

Brookville Multifaith Campus

News



*This issue is dedicated in loving memory of
Rabbi Stuart Paris, HaKohen*

*One house, many faiths, endless
opportunities for growth!*

February
2023

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Vision Statement

Through learning opportunities, essential partnerships, and occasional shared worship, our campus welcomes all who want to learn, question and grow, while making a positive and lasting impact in the community and world.

Mission

To build a multifaith community of people from different faiths who connect to one another by embracing similarities while celebrating differences.

Find a Place to Belong

We invite you to discover a spiritual community made up of different religious groups. Each group maintains its own religious identity but fosters an open environment for learning, celebrating and honoring each distinct religion.

Saying Goodbye *by Rev. Vicky L. Eastland*

I became the new minister at Brookville Church in September of 2012. Around the same time, a brand new synagogue was forming on our campus. Shortly after arriving, I attended my very first Break Fast at the end of Yom Kippur. It was at the home of one of the interfaith families and I was introduced to this very warm and welcoming gentleman whom I was told was the rabbi of this new synagogue.

I quickly discovered that Rabbi Stuart Paris was a dynamic person who filled a room with his light and love every time he walked in. We became deep friends over the ten years God gave us. We studied together, prayed together, worshipped together, ministered to the interfaith families together and along with Dr. Sultan Abdulhameed, founder of the Muslim Reform Movement Organization, built a multifaith campus together that continues to welcome everyone! Rabbi Stuart has left an indelible mark on our hearts. His love for God, his congregation and especially the children of our campus continues to be felt through his spiritual presence that remains with us.



We shared the same passion for inclusion and the sanctuary immediately became a shared worship space as the Torah was permanently housed in a beautiful Ark behind the Christian pulpit where it will continue to remain. It was commissioned and built just for The New Synagogue of Long Island by a man named Noah. Rabbi Paris carefully chose the Hebrew verses he wanted to be displayed on the front of the Ark.

In an article Rabbi Paris wrote for our campus newsletter in June of 2015 he said:

The Ark in the front of our synagogue has two of the most important statements in the entire Torah written across the top and down each side:



וְאַהַבְתָּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ.

V'ahav'ta et Adonai Elohecha, b'chol l'vav'cha, u'v'chol naf'shecha u'v'chol m'odecha

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

וְאַהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ.

Ve'ahav'ta lere'acha ka'mocha

"Love thy neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:17-18)

Rabbi went on to say: *These two Torah portions were also selected by Jesus and Muhammad as the two most important teachings to their followers....The Ark in our shared sanctuary therefore embodies the true spirit of each of our communities and honors all who call the Multifaith Campus their home.*

Continued on page 3

On May 15, 2016 Rabbi Stuart held a special Torah Completion Ceremony to restore The New Synagogue of Long Island's 100 year old Torah. This will go down as one of the most memorable events held on our multifaith campus. Why? Because Rabbi Stuart invited everyone to receive a letter of the Hebrew alphabet during this ceremony.

Rabbi Stuart always said that the Torah is **Love** and when he asked the Orthodox Sofer who was doing the restoration work if non Jews could receive a letter in the Torah, Sofer Druin said, "Of course! The Torah is for EVERYONE!" This once in a lifetime event was so meaningful for all who participated: Jews, Christians, Muslims and even an Atheist!

Rabbi Stuart was a huge part of helping us define the mission of our campus; that we love all others the way God loves us. At every Shabbat service, Rabbi Stuart would ask if God loves all of us then what does that make us to each other? He would say it makes us brothers and sisters and therefore we are all part of God's family.

I will miss my friend, but I am so thankful for the time we were given and that he was a big part of helping shape our multifaith campus into the inclusive home it is today. Let's continue to carry that forward in the spirit of love that Rabbi Stuart embodied so well.



[Click here](#) to watch Rabbi Stuart read the meaning of the Torah inscription from the Gospel of Matthew



Rabbi Stuart Paris, his wife Rev. Enid Kessler and Sofer, Rabbi Gedaliah Druin

Nancy Worsham also shared that she enjoyed the Torah Completion. She found it informative and fun!



Our Torah letter, "Kouf" meaning "ALL" means a great deal to us, as Rabbi Paris encouraged and supported us as a family at Brookville Multifaith Campus. His generous inclusion of us and our son Benjamin in his ministry will never be forgotten, and we hope to carry it on forever at Brookville in his loving memory!
David, Lisa and Benjamin Denison

Rabbi Stuart Paris *by Rabbi Scott Matous*

I met Rabbi Paris in 2005 while in rabbinical seminary and was immediately drawn to his warmth and genuine nature. He was always supportive and encouraging of my growth and development as a rabbi (and in general). It is still with some sense of disbelief that I cannot pick up my cell phone and call Rabbi Paris just to say hello, ask for advice, or to see how he was doing.

While I definitely want to acknowledge our grief, sadness, and loss that we feel due to the passing of Rabbi Paris, I want to honor our tradition of having gratitude for the life and soul of Rabbi Paris who connected with the core of our very lives and blessed us.

Rabbi Stuart was a true leader, teacher, mentor, and friend. He impacted many people and multiple communities, especially in helping establish the Multi Faith Community of Long Island, the New Synagogue of Long Island, and as President of AFSI (All Faiths Seminary International). Rabbi Paris built a spiritual community based on love, acceptance, and joy.

As a leader Rabbi Stuart set an example of how to appropriately prioritize his life. While he was very present as a rabbi, Rabbi Stuart put his family first as a husband, father, and grandfather. He let it be known that his (home ? Wife? Family?) came first.

As a gifted teacher, Rabbi Stuart taught by telling compelling stories and by being an example of joy and love. He was very knowledgeable on Jewish theology, Jewish history, all things Israeli, Kabbalah, and how to make Judaism accessible to the experienced veteran and novice alike.

That said, Rabbi Stuart was much more than a Rabbi. He was a Rebbe, carrying on the tradition of his mentor and friend, Rabbi Joseph Gelberman. Rebbe is a Yiddish word that describes a tzaddik (righteous person), spiritual mentor, and community leader in the Hasidic movement. Rabbi Stuart mentored many many people spiritually (both Jewish and non-Jewish) as well as mentoring people in the business world.

I've been blessed to know Rabbi Stuart since rabbinical school and have been blessed to call him rabbi, mentor, rebbe, and friend. May Rebbe Stuart's name always be for a blessing as we remember how he touched our minds, our spirits, and our hearts.

Remembering Rabbi Paris *by Nancy Kelleher*

When I was a little girl, I felt like I was being dragged to synagogue by my parents and forced to have a Bat Mitzvah. My family did not know the Rabbi personally and the Rabbi would not have known us by name either. I would have never thought that as an adult woman married to a Catholic man that I would not only enjoy going to synagogue but that my Christian husband would be along side me and our children feeling loved and welcomed and being asked up to the Torah and holding it at Friday night services and at our son's Bar Mitzvah. That is the miracle that Rabbi Paris brought to me. Because of his love and joy for Judaism not only do I want to attend services I also know that I am not dragging my children to synagogue as I was as a child and that my children look forward to going and participating. I know my children felt and will always feel Rabbi Paris' love and joy at every service and want to continue his traditions. Our family will all miss him terribly but will always feel his love and joy with us.



Rabbi Stuart Paris, City of Lights T-E-A-M Basketball *by Rev. Bill McBride*

In a previous edition of the Brookville Multifaith Campus Newsletter, I had the privilege of introducing the -City of Lights S-A-F-E Transformation Dreidl in honor of Rabbi Stuart Paris, who taught us to play and pray in a safe way. I used the acronym SAFE with words ending with "-city" in order to suggest that like Paris, known as the City of Lights, Rabbi Paris was known for the light he brought with his Simplicity, Audacity, Felicity and Electricity to help us feel SAFE in so many ways.

In this article, I would like to continue to honor Rabbi Paris for the way he helped us to work as a TEAM on the multi-faith campus and introduce The Rabbi Stuart Paris T-E-A-M Basketball using the 4 grooves or lines of a basketball to demonstrate how he helped guide our students to get their God-groove on at crucial times in their lives. The grooves on a basketball serve to help players guide the ball with greater skill. We were lucky to have the Brandeis University Hall of Fame basketball team player guiding us in countless illustrious moments. As a co-director for the IFC Religious Education Program I appreciated Rabbi's team spirit and willingness to help in any way to enhance our program.

T is for the Tenacity of Torah. I'll never forget how he loved to tell the story of the Bar Mitzvah student whose curiosity led the student to comment that the first letter of the Torah is Bet and the last letter is Lamed--which spells the Hebrew word for heart. Rabbi's eyes would light up with amazement at the student's brilliance and curiosity. Also, Rabbi Paris was tenacious in his articulation of God's unconditional love and constantly echoing that message with the heartfelt words, "I love you very much." Thanks to him, our team can proclaim, "We're loved unconditionally."



E is for Elasticity of Echad. When Rabbi Paris would question students on the 6 most important words in the Torah(The Shema) and ask what they meant. He would always stretch us and expand our belief in "Mr. and Mrs. God" in making us a family of faith. "What does that make us?" he would ask. The response of the brilliant believers he championed was a resounding, "We're brothers and sisters."

A is for Authenticity of AnaB'Koach. Rabbi Paris graced the campus by offering Kabbalah classes to create a team formed by flights of eagles and sounds of angels to enlighten us with his understanding of Spiritual Judaism. When asked what branch of Judaism he represented, he would respond with the word, "Authentic." Collaborating with Cantor Irene, we would be guided in the mystical song "AnaB'Koach" transcending any difference of faith. Thanks to Rabbi Paris' mystical touches and insights, all Rabbi's students can cheer that God is conspiring in our favor and we can tell the world that "We're authentic."

M is for Multiplicity of Modeh Ani (I give thanks.) Rabbi Paris shared the Modeh Ani prayer of thanks to all of us on the multifaith campus. One of his first students of the IFC highlighted his sharing of the prayer by telling the story of and how Rabbi Paris recorded this prayer for her in a way that she could pray it each day and share it with others. For me, this story illustrates the many creative ways that he was able to help us be a community of thanksgiving. Thanks to Rabbi Stuart Paris, we are able to say in multiple ways, "We're thankful each and every day."

For all of us at the Brookville Multifaith Campus, Rabbi Stuart Paris was a Hall of Fame faith leader and team player whose God-given talent we will never forget.

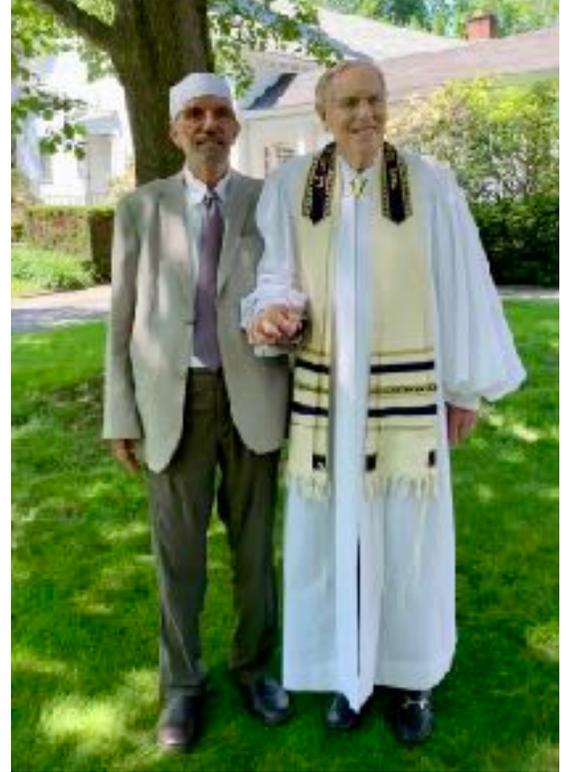
Remembering Rabbi Stuart *by Sultan Abdulhameed*

I vividly remember meeting Rabbi Paris for the first time. I was struck by the kindness in his welcoming smile and the warmth of his presence. This was obviously someone who exuded love. This first impression was repeated every time I met him.

Obviously, Rabbi Paris had attained such a high spiritual station that goodwill and friendliness naturally emanated from him. Rabbi Paris and I had numerous discussions about religion. In these conversations I discovered his exceptional open mindedness and his love of knowledge whatever its source.

The love he expressed for Muslim people and the respect with which he spoke about Islam deeply touched me. He said to me several times, "Islam is a continuation of Judaism", which I also believe to be true.

I will always remember Stuart Paris as a role model for his love and acceptance for all. His love was pure and Godly without any selfish motive. He was the type of religious leader that the world desperately needs. The multifaith campus and all of us who knew him are truly blessed.



Brookville Multifaith Campus Leaders...we will miss Rabbi Paris & Safia Hameed



Dr. Sultan Abdulhameed, Rev. Bill McBride, Cantor Irene Failenbogen, Safia Hameed, Rabbi Stuart Paris, Pierre Pirard, Rev. Enid Kessler, Rev. Vicky Eastland
Last picture taken together - Sept. 2022

Remembering Rabbi Stuart *by Cantor Irene Failenbogen*



Rabbi Stuart and I have been sharing the leadership of the New Synagogue of Long Island for more than 10 years. I remember receiving the call around Passover from Rabbi Stuart looking for a Cantor for his synagogue. From the first service together, I knew that we were meant to lead this congregation of Jewish and Interfaith families coming from so different backgrounds and ages. It has been a wonderful ride as leaders and I am so immensely grateful.

Today, I want to share a story that tells the nature of our friendship and adoration for each other. Rabbi Stuart always lead a prayer before each service behind the pulpit. We would hold hands, bow our heads and center before each celebration. He would often pray for wisdom,

spirit, light and good voice for me to uplift the community. One particular service, his words were so inspiring to me as a leader, I just felt to kiss his hand in a sign of gratitude. So, he kissed my hand too. This became a ritual of kissing hands before every service. When Rabbi Scott joined the New Synagogue, the three of us in a circle, held hands and kissed each other's hand in a spiritual acknowledgement that we needed each other's talent to lead the best service we could. The ritual became very funny when we had Bar or Bat Mitzvahs and we had to explain to teenagers why we needed to hold hands and pray before their ceremony.

This simple gesture of gratitude and affection shows how genuine our love and admiration for each other was. Today, words cannot express our sadness for this loss as a community. We will miss Rabbi Stuart so much, but, his spirit is guiding us to continue to pray for the light, for a good voice to speak our truth and for more kissing of loving hands. Thank you.

A Man of Peace *by Barbara Reiter*

Trying to compose a tribute to Rabbi Paris is a difficult task. A man of peace, love and friendship. Rabbi Paris transcended this for all people. He treated everyone on the same level no matter their age, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

I became a member of The New Synagogue of Long Island at the invitation of Cantor Irene years ago and I have grown increasingly spiritual under the tutelage of Rabbi Paris and Cantor Irene.

To honor his legacy, I will keep him in the present and continue to spread his examples of love.

He is missed but always present.



Shalom, *Barbara Reiter*

Rabbinical
Altruistic
Beloved
Blessing
Intuitive

Spiritual
Truthful
Uplifting
Accepting
Reflective
Thoughtful

Passionate
Accessible
Respectful
Idealistic
Spontaneous

These are just a few of the thoughts that come to mind when remembering Rabbi Stuart Paris. This is in alignment with the Kabbalah tradition of parsing out words to find their inner meaning.

~ *Lilly Strauss Greenberg*

Memories of Rabbi Paris *by The Mankes Family*

Christine: From the moment I met Rabbi Paris, he emanated love and compassion and was a friendly and pleasant person to be around. I felt at ease and comfortable talking to him. Rabbi Paris was one of the first people I met when my family first joined the Interfaith Community of Long Island over 10 years ago. Some of my most meaningful memories are our first Passover in Brookville in 2011, attending my first Shabbat service in Brookville, my daughter's baby blessing and welcoming ceremony and both of my son's Identity and Transition ceremonies. The one common thread in all of my memories is his smile, his kindness and ability to captivate us all with his gentle but meaningful and powerful sermons. I would write down quotes that he said that really resonated with me. Some of my favorites are:

"We will spend this hour worshipping the same God."

"God doesn't care how we found him, just that we do."

"We are all children of God, so we are all brothers and sisters."

Pete: Rabbi Paris was such an incredible man. He continually made my family and I feel like we were so significant in his life. He was an incredible listener. He always checked in on us and asked questions that were meaningful to our lives. Rabbi Paris was fantastic with all of the children from the IFC. I remember how wonderful he made our Interfaith Passover seders. He was always able to get the children involved and make them feel as if they were running the seder. Rabbi Stuart Paris will forever be treasured in our family. He represents all the qualities of the person I want to be. I appreciate all he has done for me, my family, and the entire interfaith community. He has made me a better person and I will always be grateful for all that he taught us. I thank G-d for letting him be a part of our lives.

Charlie: Rabbi Paris was one of a kind. A truly extraordinary man. He taught us about Jewish holidays and traditions in a way that no one else could. When I was a kid, he would explain things in a simple way that kids could understand. He will be missed and remembered.

Danny: One of the things that Rabbi Paris had said that resonated with me the most was when he said to love with love. He exhibited this saying by showing his compassion to anyone he saw. He loved with love because his compassion was genuine. I am going to miss his compassion and infectious joy.

Rosie: I know he did a lot for Brookville and the community and when I talked to him he was a good person and very joyful.



Rabbi Paris and Reverend Enid did blessing and naming ceremonies for Jake and Max. They will always have a special place in our heart. Rabbi Paris will be missed tremendously.

~ Allison Bilawsky



Bilawsky family with Rabbi Stuart Paris and Rev. Enid Kessler at Max's blessing and naming ceremony

Rabbi Paris and his wife, Rev. Enid Kessler spent many years ministering side by side!



Treasured Memories of our Dear Rabbi Stuart Paris



A few of the Bar & Bat Mitzvah's at The New Synagogue of Long Island



Ian Schombs



Maddy Cirker



Gabe Cirker



James Kelleher

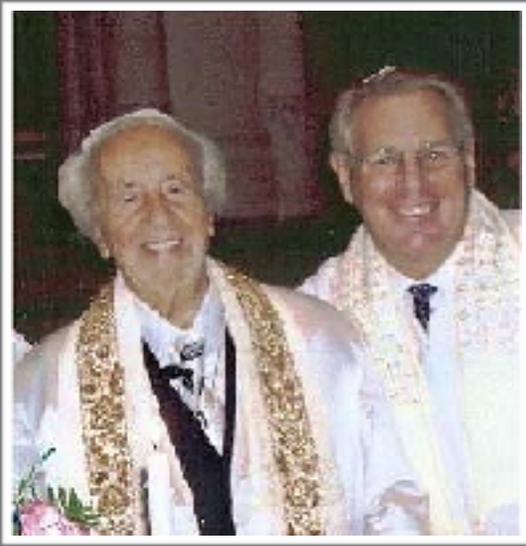


Jasper Weinberger



Cassie Johanson

Pictures of Rabbi Stuart Paris from All Faiths Seminary Events *by Rev. Larry Schwartz*



Rabbi Gelberman and Rabbi Paris



2017 Ordination for graduates All Faiths Seminary International. It shows Rabbi Stuart's Interfaith joy in action as he joined in with a Kirtan chanting session led by Guru Dileepji Thankappan



2017 Ordination for graduates of All Faiths Seminary International.



Rabbi Stuart and Cantor Irene re-enact Maddy Cirkir's Bat-Mitzvah for the 2016 AFSI Students

I worked with Rabbi Paris for many years at All Faiths Seminary International. and attended many inspirational services he led for the New Synagogue of Long Island. Rabbi Stuart was a visionary and someone who taught from his heart. He always said: "Lead with your heart and your mind will follow."

~ Rev. Dr. Kathleen T.Regan
Dean
All Faiths Seminary International

Rabbi Stuart would have turned 80 in January. He lived a life as a true renaissance man- Rabbi, Athlete, Business Executive, Teacher of Kabbalah, Father, Husband, loved by so many. I miss his special, loving soul. May he be of Blessed Memory. *Cynthia Adelman*

Rabbi Stuart, my dear friend, my teammate, a great basketball player, an even better mensch. You are loved and missed. *Steve Adelman*



SYNAGOGUE OF THE MONTH VIRTUAL SHABBAT SERVICE 5783

The New Synagogue of Long Island
The Synagogue for Spiritual Judaism

Rabbi Scott Matous
Cantor Irene Failenbogen

Synagogue of the Month Virtual Shabbat Service at 7:00 PM

Please join us on Friday, February 3, 2023.

**We will be having an in-person service as well as a virtual service in honor of
Rabbi Stuart Paris**

Brookville Multi-Faith Campus
2 Brookville Road
Brookville, NY 11545

There will be a coffee hour after services.

We have no membership dues or fees. All are welcome.

We rely on your support and commitment!

Please support The New Synagogue of Long Island as generously as you can.

[Print the form and mail it to us!](#)

We thank you in advance for your help and generosity.

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[Synagogue of the Month](#)

Text-to-Donate Text "NSLI" to (202) 858-1233

The New Synagogue of Long Island

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day Youth Event



Outreach event held at the Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center in Greenvale

Participants from IFCLI: Rev. Bill, Cantor Irene, Jim, Sara, Abby and Dean Decker and Nancy and Jack Kelleher



How can I stay informed regarding the Interfaith Community?

EMAIL

Please check your email for updates. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please email allison@interfaithli.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ifcli>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/interfaithcommunityli/>

Please check our website at <https://www.interfaithli.org/home> for a full calendar of exciting events that have been planned for your family this year!

In Memory of Safia Hameed

Safia Hameed, Dr. Sultan Abdulhameed's wife, was a beautiful soul whom we lost on Jan. 6, 2023.

Safia was a physicist, who earned her doctorate at the University of Manchester in England and had a challenging and fulfilling career at the American Institute of Physics, first as a Staff Scientist, and later as a Senior Scientist and Manager of a Division. As her husband shared during the funeral prayers for her, she was very humble about her achievements and never referred to herself as Dr. even though she had earned that title.



Like many immigrant Muslim families with young children in the USA, faced with the challenge of providing them with religious education and Islamic values, Safia and Dr. Sultan and their three children joined the Islamic Center of Long Island (ICLI) in the 1980s.

In 2015 Safia was honored as a Muslim Woman Pioneer for her leadership and volunteerism which is listed below.

- Safia was elected Vice President of ICLI in 1987 and was the first woman Vice President serving a two year term. She had the honor of being present at the ground breaking ceremony for the current building of ICLI.
- She was one of the founding members of the Domestic Harmony Foundation, a non-profit organization that works mainly with Muslim women who are victims of domestic violence. Safia served as a family counselor there for five years.

Safia enjoyed time spent with her grandchildren, was a voracious reader especially of physics and a lover of gardening. She felt closest to God when working the soil and tending her gardens.

Thank you for your prayers and love sent to our dear friend Dr. Sultan, who has been an integral part of helping build our multifaith campus. His quiet yet strong spiritual presence and leadership on our campus has been a powerful example of someone who exemplifies the true spirit of inclusion and peace. His wife, Safia was always at the ready to help in the kitchen during our multifaith events sharing her sweet spirit with us along with her delicious food. She will be greatly missed.



Dr. Sultan and wife, Dr. Safia



Safia and granddaughter Saleha

The Next Chapter



When Rabbi Paris and I met, we hit it off right away because both of us were previously in the military service. We became good friends as the months passed. At the end of the year we were discussing the similarities of our morning prayer time and he sent me an email (show here) with his daily prayer - Modeh Ani. I immediately picked up on it and made myself a page of the people, places and things that I wanted to thank God for putting in my life.

Now Rabbi Stuart is gone, but he has given me something I have used every day and expect to do always for my morning Quiet Time. The Modeh Ani has enhanced the spirituality of my day's start and each time it is prayed it brings him back to life

for a moment in my memory. I am sure there are many of you whose lives have been touched by this remarkable person and the Modeh Ani is free to all. You can use it as a gift from Rabbi Paris. May he rest in eternal peace.



From Rabbi Paris to Branch Worsham:

The first prayer I recite each morning when I first open my eyes is the "Modeh Ani", *"Thank you God for restoring my soul to my body and giving me another day of life."*

I then list all of the people, places and things for which I am grateful and especially for the gift of life, God's most precious gift.

There has been a very touching coincidence during this sad time. One of the most friendly and kind people in the entire multifaith group passed away, saddening all the more those of us who knew Safia Hameed. Her special joys that I knew of were gardening and feeding people. One evening at a multifaith gathering in the fellowship hall Safia stood beside the tables full of food and pointed into the kitchen saying to me, "This is where I promise to be whenever food is needed." She would tell me which trays of food I should eat and which ones would not taste

good to me. She took care of all of us that way. God blessed her with that joy of serving. She was a dear friend.

Sorrowfully submitted,

~ Branch Worsham