

THE SAINT TIM'S TIMES



Kayaking Adventures

by Mark Tull

Kayaking is many things for me. It is an aquatic adventure where I get to see the natural world from a new perspective that I really enjoy doing. Paddling enables me to discover wildlife in its natural habitat with minimal imposition on my part. You can literally sneak up on wildlife, such as bald eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, turtles, kingfishers, dolphins, pileated woodpeckers, beavers, muskrats, deer, nutria, an alligator (keeping your distance), jumping fish, snakes on occasion, and egrets to name a few in their natural habitat, most likely not all on one trip.

The plant life is so beautiful and varied viewed from the water with cypress and Tupelo trees, marshmallow blooms, Carolina jasmine, marsh roses to name a few. I have even paddled below boulders as big as a large storage building standing on the riverbank. It is so interesting and enlightening. You can even fish during the trip, ask Steve Callender.

The weather can be a beautiful and ominous factor on your paddling trip presenting opportunities for fantastic photographic captures and memories. It can also provide some moments of humbling anxiety and exhilaration, sometimes requiring spontaneous action, resulting in relief and wonder at the hands of Mother Nature. It helps to check the weather forecast prior to heading out on your paddling excursion, as I have learned the hard way. Even then there can be surprises.

To me one of the best aspects of the paddling journey is the chance to share the experience with others that greatly enhances the adventure and learning experience. In my humble opinion, it is essential that a paddler knows how to swim and wears a life jacket while on the water. The life jacket is a legal requirement as well as a wise one. More than likely, you will get wet, which is a great part of the fun. As a beginner it is more fun and safer to go with an experienced paddler or kayaking company guide, who can help you on the journey.

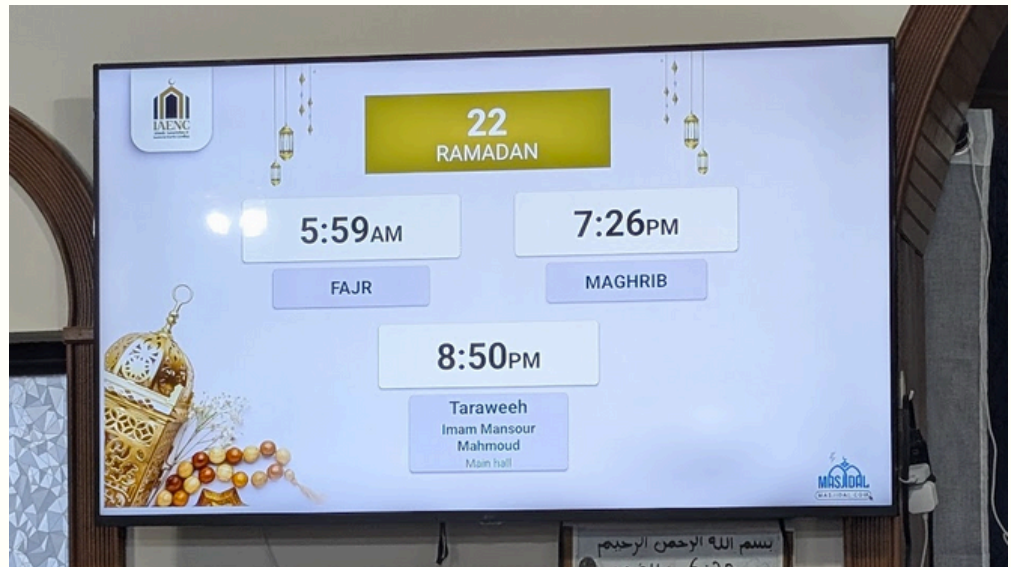
Kayaking is easy to learn with minimal instruction and great fun practicing and actively learning. It is a great way to get exercise in, too. I have learned there is so much of the natural world to experience and a very good way for me is to do it via a paddling trip with friends. Recently I went on a great paddling trip with friends, new friends, and family to Merchants Mill Pond in Gates county, northeast corner of NC, which was so much fun it is even hard to explain the joy derived from it. It is such an emotional experience. Some of the paddlers were camping there already, gaining an even better outdoor adventure with the hooting owls at night. The best way for me to conclude a paddling adventure would be to sit around a campfire or at a restaurant after the paddling trip, reminiscing and sharing our experiences and emotions gained on the water with fellow paddlers. I guess by now you can tell I enjoy the paddling journey. Hope to see you sometime on the water in the near future.



Ramadan Feast: Being Welcomed into Holy Space and Time

A group of St.

Timothy's parishioners recently participated in a Ramadan feast at the invitation of members of the Greenville Mosque. What follows are two reflections about the experience.



A Community Feast by Chuck Widney

Connie and I, along with St. Timothy parishioners Diane Hatfield, Leslie Bowman, Jocelyn Nelson; and other guests were invited to participate in a Ramadan Feast at the local Mosque on Evans Street. This was my first time to experience Islamic services inside of a Mosque of any type; it proved to be quite enjoyable.

The biggest surprise of the evening occurred shortly after arriving in which men and women were separated to attend in separate rooms of the building. It remained this way for the entire evening, fortunately I never felt like it was an obstacle to our participation or in socializing with others; the women enjoyed their gathering as well.

We non-Muslim guests were invited for the sharing of conversation. Conversations were very satisfying with the genuine friendliness and many thoughtful discussions. Discussions ranged from occupations, children, origins and similarity of faith. For a visit to a faith-based community, this was one in which I truly felt welcome and honored to be a part of the group.

Ramadan is similar to lent as it is a time to grow spiritually; one of the disciplines is to fast from sunup to sun down. The fast is traditionally broken with a date (fruit) and water. Everyone was provided with dates and water after entry, at sundown we all ate a date and entered into prayer. We were not specifically invited to participate by kneeling (they may have noticed that our bodies were not as flexible as theirs.) Interestingly there was one individual Muslim who used a chair; allowances are made for those with physical issues.

A full meal was served buffet style, main dishes included lamb, chicken, chickpeas and lentils. Pitas and hummus were available, as a side the pitas helping to corral food, we only had spoons as utensils.

We were served Arabic coffee; Google AI says: Arabic coffee, also known as "qahwa," is a traditional Middle Eastern beverage made from lightly roasted Arabica coffee beans, typically spiced with cardamom and sometimes saffron or cloves, and served without milk or sugar. About two ounces was served in a disposable plastic cup. It was unlike our traditional coffee, resembling tea but very good.

Various interesting conversations occurred during dinner until time came to clear the hall for the evening prayer. A photo is attached of a monitor that was permanently mounted on the wall providing prayer times and other information concerning the daily and weekly scheduling within the community. Times specifically shown are most relevant to Ramadan: Dawn, Dusk and Rest.

I encourage anyone to experience Ramadan if invited. I also pray that we extend the same hospitality to all brothers and sisters who come to our campus.

Why a Date?

Muslims traditionally break their fast with dates, often consuming one to three, as this practice is believed to be a Sunnah (a practice of the Prophet Muhammad). The act of breaking the fast with dates is seen as a way to connect with the Prophet's teachings and to show gratitude for the blessings of sustenance. (source: Mohammad Saad, a friend of the Whitesides)

Working to Build Community by Leslie Bowman

I recently attended two local events which bolstered my faith in our ability to have intelligent conversations that improve our understanding of and our relationship with communities that may differ from our own. The first event, hosted at St. Timothy's by the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina's Racial Healing Commission, was the Jazz and Race Symposium. I arrived part way through (due to a prior commitment) and was thrilled to see the church brimming with a diverse crowd of people. I enjoyed listening to a question-and-answer session that dealt with understanding and responding to the current political climate and its perceived effect on the poor and people of color. The Rev. Dr. Hanna Broome, who also delivered the keynote address, led the thoughtful and informative session. Following the symposium, we were treated to a set of amazing jazz music led by the Rev. Skip Walker.

The second event I was blessed to attend was a feast at the Greenville Mosque to break the day's Ramadan fast. The women of the mosque taught us that Ramadan is a month where Muslims aim to grow spiritually, strengthen their connection with God, and reflect on their purpose. It is similar to the Christian season of Lent. During the month of Ramadan fasting is observed from sunrise to sundown.

The women who hosted us treated our small group from St. Timothy's and St. Paul's as honored guests! After prayers at sundown, we enjoyed a delicious meal and were served first. The women were warm and welcoming, and eager to share their hospitality and their faith. During the meal the women introduced us to some key beliefs of the Islamic religion and emphasized the many similarities between the Islamic and Christian faiths. The literature they gave us stressed that Islam encourages one to seek the truth through reason, reflection and evidence. Plans are underway to revive the Interfaith community in Greenville, and this special dinner was a good introduction to a very welcoming group in Greenville's faith community,

