

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER



Fostering Cohesion, Understanding and Harmony in Manchester

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Welcome to the April 2020 Faith Network for Manchester Newsletter

It has been reported in The Times today that Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist clerics have joined forces to encourage us to stay at home and work for our communities in other ways, as we are unable to attend our places of worship to pray. The statement includes: "... the hearts of our communities remain open. We commit ourselves to encouraging our communities to continue to help, support and give. We pledge ourselves to making our communities stronger and building new friendships. We commend our communities for following official guidelines for the sake of all of us."

The restrictions in place at this time of social distancing and 'lockdown' affect all of us and we continue to be grateful to all key workers ensuring the sick are treated, the vulnerable are cared for, essential services are maintained, food and necessities are provided and available and all the other vital roles that are being fulfilled. All of us must play our part and the community spirit being shown is tremendous.

There are so many issues that we face as members of faith communities and society – no prayer meetings, health and wellbeing issues, no gatherings for social or sport activities, the inability to visit the sick, the

distance of families, loneliness, more domestic abuse, mental health problems on the increase and suicide. There are issues are finance, work, poverty and death and bereavement.

In this newsletter we try to look at the topic of bereavement and publicise the hotline for faith communities set up by SFI, the Feedline initiative to provide hot meals across the city each day, have a feature on Ramadan and also have a list of all the topics we will be having interfaith dialogues or practical information sessions on over the next few weeks.

So many groups and communities are using online ways of organising and bringing people together, which is great, invaluable in fact, and of comfort to so many. We must remember those we are not reaching in this way and find ways of staying in touch and supporting them too.

We hope that you will want to join us to discuss the issues affecting us at this time and to share good practice – we can never have or learn enough ways of supporting each other at this time. Our sessions are on Wednesdays from 5.00 to 6.30 p.m. and you can join us through the link provided in the email along with the password. Topics we will discuss together

include how we are coping (today), loneliness, the financial impact, mental health issues, suicide prevention, funerals and bereavement and more.

Finally, FN4M are in a sticky position financially at the moment and we have set up a crowdfunding page. If you are in a position (and can encourage others) to help us please go to <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/faithnetwork4manchester> All support will be gratefully received.

With best wishes for health, staying safe, well and strong and blessings on all of us.

Rabbi Warren Elf MBE,
Director of
Faith Network for Manchester



ONLINE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

— ✦ —

How Are We Coping with COVID-19 and The Closure of Faith Buildings

WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL 2020

5:00 PM-6:30 PM

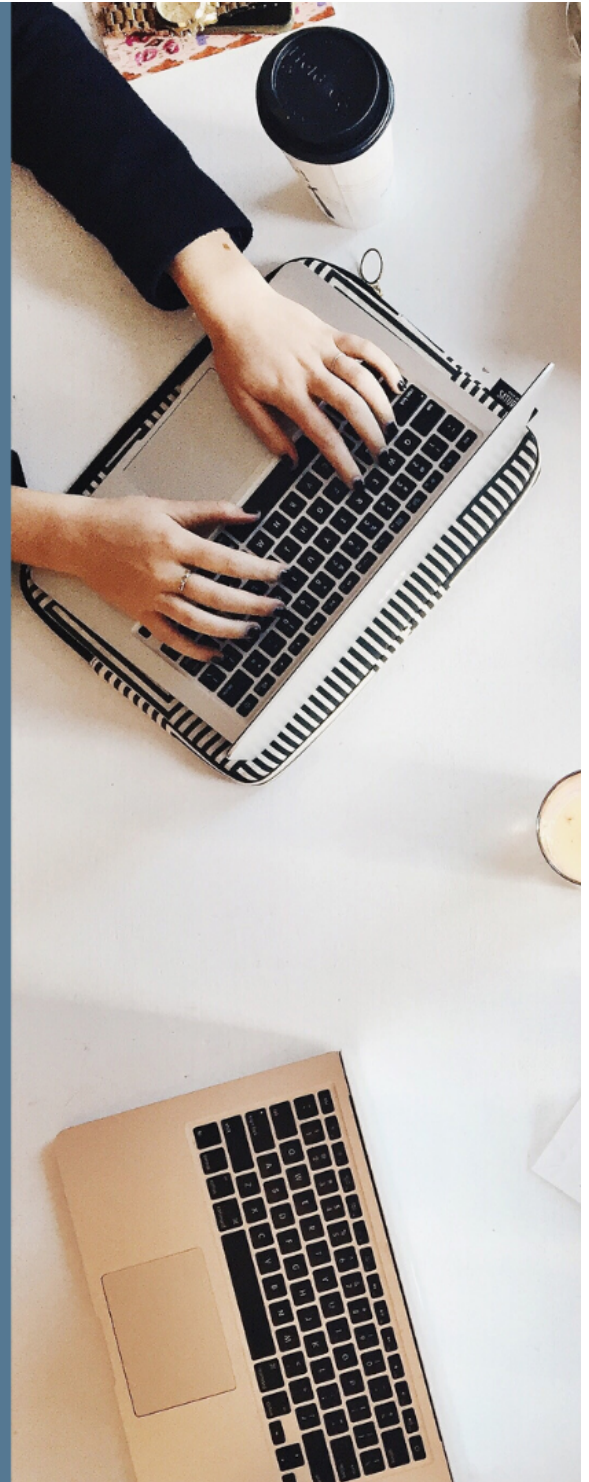
— ✦ —

How are we running, streaming services
and prayers?

Tips and insights to share, offer and learn.

How are we maintaining contact with and
supporting those who are not tech savvy?

What events, activities and suggestions are we
able to offer while we are not able to meet
together?





Online Practical Learning Session:

Faith Communities and Loneliness with Special reference to COVID-19 Restrictions

Wednesday 29th April 2020

5:00 pm- 6:30 pm

Many of our members and congregants will be feeling extra lonely at this time:

How are we checking on who is feeling depressed or more vulnerable through their loneliness and how can we support them?

Do we need to offer more professional support to some individuals and do we know where to go for it?

Pastoral work and community care throughout the Covid-19 isolation.

We will address these questions and more with the support of those with experience of counselling, pastoral work and chaplaincy services.



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

**INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND
INFORMATION EVENTS**

1

**How Are We Coping with COVID-19 and
The Closure of Faith Buildings**
22nd April 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom

2

COVID-19 and The Financial Impact On The Faith Sector
6th May 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom

3

Funerals and Bereavement During the COVID-19 Crisis
20th May 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom

4

**Relationship and Sex Education Update –
Following on From Our Conference Last Year**
3rd June 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom

5

**Are We Still Coping with COVID-19
and Steps We Have Taken**
17th June 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom

6

**Looking To The Future, After COVID-19 –
What We Will Need To Do!**
1st July 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom

**To join the FN4M Zoom Online Interfaith Dialogue and
Information Events**
email admin@fn4m.org for the link and password

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

ONLINE TRAINING EVENTS

1

**Faith Communities and Loneliness
with Special Reference to COVID-19 Restrictions
29th April 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom**

2

**Faith Communities and Suicide Prevention
with Special reference to COVID-19 Restrictions
13th May 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom**

3

**Faith Communities and Domestic Abuse
with Special Reference to COVID-19 Restrictions
27th May 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom**

4

**Faith Communities and Mental Health Issues
with Special Reference to COVID-19 Restrictions
10th June 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom**

5

**Faith Communities and Safeguarding
with Special Reference to COVID-19 Restrictions
24th June 2020 from 5.00 to 6.30 pm via Zoom**

**To join the FN4M Zoom Online Training Events
email admin@fn4m.org for the link and password**

COVID-19, Bereavement and Other Crises



There have been many difficult adjustments to make as a result of this rampant virus and how quickly and easily it spreads. Tragically, there have been an unbelievable number of deaths and many difficult decisions have had to be made that impact on public life to save lives and keep us safe. Faith communities have felt this as much as any others.

Not only have faith buildings been closed to prevent public gatherings for prayer or other reasons but many of us have been acutely aware of the difficulties this poses for those who are sick in hospital and their families, and also for those who have died. There are so many other ways that it has impacted on our lives, even for those of us who appear to be healthy.

Death, bereavement and funerals is a massive area that has been affected. Many of our faiths have special rituals leading up to death, at the moment of death, treatment of the body of the deceased and various mourning rituals that we always follow. We cannot (or at least could not) imagine not doing certain things around death, bereavement and mourning – we always do this! Certain rules and rituals for the funeral are always followed as well.

Those of us who saw the pictures of mass graves in New York must have been horrified – apart from the fact the unknown people being buried were in coffins, it reminded us all too well of pictures we associate with genocides and the holocaust, even though the respect and grief and the fact they were in coffin made it very different.

The number of deaths and the spread of this virus have resulted in many changes. The fact that the bodies of those who die of Coronavirus are not washed in the same way as usual in many faiths, the fact that we cannot gather to support the family of the deceased, or even attend the funerals of friends and even family, has been very difficult for many of us to deal with and accept.

Different communities have decided different things about how to deal with the situation. The authorities have been very accommodating in trying to ensure that the sensitivities of faith communities and our needs are considered but the emphasis has had to be on stopping the spread of the virus and protecting lives. That is crucial for all our faiths and beliefs as well.

When the number of people who can gather together is restricted to two, that has a massive impact on funerals and mourning rituals. The fact that the government allowed close family to attend funerals was good on one level, but dangerous on another, and ambiguous. Now the advice seems to be up to 10 close family members, safely distanced 2 metres apart, are allowed but again that raises all sorts of questions, especially for the vulnerable, the elderly, those who have health conditions or compromised immunity.

Some communities may still try to restrict the number further or not allow any at the funeral to avoid some of these difficult decisions for faith leaders and family members. The fact that we can stream the funerals is a help in part and we can be a supportive online

community.

However the emotional and practical support we need to offer and will need to offer until, and way beyond, this crisis is over is immense. There will be many mourning rituals and bereavement issues that we will have to work out together.

May we be strong and caring enough to do this together and support each other, within and across our faith communities. We pray for strength for ourselves and each other to get through all these difficulties and hurdles and to learn to adjust, religiously, practically and emotionally.

Warren Elf
Director of
Faith Network for Manchester

Ramadan



Ramadan is the most religiously significant time of year for Muslims throughout the world. It marks the month in which the Quran (the holy text of Islam) was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As Islam uses a lunar calendar (based on the moon), the dates for Ramadan vary every year. The moon can be seen at different times in different parts of the world, therefore the first day of Ramadan can vary slightly from country to country.

Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, which form the basis of how Muslims live their lives. The other Pillars are Faith, Prayer, Charity and Pilgrimage. Fasting in Islam does not just consist of refraining from eating and drinking, but from every kind of selfish desire and wrong-doing and must be intentional. The concept of niyya which means "intention" guides the fasting of Ramadan. Muslims must willfully dedicate their fast to Allah alone in order to achieve niyyah. The fast is not merely of the body, but essentially that of the spirit as well. Each day during Ramadan Muslims do not eat or drink from dawn and break the fast after sunset, often with dates, as the Prophet Muhammad recommended. Muslims gather their friends and families for Iftar to eat in fellowship.

Young children, pregnant women, and those not healthy enough to fast are not required to observe the fast.

A few other reasons for fasting are to develop and strengthen self-control by resisting wrongful desires and bad habits. In fasting, by refraining from the natural human urges to satisfy one's appetite, this is exercising the ability of self-restraint, so that it can then apply to everyday life and bring about self-improvement.

Fasting also allows individuals to attain nearness and closeness to God so that He becomes a reality in their lives. As fasting purely for the sake of following a Divine commandment, knowing and feeling that He can see all our actions however secret, it intensifies the consciousness of God in hearts, resulting in an higher spiritual experience.

Charity and generosity is also especially urged during Ramadan. This teaches everyone to learn to give, and to not always take. Fasting enables individuals to sympathize with the suffering of others, and be mindful in helping out and remembering the blessings of life which are normally taken for granted.

During the Holy Month of Ramadan there are also special prayers called Taraweeh which take place after every evening's last daily prayer (Isha). Taraweeh is derived from the Arabic word meaning "to rest and relax", as it is seen as a special form of Islamic meditation and commonly take place in mosques where Muslims pray in congregation. These special prayers involve reading long portions of the Quran, as well as performing many rakahs (cycles of movement involved in Islamic prayer). The Quran is divided into equal parts for the purpose of reading sections of equal length during each of the Ramadan nights. The aim is read the entire Qur'an by the end of Ramadan.



After fasting for a month, Muslims celebrate Eid Al-Fitr, which means "The celebration of breaking the fast". Muslims begin Eid with prayer, sometimes in the mosque but usually in an outdoor location. Before going for the Eid prayer, it's encouraged to take a bath and wear the most befitting clothes and look dignified for the celebration. Following the Eid prayer, people gather together to have a feast with their families and friends. This is a time to celebrate the completion of a spiritual duty, as well as a time to bond, share and express love, peace and friendship. Some people also take part in the tradition of gift exchange during Eid.



THE RAINBOW CHILDREN

The history books will talk of now,
That time the world stood still.
When every family stayed at home,
Waved out from windowsills-
At those they loved but could not hold,
Because they loved them so.
Yet, whilst they did they noticed all the flowers start to grow.

The sun came out, they can recall,
And windows, rainbows filled.
They kicked a football in their yards,
Until the night drew in.
They walked each day but not too close,
That time the world stood still.
When people walked straight down the roads,
That once the cars did fill.

They saw that people became ill,
They knew the world was scared.
But whilst the world stood still they saw,
How much the whole world cared.
They clapped on Thursdays from their doors,
They cheered for the brave.
For people who would risk their lives,
So others could be saved.

The schools closed down, they missed their friends,
They missed their teachers so.
Their Mams and Dads helped with their work,
They helped their minds to grow.
The parents used to worry that,
As schools were put on hold,
Their children wouldn't have the tools,
They'd need as they grew old.

But history books will talk of them,
Now adults, fully grown.
Those little boys and girls back then,
The ones who stayed at home.
They'll tell you that they fixed this world,
Of all they would fulfill.
The RAINBOW children building dreams,
They'd dreamed whilst time stood still.



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ZERO COST

FEED LINE - MCR

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response



► FEED MY CITY | www.feedmycity.org

0300 365 3101

STEP 1

Call Feedline

Line's are open 24/7
PLEASE CALL
0300 365 3101



Delivery or Collection

Will be made by one of our drivers in line with current UK GOV & NCASS guidelines ie. Social distancing & PPE

STEP 2

Place your order

Minimum order **10 persons**

(If less than 10, **discuss with Feedline operator**, We will try our best to serve)

Maximum order at any **one time 50 persons**

Hot Vegetarian Meals

for anyone in the following situations:

Homeless, Refuge centres, shelters, etc.

Emergency Provisions -
No gas, No water

No access to a basic meal or COVID-19 situations

STEP 3

INFO required

- Contact name
- Contact phone number
- Contact address
- Drop off point
- Drop off point contact number

Service on reasonable endeavour basis



Avoid close contact

with people who are sick, sneezing or coughing.



Avoid touching

your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

WE DO NOT STORE OR KEEP YOUR DATA

Feeding Humanity - Supporting People

HELPLINE FOR FAITH INSTITUTIONS

0333 772 1989

EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK, 1PM-7PM



Call our team of expert consultants for up-to-date support during this critical time.

**CALL US ON
0333 772 1989 OR SEND
US AN EMAIL AT
INFO@SFITOGETHER.ORG**

www.sfitogether.org

SFI | Strengthening
Faith Institutions

WE CAN HELP WITH:

- Local and National Government economic support schemes
- Charity Registration
- Gift Aid
- Legal matters
- counseling support
- Safeguarding children online
- Health and well-being
- Volunteer opportunities
- technical and financial support for online engagement

FN4M Contact Information



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