

Advancing Inter-Religious Relations

Prepared by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music of
The Episcopal Church
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Certain hymns and passages from the New Testament can mislead parishioners into believing that the Church has replaced Judaism. Islam, on the other hand, may arouse fear. These responses are not in line with church teaching.

The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, following the urging of Paul that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone” (1 Timothy 2.1), offers the following prayers for our Jewish and Muslim sisters and brothers, who also call on the God of Abraham as their hope and salvation. These collects may be included in the Prayers of the People.

A collect for each Jewish and Islamic holy day is provided below in two separate lists. As in many ancient faith traditions, the Jewish and Islamic faiths observe their holy days according to the lunar calendar. Due to the complexity of calculating where these days from the lunar calendar fall in our common solar calendar, a web-link has been provided to help parishes or individuals using these collects find the appropriate day for using these collects in any given year. Along with each collect, a brief explanation has been provided, which may be read prior to the reading of the collect.

Prayers for Islamic holy days

To find when these holy days fall within the year:
<http://www.moonsighting.com/important.html>

Muslims celebrate the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.

Prayer

O God, whose glory the speechless skies proclaim and whose wisdom we discern in the words of the prophets, bless all faithful Muslims as they celebrate the birth of Muhammad. Grant us grace so to hear your voice at all times and in all places and teach us to follow its promptings. Amen.

In Ramadan, Muslims take on the discipline of fasting for a month.

Prayer

O God of abundance, bless those who keep the fast of Ramadan and all holy fasts that they may learn to put their trust in your abundant mercy and providence. Amen.

In Laylat al-Qadr, the Night of Power, Muslims commemorate the night in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

Eid Al Fitr, the end of Ramadan, marks the end of month-long fast, Muslims, therefore, thank God for sustaining them through the season of self-denial.

Prayer

Eternal God, who through the mouth of prophets has revealed wisdom to all peoples, we praise you for your many revelations. May those who celebrate the giving of sacred writings, who observe the fasts and offer you their prayers, be filled with your wisdom and peace. Amen.

Eid Al Adha, also known as the Feast of Sacrifice, commemorates Ibrahim's (that is, Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his son to God. This festival also marks the end of the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Prayer

Faithful God, in whose providence Abraham trusted even beyond his own understanding, may all who celebrate his faithfulness come to know your saving mercy. Amen.

As Muslims welcome the New Year of their calendar they also commemorate the migration of Mohammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina.

Prayer

O Almighty God, by whose will the world turns and seasons and years come in their time, as Muslims welcome the New Year and remember the journey of the faithful to Medina, make us all mindful that you do not fail to provide for those whom you call. Amen.

Prayers for Jewish holy days

To find when these holy days fall within the year: <http://www.hebcal.com/holidays/>

In the festival of Purim, Jews commemorate their salvation from a Persian plot “to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day.”

Prayer

O God, who rescued your people from the hand of the Persians, bless this holy festival of Purim and all who observe it. Teach us to trust in your faithfulness, for you do not forget those who put their trust in you. Amen.

In the eight-day festival of Passover, the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt is celebrated.

Prayer

Gracious God, fill with your joy and hope those who keep the feast of Passover. May all who turn to you for liberation likewise show forth your redeeming love. Amen.

Every year on the holiday of Shavuot, which means “oaths,” Jews commemorate God’s gift of the Torah and renew their acceptance of God’s teaching. On this day God swore eternal devotion to them, and they in turn pledged everlasting loyalty.

Prayer

Ever-faithful God, we bless your holy name for the Prophet Moses, through whom the Law was given. Free, defend, and nurture those who trust in your everlasting covenant; make them ever faithful to your commandments. Amen.

The festival of Rosh Hashanah, meaning, “Head of the Year,” celebrates the creation of Adam and Eve and the special relationship between God and humanity.

Prayer

O God of all creation, this festival of Rosh Hashanah, when Jews lift up their praise to you for the gift of the New Year—May all creation come to glorify you, our creator and sustainer. Amen.

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish year; it is the Day of Atonement, for as it says in Leviticus, “For on this day He will forgive you, to purify you, that you be cleansed from all your sins before God.”

Prayer

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hear the prayers of your people who come before you in fasting and repentance. May their offerings this Day of Atonement be pleasing in your sight. Instill in our hearts true repentance and amendment of life that we, too, may show forth your saving love. Amen.

The eight-day festival of Chanukah celebrates the triumph of light over darkness. It commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after a group of Jewish warriors defeated the occupying Greek armies.

Prayer

Bless those, O God, who keep this Festival of Lights. May all who live by faith show forth your light in the world and, by your grace, triumph over sin and darkness. Amen.