

# CAMBRIDGE CENTRAL MOSQUE

## NEWSLETTER

INCLUSIVITY, DIALOGUE, COMPASSION

[cambridgecentralmosque.org/ramadan](http://cambridgecentralmosque.org/ramadan)



### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Assalamu alaykum wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakatuh!*

HAVING BEEN IN post for over a year now, I feel truly settled in this wonderful community. It has been a privilege to serve the many people who walk through our doors, from local worshippers to visitors from around the world.

In this time, I have been grateful for the dedication of our team in facilitating the many services

the Mosque offers, from guided tours to wedding ceremonies. The launch of our Youth Clubs and the expansion of our Madrasa Programme to include more than a hundred and fifty pupils have been particularly rewarding, bringing more young people into the Mosque and strengthening their connection to their faith.

This Ramadan we witness a Mosque filled with worshippers every day. This year, our theme is 'Honouring the Qur'an' and we are excited to bring this to life with a packed schedule of daily programmes and special events. Highlights include drop-in Qur'an lessons with our Imams and teachers, as well as online content to keep everyone spiritually

engaged, no matter where they are.

We are immensely grateful to our donors, whose support allows us to continue and expand our work. This Ramadan, as a token of appreciation, we will be gifting special Cambridge Central Mosque Qur'ans to those who contribute to our 'A Gifted Qur'an' campaign. We are also pleased to be distributing the remaining copies of the *Legacy Qur'an*.

Please keep us in your duas during this blessed month, and if you are able, we would love for you to join us at Cambridge Central Mosque.

With heartfelt appreciation,  
Fezaan Azam  
Operations Director

## Letter From Our New Imam



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Assalamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh. I am deeply honoured and humbled to have been entrusted with the role of Imam at Cambridge Central Mosque. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Diyanet, the Mosque's leadership, and the Imams for placing their trust in me. I would also like to thank the entire Cambridge community for the very warm welcome I have been receiving since the moment I began this honourable duty. It is a privilege to be in a position to serve this vibrant and diverse community of Cambridge, and I am excited to embark on this journey with you.

With a background in Islamic theology, as well as a bachelor's and master's in law, and my ongoing PhD in International Law, I look forward to sharing what I have learnt about Islamic and contemporary issues throughout my diverse educational journey. More importantly, I can't wait to improve and build upon this knowledge by the grace of Allah and with the contributions and feedback from yourselves, the Cambridge community, which is known worldwide for its scholarly excellence.

Also, having served as an Imam in various communities, including in different cities in Turkey and the UK, I have had the opportunity to lead prayers and engage with diverse Muslim communities. I hope and pray that this has enabled me to connect with people from all walks of life, which is befitting for the inclusive nature of the beautiful Cambridge Central Mosque.

I am eager to engage with all segments of our community, particularly our youth, and contribute to their Islamic education in a way that caters to their spiritual and educational needs.

I ask for your support, advice, and du'as as I take on this responsibility. Please feel free to reach out to me with any suggestions or ideas. Our mosque's doors are always open, and I am here to get to know you and listen to you.

Jazakumallahu khayran!

Hafiz Muhammed Nurullah Benli

## GREENING MUSLIMS

We are excited to be partnering with Cambridge University's Dr Davide Pettinato to co-develop and evaluate a multicomponent, Islam-literate environmental education intervention aimed at strengthening pro-environmental values, self-identity and personal norms among British Muslims.

The project's objectives are:

- to explore these values in the British Muslim community.
- to evaluate and compare the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of different types of mosque-centred interventions in strengthening British Muslims' pro-environmental ethics and sense of identity.
- to enable Cambridge Central Mosque to develop a holistic programme of Islamic environmental education which can become a model for other mosques in the UK and abroad.

## Woodland Cemetery



This Ramadan we are officially opening our large woodland burial site to the Muslim public, following completion of access improvement works. Bookings are **open now** for individual and family plots. All interments are arranged with qualified funeral directors. To apply or for further information please visit [gardensofrest.com](http://gardensofrest.com) or telephone 01638 600693.

In keeping with the ethos of the Cambridge Central Mosque the site is managed in an ecologically-sustainable and Islamically-compliant manner. Burials will be directly in shrouds (kafan) or wicker coffins and the cemetery will be kept in a state of natural simplicity. The long-term appearance of the site will be a diverse meadow ecosystem with native tree copses.

We have begun instructional sessions on washing and shrouding the dead. The first session in November was for sisters only. Led by Shameela Islam-Zulfiqar, this event concluded with the award of certificates of competency.

We are grateful to the anonymous local resident who has generously gifted this property to the mosque as a Waqf.

## Iftars At The Mosque!

This year we are offering free hot meals at Maghrib time for our worshippers and guests. We are hugely grateful to the following restaurants for providing these meals during this blessed time. May Allah bless their hands!



**Chicken Cottage**  
83A Mill Rd, Cambridge, CB1 2AW



**Golpo**  
36-38 Hills Rd, Cambridge, CB2 1LA



**Hassan Catering**  
130 Leagrave Rd, Luton, LU4 8HX



**Namaste Cambridge**  
43 Clifton Rd, Cambridge, CB1 7ED



**Noshe Afghan Restaurant**  
18 Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 2AD



**Samaan**  
74 Mill Rd, Cambridge, CB1 2AS



**The Grill Peri Peri**  
52 Mill Rd, Cambridge, CB1 2AS



**Zidan's Piri Piri**  
214 Mill Rd, Cambridge CB1 3NF



**Zi's Piri Piri**  
36A Mill Rd, Cambridge, CB1 2AD



## I'tikāf Rules

There is high demand and limited space for I'tikāf at the Cambridge Central Mosque. As a result, priority is given as follows:

- Those who live in Cambridge (and surrounding areas)
- Those who did not perform I'tikāf at the mosque last year
- First-come, first-served.

Anyone performing I'tikāf at the mosque must remain in a state of I'tikāf for the full 10 days (or 9 in the case of a 29-day Ramadan). You will be expected at the Mosque by Asr of the 20th day of Ramadan.

## Health Matters

Our regular Health and Wellness Days have proved very popular among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Focussing on preventive health and community wellbeing, these include expert talks, and actual screenings for skin, cancer and eye health. Many of these events are held in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support.

Join us for BIMA Lifesavers 2024 at Cambridge Central Mosque! Learn essential lifesaving skills like CPR, the recovery position, and choking management, guided by the accredited British Heart Foundation Heartstart programme.



## KIDS CLUB

Every other Saturday we bring our children together for a wonderful exploration of Prophetic stories and guidance.

To express gratitude during NSPCC Kindness Challenge week, the children assembled hygiene packs for local refugee families, generously supported by The Karim Foundation. We also created 'gratitude hands' to reflect on our blessings, and enjoyed glitter tattoos, including one by Imam Zakarya!

And we have also started to arrange family walks in popular beauty spots outside Cambridge!

Kids Club meets every other Saturday from 9-11 am for children aged 5-11. Follow the Cambridge Central Mosque Youth Hub Eventbrite page for more details and registration!

## JOIN YOUR CLUB

Following the success of our Ramadan children's activities last year we've launched \*three\* new clubs with engaging events and activities to inspire, nurture and strengthen!

**Kids Club** (ages 5-11) [fortnightly]

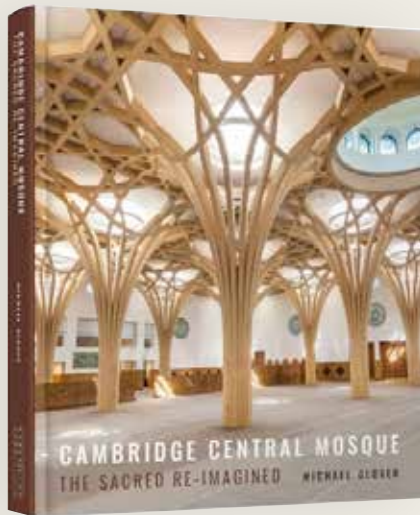
**Boys Club** (ages 12-17) [monthly]

**Girls Club** (ages 12-17) [monthly]

There's something for everyone – join your club now!  
<http://ccmyouth.eventbrite.com>



Our 24-hour a day online TV station is live again! Viewed by thousands last year, this popular fixture of our fasting lineup now incorporates unique special features new to 2025! Spiritually uplifting, informative and fasting-appropriate, our service offers documentaries, features on Islamic art and design, reports on issues of concern to the global Umma, children's programmes, Qur'anic recitations by well-known voice masters, and dozens of uplifting Islamic songs! This service is still absolutely FREE. Please visit <https://cambridgecentralmosque.org/ramadan-tv/>



## MOSQUE BOOK PUBLISHED!

London-based art publishers Lund Humphries have officially released the first-ever book to be written about a British mosque! *Cambridge Central Mosque: The Sacred Re-Imagined* is a sumptuously-illustrated coffee-table book written by leading cultural critic Michael Glover. This is the book to read if you want the full story about our mosque: its ecological vision, its spiritual orientation, its inclusivity, its unique award-winning design, and its outreach to the other communities who share the city of Cambridge with us. Copies are now available from local bookshops and from internet booksellers.

In 2024 we welcomed 193 men and women into the religion of Islam in our mosque. The Cambridge Crescent is a local support group designed to support them. Welcoming newcomers from every walk of life and age group is a constant challenge for our dedicated team of unpaid volunteers! To enhance the Crescent's activities we are inviting donations this Ramadan from all who care about the strength and spiritual growth of these new brothers and sisters. At [cambridgecrescent.org](http://cambridgecrescent.org) you can donate specifically for the Crescent's major activities:

- Gift Shahada Packs
- Facilitating Islamic Retreats
- New Muslim Classes
- Reconcile a Heart
- Help make Eid special
- Help train support buddies

You can also donate to support the Crescent's Ramadan Coffee-less Mornings, and our Monday New Muslim Iftar Gatherings.

These services are Zakat-eligible. As Allah guides us to whom to give, as illustrated in the verse below, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was also known to give and reconcile hearts.

*'The charitable offerings are only for the poor, and the destitute and those who collect (the zakat) and those whose hearts are (to be) reconciled and for (liberating) slaves and debtors and in God's path, and the wayfarer, as an obligation from God and God is Knowing, Wise.'*  
(Holy Qur'an 9:60)

We are also reminding all Muslim families in Cambridge to keep a look-out for new Muslims in the mosque, as they often have no-one to break the fast or celebrate Eid with. Welcome them into your homes, and show them the proverbial hospitality of this blessed month!

## VISITING INSPIRATIONS

Dr Tareq Moqbel spoke on 'The Qur'an and Cambridge'  
Aisha Henry spoke on 'Guarding the Tongue for Young Muslims'

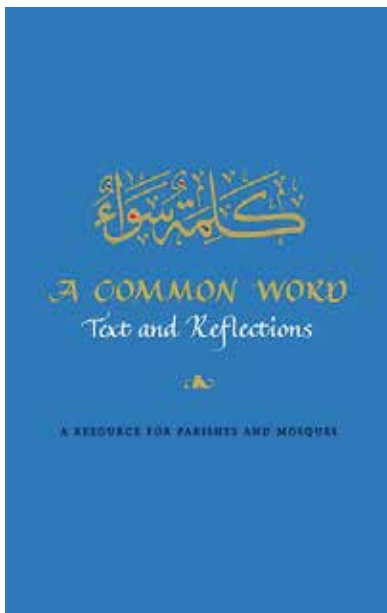
Will Caldwell, Ali Dia and Mike Swies, 'Rising Above the Self: Building Communities of Service'

Hisham Abu Yusuf, 'Visionaries: Young Companions Who Changed the Course of History'

Dr Halis Aydemir, 'Technology and Prophecy'

Dr Zakariya Goga, 'A Healthy Ramadan'

Qari Abdurahman Farag, official cantor at Cairo's historic Sultan Hassan Mosque, recited from the Holy Qur'an



## Interfaith at CMT

The Holy Qur'an says: 'Speak to the People of the Book only in the most beautiful way.' (al-Ankabut, 46) According to the commentary of Imam Ibn Kathir, this means 'with gentleness and kindness and beautiful speech.'

Over the past few months we have welcomed several distinguished guests and congregational visitors from local communities, and we seek always to work together in a spirit of fellowship with churches,

synagogues, and other places of worship.

We also hold a large supply of printed copies of *A Common Word*, the well-known Muslim-Christian dialogue initiative, which are given free of charge to visitors interested in building amicable and well-informed bridges between religions. The edition includes interpretive essays by Abdal Hakim Murad and David Burrell.



JOIN OUR VOLUNTEERS for our monthly Litter Pick! An excellent way of getting some fresh air while fulfilling the Islamic duty of *husn al-jihar* (honouring neighbours).

Want to learn Arabic? Now is your chance! If you live in or around Cambridge, apply today for in-person classes at Cambridge Central Mosque with lessons every Sunday: <https://forms.gle/qttTQZAPESaHzcVT8> Limited spaces: apply now!

We have continued with several popular episodes of our Prophetic Dua Series presented by Muhammad Davis.

All sisters are welcome to our regular Monday evening study circles in which we open the treasure chest of Revelation.

Don't miss the first articles by leading scholars which are now available free of charge through the online St Andrews Encyclopedia of Theology. Visit <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Islam>

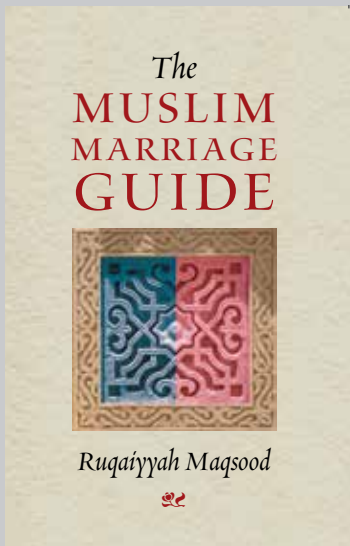


## Blessings from Al-Quds!

Many visitors ask about the two exquisite tiles embedded in our Mihrab. These are 16th century originals from the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. In troubled times we remember the holy night in which the prophets prayed together in this place, including Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, peace be upon them all.



Many thanks to a donor in Abu Dhabi for sending us organic and high-quality dates from the official Dahra farm in the United Arab Emirates!



## Marriage Guidance

In 2024 we celebrated a record 290 nikah weddings at the mosque! We offer a range of wedding packages for those considering tying the knot in our beautiful facility! This includes celebratory banquets and receptions, as

well as practical advice on event management to make your special day truly unique. We can also provide pre-marital counselling on request. Mosque supporter Ruqaiyyah Maqsood has written a very accessible book based on Qur'an and Sunna, *The Muslim Marriage Guide*, which deals with many of the issues we often encounter.



## Monty Don in Cambridge

The popular BBC series 'Monty Don's British Gardens' came to Cambridge recently to visit our wonderful garden. Already famous for his series on Islamic Paradise Gardens around the world, Britain's best-known gardener came to learn more about Islam's relationship with the natural world, and the mosque's traditions of service to neighbours of every background. The clip can be viewed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0klcmcd>



## Remembering A Forerunner

Halil Halid (1869-1931) is considered to have been the first Alim (Muslim religious scholar) in Cambridge. He served as a lecturer at Cambridge University between 1902 and 1911. Born on the Black Sea coast of Turkey to a distinguished family of ulema, he graduated from the Küçük Ayasofya Madrasa in Istanbul, and was an expert in all the Islamic scholarly disciplines. As well as teaching in Cambridge in the years before the Great War, he wrote regularly for the Turkish newspaper *Servet-i Fünun* and authored several reflections on life in Western Europe at the time. He also served for a time as Ottoman Vice-Consul in London. His books include *Diary of a Turk*, and *Algerian Memoirs*. On his return to Turkey he was elected to the Ottoman parliament, after which he became a theology lecturer at Istanbul University (Darul Fünun). He lies buried in the Merkez Efendi cemetery in Istanbul.

On November 14, Diana Darke joined us for the launch of her new book *Islamisque: The Forgotten Craftsmen who Built Europe's Medieval Monuments*. In this book, Darke, a British author who has lived for many years in Damascus, explains how many of the highlights of medieval European church architecture are the result of influence by Muslim craftsmen and artists.



## Baraka Books!

Our mosque does not have a bookshop, but visitors can collect free copies of *Muslim Book News*, which showcases leading publications by Cambridge-based Islamic publishers, which can then be ordered online. Cambridge is a major hub for Muslim publishing, being the home of the Islamic Texts Society, CMC Press, the Quilliam Press, the Muslim Academic Trust, Lote Tree Press, and Equilibra Press.



## Discover the Beauty of Islamic Literature and Gifts

As a new family in Cambridge, we've been warmly welcomed into the community of Cambridge along Mill Road and have Alhamdulillah brought to fruition a dream to provide quality goods and literature to the local community.

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ <b>Qurans</b>                 | ✓ <b>Beard products</b>    |
| ✓ <b>Islamic literature</b>     | ✓ <b>Perfume free soap</b> |
| ✓ <b>Children's books</b>       | ✓ <b>Handmade tasbeehs</b> |
| ✓ <b>Abayas</b>                 | ✓ <b>Perfumes</b>          |
| ✓ <b>Hijabs</b>                 | ✓ <b>Black seed oil</b>    |
| ✓ <b>Thobes</b>                 | ✓ <b>Yemen sidr honey</b>  |
| ✓ <b>Prayer mats</b>            | ✓ <b>Supplements</b>       |
| ✓ <b>Breathable nail polish</b> | ✓ <b>Health products</b>   |

In addition, every Friday after Juma at 2pm, we will be offering arts and craft activities, which you are welcome to attend and participate in.



# The Month of Prayer

by Abdul Qadir bin Salim Al Bidh

WE HUMANS, FORGETFUL and sorrowful, share one deepest longing: to return to the Truth, Who is all peace, rightness, and beauty. Whatever our background and culture, we all yearn for that journey's end. We are all on a voyage which we only dimly understand. Some of us have no words at all for where it began, or where it is taking us, but still feel it in our depths. That is the tragedy of the forgetting of Truth, and there is no greater tragedy, and no deeper sorrow. Such people have great rights over us.

All of the Five Pillars of Islam are Divine gifts which help us to understand the journey and to find serenity and hope at every stage along the way. Every pain and misfortune is bearable if we know that we come from God's Beauty, and are travelling towards it once again.

Once we know this we can start to understand the deep mystery of the holy month of Ramadan.

Allah is *al-Rahman*, the All-Compassionate. The flow of life and being itself is directed by this holy name. We can swim properly and blissfully in this sea which moves from Him and to Him if we beautify our lives with perfect spiritual forms. Once we are living in the pure shape of the Sunna, we can open our eyes properly, and see the world correctly, with our hearts and minds, and also with our senses.

During the holy month, even forgetful people gain increased love and respect for the True God. It is a time of mingled seriousness and joy. And both are lessons in the reality of existence. God has not created this world in jest. Neither does He wish us to grieve. The happy soul is the one which sees that what exists is what He commands, and that we are all fish in the river which flows to the same Compassionate Source.

During these days we hear and read and breathe the Timeless Book of Revelation: the blessed Qur'an. It is like a diamond, with as many facets as it has verses. Its pure beauty shines on our hearts in so many ways; when we embark upon the voyage of the Khatm, we travel through well-loved familiar lands. We pass through valleys and great mountain ranges. We hear the divine Voice ourselves, as we are immersed in Heaven's clear waters.

Once again we hear Surat al-Rahman, Surat al-Mulk, Surat al-Insan. We are refreshed and find our bearings on earth once again. The world in its distractions and worldliness grows faint and distant, as we hear the Eternal and Infinite sounds. What privilege could be more glorious? What honour more majestic?

The Night of Power comes, and we hope to feel its presence. It is better than a thousand months, since time is in quality not quantity. It is the night in which the uncreated Speech came down to our world. Even our impure and tired ears listen to it, and our hearts are amazed. The Angels and the Spirit descend also. It is peace, until the rising of the dawn.

Fortunate Umma of the Best of Prophets! Such a robe of honour is placed on our shoulders as we bow our heads together to the Merciful Lord! 🌸

## DONATION INFORMATION

### Bank Transfer

HSBC

Address:

63-64 St Andrews Street,  
Cambridge CB2 3BZ,  
United Kingdom

Account Name: The Cambridge Mosque Trust

Account No.: 54298209

Sort code: 40-16-08

IBAN: GB68HBUK40160854298209

Branch Identifier: HBUKGB4103J

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS:

<https://www.justgiving.com/muslimacademic>

Post one-off cash/cheques made payable to:

“THE CAMBRIDGE MOSQUE TRUST”

309-313 Mill Road,  
Cambridge CB1 3DF

Or automate a regular donation by downloading, completing and posting a standing order form to your bank. Information on our website.

[www.cambridgecentralmosque.org](http://www.cambridgecentralmosque.org)

Registered charity: 1164931

