

Christian-Muslim Interfaith Iftar Dinner

The program was organized by Rev. Sabir Gul, in charge of the session, at Saint Paul's Church to promote peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among multi-religious communities. It transformed this Iftar dinner into a symbol of interreligious solidarity. Mr. Shahzad Lawrence, a member of the District/Division Peace and Interfaith Harmony Committee, facilitated and coordinated the event and ensured participation from religious scholars, civil administration, law enforcement agencies, and members of civil society from every walk of life.

On the blessed evening of 4th March 2026, a remarkable **Christian-Muslim Interfaith Iftar Dinner** was held at **Saint Paul's Presbyterian Church in Gujranwala, Pakistan**. This spiritually uplifting and socially impactful gathering became a shining example of harmony, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue at a time when the national and international situation demands unity, patience, and collective wisdom.



Mr. Shahzad Lawrence, in his welcome speech, highlights the contribution of the pastor Sabir Gul and the session of Saint Paul Church in promoting religious harmony and dialogue for peace.

The worthy guests were warmly and respectfully welcomed with beautiful bouquets of fresh flowers upon their arrival at **Saint Paul's Church**. Rev. Sabir Gul, along with Mr. Shahzad Lawrence and the Church Session members, personally welcomed each distinguished participant with smiles and heartfelt greetings.

This floral reception symbolized honor, peace, and interfaith goodwill. The gesture reflected the spirit of hospitality and mutual respect that defines both Christian and Muslim traditions. The welcoming ceremony created an atmosphere of warmth, dignity, and harmony, setting a positive tone for the meaningful Interfaith Iftar Dinner gathering.



We welcomed Mollana Akbar Naqshbandi, a known Muslim scholar



We welcomed Rev. Fr. Francis Gulzar, Parish Priest, Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, Gujranwala



We welcomed Additional Commissioner General Aamir Jablani, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Furqan Hashmag, Muhammad Nadeem Butt, and Muhammad



We welcomed Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zeeshan Nadeem, Deputy Superintendent of Police Malik Naem, and other distinguished guests

A meeting regarding Christian Muslim Iftar Dinner was held with Rev. Fr. Shakeel Inayat and Shahzad Lawrence; the elders attended the meeting as well.





The sitting plan for the Christian-Muslim Interfaith Iftar Dinner at **Saint Paul's Presbyterian Church of Pakistan** was outstanding and thoughtfully arranged to encourage interaction and dialogue among guests from different faiths and departments. Comfortable sofas were placed for senior officials and religious scholars, ensuring respect and convenience.



A high-quality sound system was installed for clear speeches and recitations. Attractive banners displaying the message of “Christian-Muslim Iftar Dinner – Promotion of Interfaith Harmony and Peace” were prominently placed, creating a dignified atmosphere that reflected unity, tolerance, and community partnership.



The significance of this Interfaith Iftar Dinner becomes even more profound when Christians and Muslims in Pakistan are observing the sacred seasons of Lent and Ramadan simultaneously. Lent, a period of fasting, repentance, prayer, and spiritual reflection for Christians, and Ramadan, a month of fasting, self-discipline, charity, and devotion for Muslims, both emphasize purification of the heart, compassion for the needy, and closeness to God. When these two holy seasons overlap, they create a powerful spiritual opportunity for interfaith harmony and shared moral values.

Prayer rugs were respectfully arranged beside the marquee hall to facilitate the comfort and religious obligation of Muslim scholars and guests. This arrangement demonstrated deep respect for Islamic traditions and ensured that participants could offer their Maghrib prayer peacefully and with dignity. The provision of a clean and organized prayer space reflected genuine interfaith sensitivity and hospitality by the Christian hosts.

Its significance for the Muslim community was profound. It conveyed acceptance, honor, and understanding of their religious practices. Such gestures strengthen trust, promote interreligious harmony, and send a powerful message that faith communities can coexist with mutual respect and cooperation.

In such a context, an interfaith Iftar dinner is not merely a social gathering; it becomes a sacred symbol of unity in diversity. It reflects how both communities, while practicing their distinct religious traditions, can stand together in mutual respect and solidarity. The shared experience of fasting—though observed differently—builds empathy and understanding.

It reminds both Christians and Muslims that sacrifice, patience, forgiveness, and charity are universal principles that transcend religious boundaries.

The possible interfaith message from such an initiative is clear: faith should unite humanity, not divide it. During a time when the national and international situation often reflects division and intolerance, observing Lent and Ramadan together sends a message of peaceful coexistence, promotion of interfaith dialogue, and collective responsibility for social harmony. It shows that Pakistan's diverse religious communities can transform spiritual seasons into platforms for tolerance, reconciliation, and nation-building.

Ultimately, this shared spiritual journey strengthens the foundation for a peaceful, respectful, and united society.

The interfaith gathering witnessed the honorable presence of prominent government officials and respected religious personalities. Among the distinguished guests were Mr. Amir Jablani, Additional Commissioner General; Mr. Furqan Hashmag, Additional Commissioner Revenue; Muhammad Zeeshan Nadeem, Additional Deputy Commissioner General; Mr. Ghayour Ahmad Khan, SSP Operations; Malik Muhammad Naeem, DSP; Rana Muhammad Sultan, District Incharge Security Branch; and Mr. Nadeem Butt, PSO to the Commissioner, Gujranwala. Their participation reflected the administration's strong commitment to social cohesion, religious harmony, and community peacebuilding initiatives.

The religious scholars who graced the occasion included Qari Muhammad Saleem Zahid, Mollana Khalid Hassan Mujadadi, Haji Yousaf Khokhar, Muhammad Saeed Ahmad Saddique, Allama Kazam Tarabi, Mollana Muhammad Akbar Naqshbandi, Muhammad Zubari Khatana, Mollana Usman Butt, Muhammad Nouman Saddique, and other respected personalities. Their presence strengthened the message that faith traditions, though diverse in practice, share common values of compassion, patience, forgiveness, and service to humanity.

The program began with a warm welcome to all guests, followed by reflections on the sacred month of Ramadan and its universal message of self-restraint, empathy for the poor, spiritual purification, and social responsibility. Christian leaders expressed their heartfelt solidarity with their Muslim brothers and sisters during Ramadan, emphasizing that fasting, prayer, and charity are principles found in both Christianity and Islam. Muslim scholars appreciated the hospitality of the church and highlighted the importance of unity in diversity, reminding the audience that peace begins with mutual respect and understanding.

As the call to prayer approached, the atmosphere became deeply spiritual. Dates and water were served, and Muslims broke their fast in the premises of the church—an act rich in symbolism and significance. It was not merely an Iftar meal; it was a powerful demonstration of interfaith trust-building, cross-community engagement, and practical coexistence.

In today's complex national and international situation—where religious misunderstandings, extremism, intolerance, and misinformation sometimes threaten the social fabric—such initiatives send a strong peace message. Globally, conflicts rooted in identity politics, religious misinterpretations, and geopolitical tensions have created divisions. In such critical worldly situations, grassroots interfaith harmony programs like this Iftar dinner become instruments of preventive diplomacy and community-based peace architecture.

The impact of this interfaith Iftar dinner on Gujranwala and its division is profound. First and foremost, it strengthened interpersonal relationships between religious scholars and government officials. Face-to-face interaction reduces mistrust and creates opportunities for dialogue before conflicts arise. It fosters confidence-building measures that are essential for peaceful coexistence.

Secondly, the event promoted tolerance and mutual understanding. When Christian and Muslim leaders sit together, share food, and exchange reflections, they dismantle stereotypes and replace them with friendship. Such symbolic gestures have long-term psychological and social benefits, especially for younger generations who witness these acts of unity.

Thirdly, the involvement of district administration and law enforcement agencies reinforced the importance of collaborative peacebuilding. The presence of senior officers demonstrated that maintaining law and order is not only about enforcement but also about prevention through community engagement. It conveyed a clear message that the administration stands with all communities equally and values interfaith solidarity as a pillar of sustainable peace.

Furthermore, the interfaith Iftar dinner strengthened the platform of the District/Division Peace Committee. By bringing together religious scholars, civil servants, and social activists, the event enhanced coordination mechanisms that can be activated during times of tension

or crisis. Peace is not built overnight; it requires consistent engagement, dialogue, and trust-based partnerships. This gathering contributed significantly to that process.

The positive outcomes of this initiative extend beyond one evening. It cultivated a culture of inclusive participation in which people from diverse backgrounds feel respected and valued. It encouraged collaborative problem-solving approaches for social issues such as drug abuse, poverty, extremism, and communal misunderstandings. When communities stand united, they become resilient against forces that attempt to divide them.

Moreover, the event projected a positive image of Gujranwala at national and international levels. In an era where negative narratives often dominate media headlines, such stories of unity and cooperation provide hope and inspiration. They demonstrate that Pakistan's diverse religious communities are capable of living together peacefully and working collectively for national progress.

This interfaith Iftar dinner also carried a strong peace message rooted in shared spiritual values. Ramadan teaches patience, self-control, generosity, and compassion. Christianity emphasizes love, forgiveness, and service. When these shared principles are highlighted in joint gatherings, they become a moral foundation for social harmony and ethical citizenship.

Another significant impact is youth inspiration. When young people observe respected scholars and officials participating in interfaith dialogue, they learn the importance of respectful disagreement and peaceful engagement. It nurtures a new generation committed to coexistence rather than confrontation.

In the future, such initiatives can be expanded to include interfaith seminars, youth exchange programs, joint community service projects, environmental campaigns, and educational workshops. Regular interfaith engagements will strengthen early warning systems against conflict and promote social resilience during challenging times.

The 4th March 2026 Interfaith Iftar Dinner at Saint Paul's Presbyterian Church of Pakistan will be remembered as a milestone in the journey toward peaceful Gujranwala and Division. It reaffirmed that harmony is not merely a slogan but a lived practice. It showed that tolerance is not weakness but strength. It proved that the promotion of interfaith dialogue is not optional but essential in today's interconnected world.



As the evening concluded with prayers for Pakistan’s stability, prosperity, and unity, a collective commitment was renewed: to reject hatred, to resist division, and to continue building bridges of understanding. The smiles exchanged, the hands shaken, and the prayers offered together became symbols of hope for a brighter and more peaceful future.

In conclusion, this Christian-Muslim Interfaith Iftar Dinner was more than a ceremonial event; it was a strategic peacebuilding intervention, a community-strengthening exercise, and a living testimony of unity in diversity. Amid critical worldly situations and global uncertainties, Gujranwala has sent a powerful message—that through harmony, tolerance, and the promotion of interfaith dialogue, peace is achievable, sustainable, and transformative.

The Interfaith Iftar Dinner was beautifully arranged according to the traditional Ramadan pattern, consisting of two important parts: **Iftari with Maghrib prayer** and then a full dinner. These food items were not only delicious but also culturally and spiritually significant, reflecting the essence of Ramadan hospitality in **Pakistan**.

Iftari (Breaking of the Fast)

The Iftari table was gracefully decorated with essential Ramadan items. It began with **Khajoor (Dates)**, following the Sunnah tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as dates are considered the most blessed and simple way to break the fast. Alongside dates, chilled **Rooh Afza Sharbat** served to refresh the fasting guests.

A colorful **Fruit Chaat**—a mixture of bananas, apples, guavas, pomegranates, and oranges—was prepared to provide natural energy. Traditional fried items such as **Samosas**, fried chicken, filled with spiced potatoes and peas, and crispy **Pakor**s, made from gram flour with onions, potatoes, and spinach, were warmly appreciated. **Chana Chaat** (spiced chickpeas with salad and chutney) added a tangy flavor to the Iftari spread.

Meanwhile, a full traditional dinner was served. The main dishes included aromatic **Chinese rice, beef and chicken, firni**, flavorful **Chicken Qorma**, freshly baked **Naan** and **Roti**, along with fresh green salad and **Raita** (yogurt sauce). The meal concluded with Green tea.

This traditional arrangement reflected the spirit of Ramadan generosity, hospitality, and shared community bonding.

Religious scholars and peace activists present at the Interfaith Iftar Dinner recorded their special peace messages to promote interfaith harmony and social cohesion. In their statements, they emphasized tolerance, mutual respect, and the urgent need for the promotion of interfaith dialogue in today's challenging national and international situation. They highlighted that Islam and Christianity both teach love, compassion, forgiveness, and service to humanity. By sharing these recorded messages, they aimed to spread a positive narrative beyond the event, encouraging unity among communities in **Gujranwala** and inspiring collective efforts for a peaceful and harmonious society.

This Christian-Muslim Interfaith Iftar Dinner delivers a powerful world message at a time when humanity is facing division, conflict, and misunderstanding. In an era marked by religious polarization, extremism, and social fragmentation, this gathering demonstrates that faith can be a bridge rather than a barrier. When Christians and Muslims sit together during Lent and Ramadan, share food, respect each other's prayers, and speak about peace, they present a living example of harmony in diversity.

The message to the world is clear: dialogue is stronger than hatred, cooperation is more powerful than conflict, and shared spiritual values can unite nations. Such initiatives prove that grassroots peacebuilding can counter negative global narratives. From **Gujranwala**, a message of tolerance, coexistence, and interreligious solidarity is sent internationally—encouraging communities everywhere to choose understanding over division and peace over prejudice.

