



## Islam Course at Thursday Lunch

"The Cross and the Crescent: Understanding Islam as Christians" is the focus of a seven week Thursday lunchtime study that will begin at 12:15 on June 24. Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, Americans have been increasingly aware of the influence of Islam on the lives of its hundreds of millions of adherents. Many of us know very little about this faith, which shares many common stories and beliefs with our own. The radicalized versions of Islam that we encounter on the news are not always representative of the broad streams of the faith, which can be found in nearly as many forms as Christianity.

We are also not the first Christians to engage with Muslims. Part of our course will trace the history of Christian-Islamic relations, exploring the forms of Christianity that influenced the beginnings of the faith and ways that Christians and Muslims have sought to explain the ways we see God to one another through the ages. We will also consider some good and bad ways to think about other religions from within the commitments of our own faith. The final three sessions of the course will discuss the basic teachings of the Qu'ran and the practices of the Islamic life.

Our key teachers for the class will be Emily Leonardy, our summer seminarian, and Dr. Richard Pfau, a member of our congregation. Emily led a course on comparative religion as a student at Duke and has a special interest in the relationship between Christianity and Islam. Dr. Pfau is a noted scholar of Middle Eastern history, and the former president of Illinois College and Averett University. He currently teaches courses about the Middle East and Islam at Hartwick College and the University of Albany.

A coursepack with readings for the class will be available in mid-June. As with past Thursday lunchtime classes, a hot meal will be served through the Senior Meals program on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays at 11:45, and will cost \$2.50 for those over 60 or \$6.75 for those under 60. On other Thursdays, you can join us at the same time to enjoy a packed lunch.