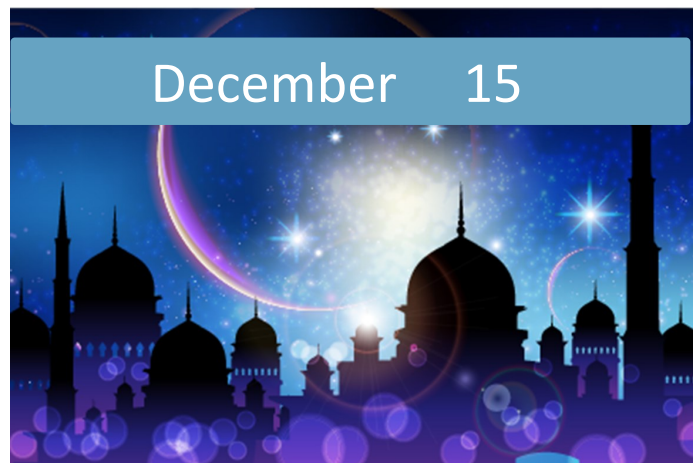
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DECEMBER 2023

IONA Masjid - Salah and Iqamah Timing

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Fri 1	6:06	6:45	7:42	12:26	1:00	2:42	3:19	3:30	5:03	5:08	6:31	7:45
Sat 2	6:07	6:45	7:43	12:27	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:03	5:08	6:31	7:45
Sun 3	6:08	6:45	7:44	12:27	2:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:03	5:08	6:31	7:45
Mon 4	6:09	6:45	7:45	12:27	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Tue 5	6:10	6:45	7:46	12:28	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Wed 6	6:11	6:45	7:47	12:28	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Thu 7	6:12	6:45	7:48	12:29	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Fri 8	6:13	6:45	7:49	12:29	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Sat 9	6:14	6:45	7:50	12:29	1:00	2:41	3:17	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Sun 10	6:14	6:45	7:51	12:30	2:00	2:41	3:17	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:31	7:45
Mon 11	6:15	6:45	7:52	12:30	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:32	7:45
Tue 12	6:16	6:45	7:52	12:31	1:00	2:41	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:07	6:32	7:45
Wed 13	6:17	6:45	7:53	12:31	1:00	2:42	3:18	3:30	5:02	5:08	6:32	7:45
Thu 14	6:17	6:45	7:54	12:32	1:00	2:42	3:18	3:30	5:03	5:08	6:33	7:45
Fri 15	6:18	6:45	7:55	12:32	1:00	2:42	3:18	3:30	5:03	5:08	6:33	7:45
Sat 16	6:19	6:45	7:55	12:33	1:00	2:42	3:19	3:30	5:03	5:08	6:34	7:45
Sun 17	6:19	6:45	7:56	12:33	2:00	2:43	3:19	3:30	5:03	5:09	6:34	7:45
Mon 18	6:20	6:45	7:57	12:34	1:00	2:43	3:19	3:30	5:04	5:09	6:35	7:45
Tue 19	6:20	6:45	7:57	12:34	1:00	2:44	3:20	3:30	5:04	5:09	6:35	7:45
Wed 20	6:21	6:45	7:58	12:35	1:00	2:44	3:20	3:30	5:05	5:10	6:36	7:45
Thu 21	6:21	6:45	7:58	12:35	1:00	2:45	3:20	3:30	5:05	5:10	6:37	7:45
Fri 22	6:22	6:45	7:59	12:36	1:00	2:45	3:21	3:45	5:06	5:11	6:37	7:45
Sat 23	6:22	6:45	7:59	12:36	1:00	2:46	3:22	3:45	5:06	5:11	6:38	7:45
Sun 24	6:23	6:45	8:00	12:37	2:00	2:46	3:22	3:45	5:07	5:12	6:38	7:45
Mon 25	6:23	6:45	8:00	12:37	1:00	2:47	3:23	3:45	5:07	5:13	6:38	7:45
Tue 26	6:24	6:45	8:01	12:38	1:00	2:47	3:23	3:45	5:08	5:13	6:39	7:45
Wed 27	6:24	6:45	8:01	12:38	1:00	2:48	3:24	3:45	5:09	5:14	6:39	7:45
Thu 28	6:25	6:45	8:01	12:39	1:00	2:49	3:25	3:45	5:09	5:15	6:40	7:45
Fri 29	6:25	6:45	8:01	12:39	1:00	2:49	3:25	3:45	5:10	5:16	6:40	7:45
Sat 30	6:25	6:45	8:02	12:40	1:00	2:50	3:26	3:45	5:11	5:16	6:41	7:45
Sun 31	6:25	6:45	8:02	12:40	2:00	2:51	3:27	3:45	5:12	5:17	6:42	7:45
Mon 1	6:26	6:45	8:02	12:41	1:00	2:52	3:28	3:45	5:13	5:18	6:42	7:45

* S = Shafi'i, H = Hanafi | **Athan is 10 minutes** before Iqamah except for Maghrib

First Friday sermon starts at 12:10 PM and second sermon is at 1:20 PM



IONA aims at transforming its members and surrounding communities to righteous, God-fearing people, who collectively strive for the highest moral standard and constantly seek God's forgiveness to earn His pleasure. IONA members seek His mercy and grace in this life and in the hereafter. They rejuvenate their souls through internal struggle (jihad) and spiritual exercise in worship of the Creator, God most glorified. The strength of their belief in God almighty gives them the courage to promote good and forbid evil, and to engage in the struggle to establish social, political, and economic justice.

