

What does Ramadan look like for Christians in Syria? (12th on the World Watch List)

Christians can experience Ramadan differently. Here, some Christian women share how they interact with their Muslim colleagues, neighbours and friends during the Islamic holy month.

The Muslim holy month of fasting, Ramadan, began earlier this week (10 March). Traditionally, Muslims will fast during daylight hours, abstaining from all food and drink (including water). For Christians living in Syria, where Muslims make up 97% of the population, their experience of Ramadan can differ.

Most Christians respect their Muslim neighbours and try to be cautious about eating or drinking around them, but sometimes believers can find themselves under scrutiny or harshly treated.

Discriminated at work during Ramadan

Ward* is a 35-year-old Christian woman from Aleppo. Last Ramadan, Ward's employer gave her more work to do, as he claimed that anyone not observing Ramadan fasting could handle more jobs. But Ward was still not allowed to eat or drink in the office in front of her colleagues to avoid offending them.

"After all that, I didn't receive the money gift that was distributed to the entire company," Ward says. Usually, companies give employees a bonus before Eid al-Fitr, the festival at the end of Ramadan to celebrate breaking the fast. When Ward asked why she was denied the gift, someone bluntly told her, "It's prohibited to give al-Fitr money to infidels!"

Judged for eating and drinking in public

Most Christians in Syria try their best to mind their neighbours, so they try to avoid eating or drinking in public – not that there are many places open during the day in Ramadan. Reem* (25) from Damascus told us. "One Ramadan, my mum was buying spices in the old market in Damascus at the beginning of the fasting month, and she didn't know it had started," Reem says. "So, she took a little of the cumin and tasted it and that made the seller so angry as he felt disrespected, and he refused to sell her any."

Christians provide a welcome refuge

In some areas of Syria, where fasting is not so strictly observed, Christians may find they are more welcome during Ramadan. Sarah*, a 21-year-old university student from Aleppo, says, "I love Ramadan a lot. During this month I feel so special as some of my Muslim university friends will hang out with me because they can eat and drink in my presence without the condemning looks of their fellow Muslim students."

PLEASE PRAY

- ✚ For Christians like Ward who are abused and discriminated against during Ramadan, that God will protect them
- ✚ That Christians in Syria will be salt and light to their Muslim neighbours, showing them the love of God
- ✚ For Muslims as they pray and fast, that in seeking Allah they would find Jesus.

Source: www.opendoorsuk.org

Ringstone in Aveland News Sheet



17 March 2024
Fifth Sunday of Lent

Psalm 51: Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgement.**

Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
**You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.**

Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and
for evermore, Amen**

Collect for this Sunday

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Readings for this Sunday

**Jeremiah 31.31-34
Hebrews 5.5-10
John 12.20-33**



Post Communion Prayer for this Sunday

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. **Amen**

Please pray for...

Anthony Andrews , Eben Atkinson, Sheila Bates, Margaret Brumby, Marie Rose Cubacub, Joan Curtis Christine Evans, Sue Grainge, Annie Hall, Clive Hall, Marion Heygate, Robert Hitchens, Jane Knight, Gordon Lack, Judy Long, Andrew Luck, Imogen Matthews, Josie Merrett, Michael Merrett, Tom Rae, John Rowntree, Maggie Sharman, Ivan Spencer, Amanda Thomson, Clive Walker, Denise Warcup, Kevin Whitfield, King Charles III, and for any others whom we name in the silence of our hearts.

We give thanks for those on the road to recovery.

We also remember the souls of Derek Bard, Bella Beeken, Audrey Gray, Melissa Metcalf, Sophie Sandford, Sylvia Waddingham and all the faithful departed. May they rest in peace and rise in glory; and we also pray for those who mourn their loss.

Wedding Anniversaries: Anita and Gary Ramsden (2 years)

Funeral anniversaries: Ivornie Davies (6 months); Arthur Jefferys, Ivor Roberts, Andrew Waddingham (1 year); Celia Wells, Hannah Faupel, Teddie Creasey, Gordon Durno (2 years).

New from Morton School

Morton School recently underwent a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection, which was full of praise for the Christian ethos which underpins all aspects of school life and the positive impact it has on the whole school community. The opening sentence reads **“Adults and pupils flourish at Morton as a result of its deeply rooted Christian vision. It is aspirational which changes lives and equips people to be the best they can.”** The rest of the report is similarly glowing. It is a testament to the whole school community, pupils, parents, staff and governors, and in particular to the leadership of the school - congratulations to you all.

Additional Services

22 March	12pm	Funeral of Audrey Gray	Rippingale
26 March	11am	Chrism Eucharist	Lincoln Cathedral
		<i>All are warmly invited to attend</i>	
7 April	2pm	Baptism of Thomas Green	Kirkby Underwood

Safeguarding & Contact Information

Safeguarding: We take your welfare and safety very seriously!

Rev'd Neil (Rector): revdneil@yahoo.com, 01778 219626 or

Janice Hill (Group Safeguarding Officer): janicethreetuns@hotmail.co.uk,
01778 440733 and 07972 211936

Group Administrator and for entries to news sheet (by Tuesday please)

Sue O'Riordan: ringstoneoffice@gmail.com

Sunday and regular weekday Services in the Group

17 March	11am	Eucharist	Morton
	6.30pm	Deanery Evensong	Bourne Abbey
24 March	11am	Eucharist	Kirkby Underwood
	6.30pm	Deanery Evensong	Morton
31 March	11am	Eucharist	Haconby
7 April	11am	Eucharist	Morton
	6pm	Evening Prayer	Kirkby Underwood
14 April	9am	Eucharist	Haconby
	6pm	Evening Prayer	Morton
Wednesday	10 am	See below	Morton

Wednesday services will usually be a service of Holy Communion . On occasions this will be replace by a service of Morning Prayer

Do you know anyone who is unable to get to church but who would like to receive Holy Communion? Just contact Rev'd Neil on 01778 219626

Holy Week and Easter services in the Group

24 March	11am	Palm Sunday Eucharist	Kirkby Underwood
25 March	7pm	Holy Week Monday Eucharist	Morton
26 March	7pm	Holy Week Tuesday Eucharist	Kirkby Underwood
27 March	7pm	Holy Week Wednesday Eucharist	Haconby
28 March	7pm	Maundy Thursday Eucharist	
		<i>With washing of feet</i>	Morton
29 March	1.30pm	Last Hour at the Cross	Morton
30 March	7.30pm	Easter Vigil	Morton
31 March	11am	Easter Sunday Eucharist	Haconby

Dunsby PCC meeting

Tuesday 19 March at 7.30pm at Dunsby Village Hall



Can you help?

There is a collection box in St. John the Baptist Church, on the left at the back of the church

Tinned meat	Tinned custard	Tinned rice pudding
Tinned vegetables	Jars of pasta sauce	Packets of plain rice
Squash or fruit juice	Tinned potatoes	Household goods
Shaving gel	Toothbrushes	Toiletries