

# **Muslim prayer service at the Washington National Cathedral**

## Washington national cathedral hosts first Muslim prayer service

Planners say they hope Friday's service will foster more understanding and acceptance between Christians and Muslim

Associated Press in Washington  
theguardian.com, Friday 14 November 2014 13.14 GMT

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President Bush at the Washington national cathedral in 2007. Bus spoke at the service for former president Gerald Ford. Photograph: Gerald Herbert/AP

Washington national cathedral is hosting a Muslim prayer service for the first time.

Planners say they hope Friday's service at the historic cathedral will foster more understanding and acceptance between Christians and Muslims around the world.

The prominent Episcopal cathedral often hosts national events, such as presidential funerals, and has hosted Muslims at various interfaith services in the past. But planners say this is the first time the cathedral has invited Muslims to lead their own prayers there, which they call a "powerful symbolic gesture."

Planners say the prayer service developed after the cathedral's liturgical director met South African ambassador Ebrahim Rasool while planning the national memorial service for Nelson Mandela.

In a statement, Rasool says, "This is a dramatic moment in the world and in Muslim-Christian relations."



The first Muslim prayer service ever hosted at Washington's National Cathedral, a landmark Christian church in the US capital on November 14th, 2014. National Cathedral's Rev Canon Gina Campbell organised the service with the support of various Muslim organizations (All Dulles Area Muslim Society, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Islamic Society of North America, Muslim Public Affairs Council and The Nation's Mosque). Rev Campbell welcomed the religious gathering, saying the Washington National

Cathedral has been "a place of prayer for all people". She said, "Let us stretch our hearts and let us seek to deepen mercy for we worship the same God". The South African ambassador to the United States, Ebrahim Rasool, also gave a sermon that preached peace in Islam and religious freedom. The prominent Episcopal cathedral often hosts national events, such as presidential funerals, and has hosted Muslims at various interfaith services in the past, while this has been the first time the cathedral has invited Muslims to lead their own prayers, which is considered as significant for the Muslim-Christian relations."

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