

Islamic Center of Boston to Host Interfaith Service to Mark Thanksgiving

11/13/2005

-- Representatives from diverse faiths will mark Thanksgiving during a service next week at the newly expanded Islamic Center of Boston.

"The notion of thanks and thanksgiving is very central," said the Rev. Frank Silva, co-chairman of the Wayland Clergy Association, adding it is an opportunity to "express the unity that they do share."

The Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held Sunday, Nov. 20, at 7 p.m. at the Islamic Center of Boston, 126 Boston Post Road (Route 20), Wayland.

Silva, who serves as pastor of the Catholic St. Ann's Parish, said the service will present readings from Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions. Non-denominational presentations will also be given.

Silva said the Clergy Association is honored the service will be held at the Islamic Center, which is wrapping up a \$3.9 million expansion project.

"Wayland is to be commended for its diversity and its respect for that diversity," said Silva.

Malik Khan, president of the Islamic Center of Boston, said "we're all excited" about hosting the Thanksgiving service.

The Islamic Center raised donations for the project and construction took about one-and-a-half years, said Khan.

The project added 10,000 square feet to the existing 5,200-square-foot building, with educational space for 400 people and renovated prayer and social space.

The project also added a new second floor to the facility, as well as new landscaping and an expanded parking lot.

The Islamic Center will host a formal opening ceremony for the new facility in the next few weeks, Khan said.

The Wayland Clergy Association is a membership of several religious organizations in town.

The group cultivates "cooperation, understanding and appreciation of difference," according to the Rev. Dr. Frederick Moser, rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit, an Episcopal church.

Along with the Thanksgiving service, the association oversees community service programs, religious dialogue and participates in the Watertown-based Public Conversations Project, which encourages relationships among people with different political, religious or cultural views.

Moser said Wayland is fortunate to have a "spectrum" of religious diversity.

"We have a wonderful working relationship," said Moser. "We have a lot of respect for each other."