

# Christian Church opens doors to Muslims

BBC News - 30 March 2013

1. ***bitterly cold*** very cold
2. **Aberdeen** city in Scotland
3. ***Episcopal* Church** a 'Protestant, yet Catholic' church
4. ***Christian* hymn** song sung in church
5. **chapel** a place for prayer and worship
6. **church priest** the person who leads the ceremonies in a church
7. **imam** the person who leads the ceremonies in a mosque
8. **mosque** a place of worship for Muslims
9. ***Muslim*** religious follower who believes in Islam
10. ***Reverend*** a title for a Christian priest or leader
11. ***true* to his faith** following the principles of his faith
12. **worshipper** someone who worships (prays or pays respect)
13. ***bare*** uncovered
14. **disciple** religious follower of a person
15. ***preach*** talk in a religious setting
16. **congregation** group who attend church ceremonies
17. **put it into practice** realize it, do it
18. ***distressed*** worried
19. ***reluctant*** not keen, unwilling
20. **opposition** resistance
21. ***facing* abuse** encountering rude or insulting behavior or language
22. ***online* troll** person who leaves rude or insulting messages on internet forums or websites
23. ***social* networking site** web site where people can communicate and interact
24. **prophet** someone who sees and tells the future
25. ***local*** from the surrounding area
26. ***global* significance** of worldly importance

Have fun learning these words using digital flashcards. Go to Quizlet.com & search for the '[Peacemakerfoundation.com](http://Peacemakerfoundation.com)' class.



St John's Episcopal Church has opened its doors to Muslims for Friday prayers

1. **On a bitterly cold and snowing afternoon in Aberdeen, the doors of St John's Episcopal Church are open to hundreds of Muslim worshippers, arriving for daily prayers.**
2. The familiar sounds of **Christian hymns** have been replaced with Islamic prayer in the **chapel** this Friday lunchtime and the **church priest** with the **imam** from the neighbouring **mosque**.
3. **Muslims** from the Syed Shah Mustafa Jame Masjid mosque next door share this church with Christian worshippers up to five times a day.
4. Church leaders believe this may be the only place in the country where Christian and Muslim worshippers pray side by side.
5. The rector at St John's has opened his doors to Muslims because there was not enough space for them to pray in their own mosque and many were forced to worship outside on the street.
6. The **Reverend** Isaac Poobalan, who grew up in Southern India surrounded by Islam, said he would not have been **true to his faith** if he did not help his neighbours.



Reverend Isaac Poobalan grew up in Southern India surrounded by Islam

7. "It was a very cold day, like today, and when I walked past the mosque I saw dozens of male **worshippers** praying outside, on the streets, right near the church.
8. "Their hands and feet were **bare** and you could see their breath in the freezing cold.
9. "Jesus taught his **disciples** to love your neighbour as yourself and this is something I cannot just **preach** to my **congregation**, I had to **put it into practice.**"
10. Reverend Poobalan adds: "I felt very **distressed** when I saw my neighbours praying out in the cold and I knew I needed to do something to help."
11. "I know I cannot solve the world's problems, but when there is a problem I can solve, I will."



The mosque is next door to the church

12. Reverend Poobalan asked his congregation for permission to open the church doors to Muslims.
13. At first, Muslims were **reluctant** to accept the invite, but they have now settled in well into their new home.
14. Worshipper Mozhid Sufiyan said: "We are so grateful to the church for giving us a space for our prayers.
15. "It was very difficult, especially for the elderly, to pray outside on the floor.
16. "Father Poobalan has been very kind to us all by inviting us into his church.'
17. "He has respected all of our beliefs and made us feel comfortable."
18. There has been some **opposition** to the arrangement, with Reverend Poobalan **facing abuse** by **online trolls** on **social networking sites**.



19. The Bishop of Aberdeen said it could be a lesson for the rest of the world
20. Christians believe Jesus is the son of God, while Muslims regard him as a **prophet**.
21. But despite these differences, there does not seem to be any tension in St John's Church, with both faiths having learnt to respect each other.
22. Peter, a member of the church congregation, said: "Any opposition is from people who do not belong to the church and do not understand the arrangement we have here.
23. "We do not have any issues with sharing our building.
24. "My faith says if you see anyone out in the cold, you invite them in, so I don't have any problem with it all."
25. Muslims and Christian worshippers at St John's Church hope their special relationship could serve as a model for the rest of the country.

26. The Episcopal Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, Dr Robert Gillies, said the arrangement at St John's could serve as a lesson for the rest of the world.
27. "What we are doing here, is something **local** that has **global significance**," he said.
28. "We have demonstrated that Christians and Muslims do not have to agree with one another.
29. "But they can learn to respect each other's different beliefs and actually come to get along and even like one another."

**Q1: What do you feel about the Reverend's actions? Did he do the right thing?**

**Q2: How can we make sure that people of different religions get along?**

**Q3: What do you feel about the following quotes:**

### **Religious tolerance, openness and serving others**

- "I have accumulated enough experience to be completely confident that the teachings of the Buddha are both relevant and useful to humanity. If a person puts them into practice, it is certain that not only they but others, too, will benefit. My meetings with many different sorts of people the world over have, however, helped me realize that there are other faiths, and other cultures, no less capable than mine of enabling individuals to lead constructive and satisfying lives. What is more, I have come to the conclusion that whether or not a person is a religious believer does not matter much. Far more important is that they be a good human being."

(The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama

in [Ethics for a New millennium](http://www.mindbodygreen.com) <http://www.mindbodygreen.com>)

- 能為人人服務，比被人服務有福。

It is more of a blessing to serve others than to be served.

(證嚴法師靜思語 Quote by Master Cheng Yen)

- ‘Hands that help are holier than lips that pray’  
(Sai Baba; a similar quote is by Robert Green Ingersoll).
- ‘Love All, Serve All, Help Ever, Hurt Never’ (Sai Baba)
- “The Holy Koran tells us, "O mankind! We have created you male and a female; and we have made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another."

The Talmud tells us: "The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace."

The Holy Bible tells us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

The people of the world can live together in peace. We know that is God's vision. Now, that must be our work here on Earth.”

(Barack Obama: [Speech to the Muslim world](#), delivered in Cairo on June 4, 2009)