

After our collaborative outreach initiative with our Muslim neighbors, *The Greenville News* featured this editorial by Fr. Furman and Mr. Zafer Mohiuddin on Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. St. Peter's vestry asked for the column to be shared in our newsletter for parishioners who do not subscribe to the newspaper.



**Your Turn**  
The Rev. Furman Buchanan  
and Zafer Mohiuddin  
Guest columnists

## A remarkable and ordinary act of faith

A remarkable and yet ordinary thing happened in Greenville last week. A Christian woman dedicated to serving God by loving her neighbor as herself reached out to someone in need. At the same time a Muslim woman dedicated to serving God by loving her neighbor as herself reached out too. They both reached out — one with a cup of rice and the other with a scoop of dried vegetables — and filled a bag of nutritious food for yet another neighbor they will never meet.

Even though these women do not see eye to eye — religiously, culturally, or politically — they nonetheless stood side by side, along with two hundred other faithful Muslims and Christians. They did the very thing their different faiths hold in common as a sacred, essential, expression of one's love for God.

On Saturday, Oct. 28 the Islamic Society of Greenville

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and St. Peter's Episcopal Church donated and packaged 31,000 meals as a collaborative act of charity. Children of God, from 4 years old to 84 years old, dressed out in hijabs, hats, and hairnets to serve the poor. In addition to practicing their faith, members of these two local communities also practiced hospitality by meeting one another, standing together, and promoting peace and goodwill in our wider community of Greenville.

One of the core pillars of Islam and one of the fundamental practices of Christianity is charity for the poor. Thus, it is an ordinary thing for faithful Christians and Muslims to reach out and serve people in need. Yet, what is extraordinary is to see two communities stepping forward to perform acts of charity together.

What began as a friendship between two women who exercise at the same gym led to conversations between other members of our communities. These conversations led to a common question: if we both hold the same core value of charity for the poor, why are we not working together? This question prompted us to do better, and to lead by example.

According to a representative from our partner at Rise Against Hunger, he has only experienced one other inter-faith collaboration during his years of service around the country, a meal packaging event in Indianapolis. It is our hope that our communities' ordinary and yet remarkable act of collaborative charity this week will prompt other faithful people and communities to begin asking the same question we have asked, and then responding as we have responded — not only with words, but also with deeds. When this happens, the poor will be blessed, goodwill and peace will spread, and we will cease describing as remarkable these acts of collaborative charity that should just be ordinary.

Consider for a moment someone who is different from you in some important way. Now consider what kind of act or purpose you might possibly share in common that could be even more profound — not just for you or for them, but also for others. Finally, ask yourself this question: Why would I not work together with someone else if it blessed people in need and promoted peace and goodwill in my own community? The answer may not be easy, but it is simple and perhaps even ordinary.

*The Rev. Furman Buchanan is Rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Greenville. Zafer Mohiuddin is president of the Islamic Society of Greenville.*