

UPF and IAPD Interfaith Iftar Meal Shares the Spirit of Islam

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Washington, D.C., United States – As part of the observance of Ramadan, the month-long period of fasting and prayer observed by Muslims worldwide, UPF-USA hosted an interfaith iftar dinner on March 1, 2026, at the Washington Times Building in Washington, D.C. Ramadan this year runs from February 17 to March 19.



For the past four years, UPF-USA has sponsored an iftar dinner, the meal held after sunset throughout the month of Ramadan, with other organizations. This year, under the banner of the “Peace Starts with Me” Alliance, UPF-USA was joined by the American Muslim & Multifaith Women’s Empowerment Council, the FFWPU-Capital Family Church, Women’s Federation for World Peace, the American Clergy Leadership Conference, and Youth and Students for Peace.

To open the program, the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), as part of UPF-International, conducted the “Water of Life” ceremony as a reflection of the spirit of Ramadan. **Ms. Tomiko Duggan**, global coordinator for IAPD, explained that this ceremony was created as a symbol of unity and harmony among all religions, inspired by Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s words: “Religion is like a

wide river flowing toward an ideal, peaceful world. The river flows for long distances before it comes to the wide expanse of peace. On its way, many streams flow into it. The streams cease to be streams from the point they meet the river. From that point, they too become part of the river. In this way, they become one.”



Ms. Kaelegh Moffitt, president of UPF-USA, welcomed the guests, saying that the Iftar dinner is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the spirit of love and kindness among neighbors. She explained that UPF conducts many interfaith activities, including recently honoring the UN Interfaith Harmony Week, in an effort to bring humanity together, to love God and love one another.

Ms. Anila Ali, president of the American Muslim & Multifaith Women’s Empowerment Council, explained the similarities between Ramadan and Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and prayer observed by Christians: “Ramadan and Lent, though distinct, both teach that self-restraint strengthens the soul. Hunger awakens empathy. Sacrifice deepens spiritual clarity. True devotion must be visible in how we serve humanity.”



She added, “At a time when our world is restless – marked by conflict, division, and uncertainty – we pause tonight to pray for healing, and we boldly declare our longing for peace across every nation and every heart.”

At 6:00 pm, a video from Mecca was shown, presenting a prayer announcing the breaking of the day’s fast. The Muslim men and women, with covered heads, offered their prayer and gratitude, then everyone shared the drinks and dates that had been prepared to break the fast.

Sharing the meal and enjoying music together, many Christians who were present learned from their new Muslim friends about unfamiliar traditions, including the meaning of headscarves, and a different way to pray. A spirit of kindness, holiness, and generosity permeated the room, in affirmation that all are brothers and sisters as One Family under God.