

## Understanding Islam

Christianity and Islam have been in a relationship ever since the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and the earliest years of the Prophet Muhammad's time in Makkah. Down through the centuries, there have been good times and bad. Muslims trace their ancestry back through Abraham, just like Jews and Christians. All three of these "Abrahamic faiths" have much in common but also see things differently. We need to know and appreciate our "cousins in faith".

Over the last forty years, a large number of Muslims have moved to Britain so that now they number by far the biggest religious group after British Christians. In many of our major towns and cities, Muslims make up a substantial minority of the population. This constitutes an invitation to Christians to get to know their cousins better and to explore ways of building bridges of mutual respect and understanding. This applies to those involved with Muslims as neighbours, friends, workplace acquaintances or clients in the caring professions.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding of Muslims in the West. This course has been designed to give an appreciation of the inner dimensions of Islam and the way that it shapes the lives of Muslims, as well as the outer manifestations of Islam as a religion. If we are to engage in dialogue with our Muslim fellow citizens, then we need to understand something of their world view, beliefs, and the history and theology of Christian-Muslim relations.

The course consists of ten two-hour sessions, including a visit to a mosque. It is given by Dr Chris Hewer, the St Ethelburga Fellow in Christian-Muslim Relations, who has been involved in the study of Islam and practically in Christian-Muslim relations since 1986. For many years, he worked in Birmingham as Inter-Faith Adviser and was associated with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations.

The outline of the course is as follows:

1. **19 April** ***A Muslim-eye view of creation***
2. **26 April** ***The Prophet Muhammad***
3. **3 May** ***The Qur'an***
4. **10 May** ***An overview of Muslim history***
5. **17 May** ***Principal beliefs of Islam***
6. **24 May** ***The ritual practice of Islam***
7. **4 June** ***Visit to a mosque- [Monday date]***
8. **14 June** ***Living constantly remembering God***
9. **21 June** ***Islam and other faiths***
10. **28 June** ***Muslims in Europe and especially in Britain.***

**Venue: St James' s Prebend Street, N1  
on Thursdays 19.45 to 21.45**