

RAMADAN BUMPS INTO THANKSGIVING MANY FAITHS PLAN EVENTS IN HOLIDAY WEEK

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

This year's Thanksgiving day holidays offer an opportunity for people of all faiths to give thanks in area houses of worship.

In particular, for south Florida's Muslim community, the Eid-UI-Fitr fiesta that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan falls just two days before the national holiday.

"It's coincidental that this year it falls just two days before Thanksgiving," said Maulana Shafayed Mohamed, the spiritual head of Pembroke Pine's Darul Uloom Islamic Institute. "With the two holidays, it will be a real big Thanksgiving this year."

The Muslim festival marks the breaking of the fast that is observed during Ramadan. "It brings the largest attendance of the year to Muslim centers around the world," Mohamed said. "People who don't pray for the whole year will pray that day."

Maulana Mohamed said that he expects between 2,500 and 3,000 people to attend services at his center at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, November 25. "People will go all out and will come in their best clothes."

Mohamed said that people from the community are welcome to attend. The Institute is located at 7050 Pines Road in Pembroke Pines.

After the service, the congregation will go to friend's homes for a meal of meat, sweets and the exchanging of gifts.

"The festival celebrates the accomplishment of a spiritual mission during Ramadan," Mohamed explained. "It also celebrates the end of that time and marks the ability to accomplish it."

Mohamed said that for the first time in South Florida, he will be hosting a two hour radio program at 7 p.m. on November 25 on WAXY 790. "It will be a live show with songs of celebration to mark the festival," he said. "People will be able to call in and give greetings to their friends and family members."

Members of First Baptist Church of Hallandale will mark the Thanksgiving holiday by giving baskets of food to needy people in the community and inviting single people to a dinner on Thanksgiving Day.

"We will identify people in our church who live alone and invite them to eat with us that day," said Rev. Bob Dyshuk. "They will enjoy their holiday more that way. I think that we will serve about 15 to 20 people."

Dyshuk said that he and his wife plan on preparing a traditional Thanksgiving meal for those who are invited.

In Weston, area residents will be invited to a bilingual Thanksgiving Day mass at 10 a.m. at St. Katherine Drexel Church, 270 Glades Creek Road in Weston. Edith Clifford, the church secretary, said that about 500 people are expected to attend.

Rabbis from Temple Kol Ami in Plantation will be taking part in a Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service sponsored by the Plantation Association of Clergy. The service will begin at 7 p.m. on Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, November 24 at the St. Benedict Episcopal Church, 7801 NW 5th Street in Plantation.

Ellen Barrett, a volunteer at the synagogue, said that Rabbis Sheldon J Harr, Daniel Treiser and Cantor Mark Goldman would join other pastors in the ecumenical service.

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EVENTS IN HOLIDAY WEEK, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* Nov 21,
2003**