

Series 1: Gaining Insight into Islam

Islam: A Christian Layperson's View

September 20, 2016, 6:00pm

Mary Bane Lackie, PhD

Islam often gets negative press in the U.S., with many holding on to less than flattering stereotypes about Muslims. Through the experiences of one American Christian living in Muslim countries, learn about the Muslim faith as observed in the lives of ordinary people.

Lackie returned home to Arkansas after a position at UAFS after eight and a half years of working abroad. She worked at educational institutions in Poland, Armenia and Dubai before wrapping up her stint overseas working on two US government-funded education projects in Pakistan. Lackie is the Vice President for Development at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith.

The Complex Wars in Syria

October 18, 2016, 6:00pm

Najib Ghabdian, PhD

"Dr. Najib Ghabdian, a Syrian pro-democracy activist and academic, is the Special Representative to the United States for the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces. He will share with us his experiences of trying to find a way for Syria to move from the current catastrophic situation to one of democracy and peace. He will examine the US policy and the difficulties caused by the Russian presence as well as the historical conflicts among the Sunnis, the Shi'a, and the Shi'a offshoot of Alawites, of which Bashar al Assad is a member."

Ghabdian is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Middle East Studies at the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville.

A Brief Introduction to the Quran and Hadith

January 17, 2017, 6:00pm

Sarwar Alam, PhD

"Alam will introduce us to the Quran, one of the world's great holy books, by telling us about how it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammed. He will also talk about the Hadith, the collection of the Prophetic traditions compiled centuries after Prophet Muhammad's death, which is used by Muslims, especially scholars and Imams. The Hadith is to the Quran in Islam as the Talmud is to the Torah in Judaism.

Alam has been an Instructor at the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, since 2012.

Series 2: Gaining Insight into Genetics

DNA and Our Changing Understanding

February 21, 2017, 6:00pm

Jeannine Durdik, PhD

Durdik's current research focuses on the changes in immune function as we age. In order to talk about this, she will review the field of genetics from Mendel's peas to a salad of CRISPR corn. Dr. Durdik and her colleagues look at the mechanisms that underlie the immune responses to infection; this could lead to a better understanding of how the immune system works.

Durdik is an Associate Dean for Research in the Fulbright College and Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

What Does Epigenetics Have to Do with Cancer Treatment?

March 21, 2017, 6:00pm

Becky Williamson, PhD

Dr. Williamson will discuss the emerging field of epigenetics, its relation to cancer, and new treatments for cancer stemming from the field of epigenetics.

Epigenetics is the modification of a cell's physical characteristics through changes in gene expression, rather than changes in the DNA sequence of a gene. She will discuss how this knowledge is leading to the development and implementation of potential new cancer treatments.

Williamson is an Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith.

A Mission to Teach Undergraduates Biology

May 16, 2017, 6:00pm

Brandy Ree, PhD

Ree is working on two projects at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith in order to provide research opportunities to undergraduates. She addresses two major health issues – neurodegenerative disease and cancer. She will treat us as possible researchers as she presents us with the information we need to choose between the two options. Get ready to become students again.

Ree is an Assistant Professor in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith.

Mind Stretchers-

Series 1:

Gaining Insight into Islam

September 20, 2016 – A Christian Layperson's Experiences Living among Muslims - Mary Lackie, PhD

October 18, 2016 – An Analysis of the Complexities of War(s) in Syria – Najib Ghadbian, PhD

January 17, 2017 – A brief introduction to the Quran and Hadith – Sarwar Alam, PhD

Series 2:

Gaining Insight into Genetics

February 21, 2017 – DNA and Our Changing Understanding – Jeannine Durdik, PhD

March 21, 2017 – What is Epigenetics and What Does It Have to Do with Cancer Treatment - Becky Williamson, PhD

May 16, 2017 – A Mission to Teach Biology Research to Undergraduates and to Us – Brandy Ree, PhD

6:00pm – In the Ruth Skinner Building, across from St. John's Church,
214 N. 6th St.,
Fort Smith, AR 72901
479 -782-9912

Email: vpelan@stjohnfs.org



Mind Stretchers

Is a small group ministry of St. John's Episcopal Church in Fort Smith, AR.

Perceptions change
as we gain knowledge.

We invite you to join us as we
open the door and see what
is illuminated!

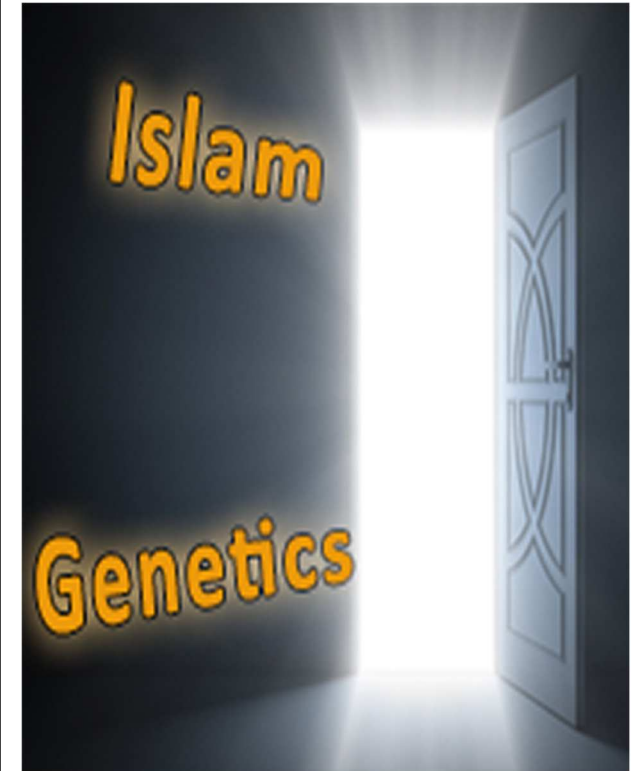


214 N. 6th St., Fort Smith, AR 72901
479 782-9912

Mind Stretchers

A St. John's Small Group Ministry

Now in our third year, we hope to gain insight as we increase our knowledge.



Join the Mind Stretchers at St. John's Episcopal Church where we question our own thinking as we learn new things.

Enjoy delicious free snacks as regional experts share their knowledge with us.