

## Together in spirit



Dates are the traditional offerings for Muslims when they break their fast and finish their prayers.

Muslims across the world have entered Ramadan, a month dedicated to fasting, prayer and acts of charity.

Just as Christians experienced over Easter, Ramadan this year will be very different for Muslim communities, as the COVID-19 crisis keeps everyone physically apart.

No prayer gatherings at the mosque, no Iftar meals celebrated in the community, no large family celebrations for Eid – the festival that marks the end of Ramadan.

Normally during Ramadan in Australia, different parts of the Uniting Church host or take part in Iftar meals with Muslim friends and partners across the country as a way of celebrating our shared humanity and friendship.

This year was to be the seventh annual Building Harmony Iftar Meal jointly hosted by the Uniting Church Assembly, NSW/ACT Synod, Uniting (NSW/ACT) and our Muslim partners, the Affinity Intercultural Foundation.

This year, the Building Harmony Iftar will go virtual on Wednesday 13 May from 4.50pm, and everyone is invited to join. Details to register are below.

In an open invitation letter signed by the leaders of all the host organisations, community members are encouraged at this time of separation to hold one another in prayer and spirit.

“In these difficult and challenging times, the values of hope, compassion and love which are common to us all are ever more important,” the letter reads.

“With the realisation that our wellbeing and survival depends on one another, we have come to know how deeply interconnected we all are.”

“Although we cannot be together in person, it is more important than ever that we hold one another in prayer and in the spirit of friendship.”

Additionally, the letter encourages people to find creative ways to share a message of friendship during Ramadan, such as a poster hung on their doors or on social media.

Right now, sending a message of peace and harmony into the world is an important gift we can all give.

Other possible interfaith connections you can make during Ramadan include:

- **Ramadan Conversations:** one-hour conversation shared live on YouTube on the current COVID-19 crisis and past Ramadan experiences, 7-8pm each night in Ramadan. Different guests will feature each night talking to former ABC Religion host John Cleary. Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/AffinityDialogue>
- **Recipes for Ramadan:** explore different tastes, cultures, stories and recipes throughout Ramadan shared on the website : <https://www.recipesforramadan.com/>  
You might even like to try some of the recipes at home for the 13th of May.
- **Be Inspired:** you might like to watch again or share one of the videos from UnitingWorld’s LentEvent about our church partner, the Protestant Church in Maluku, and their inspiring peacebuilding work with the Muslim community in Ambon, Indonesia. <https://fundraise.unitingworld.org.au/event/lent-event/be-inspired>

**Register for the Building Harmony Virtual Iftar**

**Wednesday 13 May 2020, 4.50-5.40pm**

**RSVP using this link**

**<https://forms.gle/Gs3ktq2sHt7uJUF86>**

**The Iftar will be live-streamed on the UCA Assembly Facebook page**

**<https://www.facebook.com/UnitingChurchAu>**