

behavior, many mosques like MCC have separate seating areas designated for single men and single women. Families may choose to sit together as a unit, or family members may choose to sit down with their friends in their respective areas. Seating arrangements will vary from one community to another.

During *Ramadan* Muslims begin their meal with the prayer, “O God, for You I fasted, and in You I believe, and with Your provision I broke my fast.” After eating, Muslims say “Alhamdulillah (“Thanks be to God”).”

The Night Prayer

The final of the five daily prayers is said as night falls. Like the four other prayers, it is preceded by the adhan and is carried out in congregation.

The Tarawih Prayer

A special, lengthy prayer called tarawih is said only during the month of Ramadan, after the night prayer is completed. It is an optional act of worship carried out to gain God’s pleasure. The tarawih is sometimes characterized by long recitations of the Qur’an, and can last from twenty minutes to over one hour. Some imams recite one-thirtieth of the Qur’an nightly during this prayer.

Standing for this prayer can be strenuous, so it is broken into parts. A short spiritual teaching is often read during a break. The elderly, pregnant women and the sick who wish to participate sometimes sit during the prayer if they become tired.

About the MCC

We are so happy you have visited the Muslim Community Center - East Bay. We serve a diverse Muslim population in the East Bay. We provide a safe place for individuals with multiple points of entry to learn, pray, socialize, and utilize a space situated at intellectual and spiritual crossroads.

Join our community supporters email group to receive the latest interfaith events and activities at the MCC. Join at: mcecb.org/community-supporters

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Welcome to Our Ramadan Fast Breaking

We Hope You Enjoy Your Visit!

Welcome to the iftar!

The iftar, or “fast-breaking,” is an integral part of Muslim community life during the sacred month of Ramadan. At sunset every day during the month, Muslims around the world gather in homes and mosques to break their fast together. This communal meal comes after a day of self-discipline in which Muslims abstained from food and drink, and made an extra effort to avoid impatience and harsh words. After eating, Muslims will spend the evening seeking the pleasure of God through contemplation and prayer.

The Islamic Greeting

The Islamic greeting frequently heard in the mosque is the Arabic phrase, “as-salaamu alaykum” (“peace be with you”). It is returned by saying, “wa alaykum as-salaam (“and with you be peace”).”

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan (pronounced rom-a-don) is the ninth month of the lunar calendar used by Muslims. This month is special because the Qur’an (Islamic scripture) was first revealed in this month. During Ramadan, all healthy adult Muslims must fast by abstaining from food and drink from dawn to sunset every day. They also strive to abstain from all that is evil in speech and action. Muslims are encouraged to read the entire Qur’an during this month.

When will the fast be broken?

At sunset, the adhan (call to prayer) will be made. This call to prayer is always recited

melodiously in the Arabic language. The adhan is the signal for Muslims to break their fast, often with the traditional three dates and water. Before sitting down to a meal, they stand together for the sunset prayer, one of five prayers Muslims must make every day.

The Call to Prayer (translation)

God is Most Great, God is Most Great
God is Most Great, God is Most Great
I bear witness that there is no god but [the One] God
I bear witness that there is no god but [the One] God
I bear witness that Muhammad is a Messenger of God
I bear witness that Muhammad is a Messenger of God
Hasten to prayer, Hasten to prayer
Hasten to success, Hasten to success
God is Most Great, God is Most Great
There is no god but [the One] God

Washing Before Prayer

Muslims must strive for physical and mental purity before standing in prayer. To that end, they are required to wash their faces, hands, arms, and feet before praying.

Guests are welcome to observe the prayers. If you choose, we will direct you to an appropriate place to sit. Islamic practice prevents guests from joining the prayer line. Please observe silence and remember to remove shoes before entering the prayer hall.

The Sunset Prayer

After the call to prayer, Muslims will hasten to the prayer hall to line up for the congregational prayer. They will form tight ranks, a symbol of unity and equality within the Muslim community. Men and women form separate lines for the prayer in order to maintain modesty and concentration during

the physical movements of standing, bowing and prostration. Their separation does not indicate any relative superiority or inferiority.

The prayer begins as the imam, or prayer leader (pronounced ee-mom), raises his hands with the words, “Allahu Akbar (“God is Most Great”).” From that moment, worshippers are required to devote total concentration to the prayer as they follow the words and actions of the imam.

The imam first recites the opening chapter of the Qur’an (entitled Al-fatiha) aloud, and follows this with more Qur’anic verses of his own choosing. After the recitation, worshippers bow and prostrate in unison, silently glorifying God.

The prayer ends as worshippers turn their faces to either side with the Arabic words meaning, “Peace be with you and the mercy of God.” Some of the congregation will then stand to leave the prayer hall while others will add their own, personal devotions.

Children in the Prayer Hall

Children will often be present during prayers, whether participating, watching, or in the case of very small children, imitating the movements of their elders. Their presence continues the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, who was very tender toward children. The Prophet sometimes carried one of his grandchildren on his shoulder while leading the prayer and he was also known to shorten the prayer if he heard a baby cry.

The Iftar

After completing the sunset prayer, Muslims join in a joyous and nutritious meal. Because Islam is a global religion, there are many special Ramadan foods enjoyed by different ethnic groups. Among these are soups and salads, rice dishes and meats, and, of course, sweets.

Since Islamic etiquette enjoins modesty in